ISSUES
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IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY IN THE PARISH

EDITOR'S NOTES

Improving productivity in the parish involves wise utilization of people, materials and procedures. The biggest error most of us make is to think that we are too busy doing what needs to be done today to invest time in finding better ways to do the Lord's work. Such an attitude reveals the uncomplimentary fact that most of us have gotten into a rut.

The Editorial Committee and authors hope that the reader will take time to ask the difficult questions, "How effective and efficient am I," and "How productive is our parish, school, etc.?" We hope that by taking time to read the following pages you will get a new perspective that will add joy and greater success to your personal life and to your work.

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A FORE WORD

**Increasing Productivity . . . in the *church*?**

In these inflationary times with continually escalating operating costs, people who are responsible for administration and management of school and parish programs are understandably concerned about improving efficiency of operations. This is another way of saying that Christian congregations and schools, like business and industry, are concerned about increasing productivity.

Lest the term "increasing productivity" sound too mercenary or secular to be applied to the work of the church, we need to remind ourselves that all of us involved in administering church programs are involved in a business, an important business — the King's business. We are merely managers and stewards who must give an account of the responsibilities entrusted to our care. To be sure, it is always God who gives the increase, but we who are privileged to be "planters" and "waterers" should learn to do our jobs with efficiency.

To do our work inefficiently is a waste of time, energy, personnel, material, or a combination of these. Good stewardship consists not only of giving gifts for God's Kingdom but also in conserving and using wisely the resources that God provides for us.

The articles in this issue of ISSUES demonstrate ways in which pastors, teachers and lay leaders can improve their efficiency and effectiveness in administering, conducting meetings, planning and teaching. These authors are not merely theorizing. Currently each of them is successfully immersed in the activities about which he is writing. May all of us profit from the techniques and ideas they are sharing with us.

M. J. Stelmachowicz
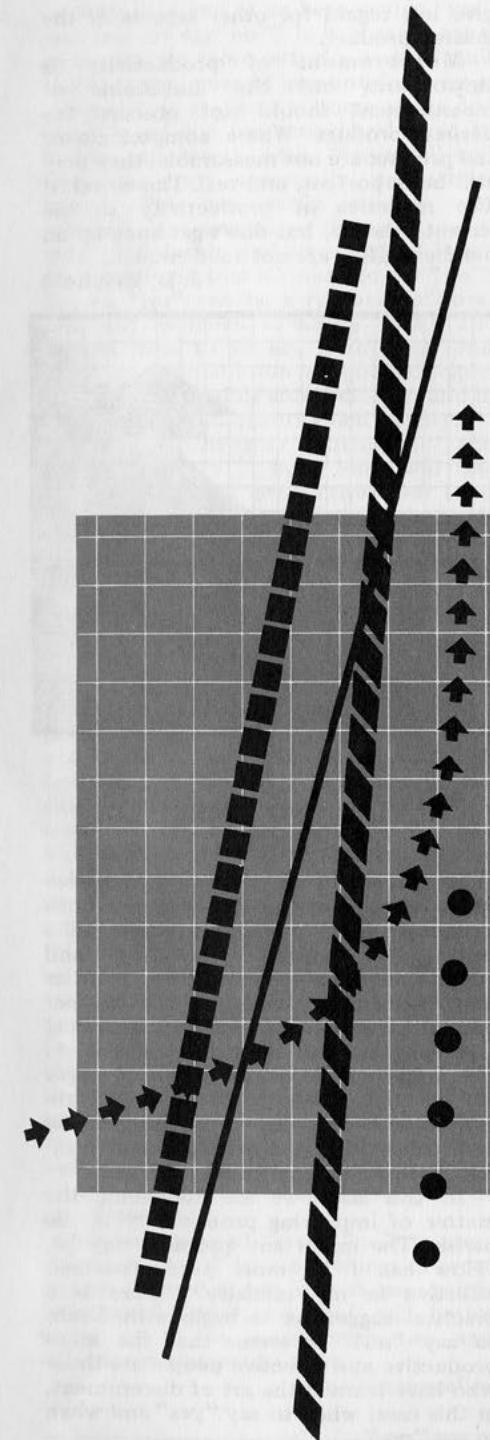
CAN WE MEASURE PARISH PRODUCTIVITY?

The terms "productivity" and "efficiency" seem to have positive, desirable connotations. Generally we value better productivity and increased effectiveness in our programs, *per se*. It seems, one ought always to direct efforts toward the goal of increasing the output (productivity) in relation to the application of resources (cost), whether the resources are financial; a worker's time; or even the intensity of a worker's effort. Efficiency = Productivity/cost. Basically, I make no argument with these ideas. However, as one directs his efforts toward better productivity, he must be aware of limitations in measuring productivity. Further, one might choose to avoid the pitfalls of pushing too hard to increase productivity when other valued objectives are threatened.

At first glance one might assume that when efforts are directed toward the conversion of assets into products, measurements of productivity are straight-forward. There are, however, many methods for measuring efficiency, but the selection of a particular method should follow clear identification of the specific, desirable ends one wishes to produce. In those cases where the product and the assets consumed are quantifiable, a simple ratio of product per asset is an adequate measure of productivity. When attempting to implement this rather general formula for measuring productivity, severl imperatives should be noted. It is absolutely crucial to the adequacy, indeed, the validity of the measure that both the product and the asset can be clearly measured in an objective manner. They must both be quantifiable. For example, productivity in a manufacturing operation might be measured as the number of units produced per some unit of asset, e.g., hours of labor, dollars of cost. Such a measure of productivity may be useful in other situations, but will lack adequacy to the extent that difficulty to quantify all the actual costs exisits. What if the conditions under which the manufacturing takes place are changed to increase productivity (as defined above) but are in reality hazardous to the workers? For awhile more product results, but in time extra costs may accrue due to lost work time or other factors which, in the long run, reduce efficiency.

On the other hand, if the product is intangible, e.g., a service, many different problems emerge in measuring productivity. Several problems can serve as illustrations demonstrating how difficult measurement can be. If a dentist can perform extractions faster than root-canals, should he pull my tooth when it could be saved by root-canal treatment just to increase productivity? Not on *my* teeth! After all, what is the desired product, number of dental procedures or good dental care? The latter is much harder to measure and therefore makes productivity difficult to define. I am glad that this strategy would be abhorred by any dentist I know. The illustration, while ludicrous, is analogous to the illustrations that follow.

In education, for example, the product is most difficult to measure. The product is learning, but measurement of the product is another story. Much has been written about the negative effects which may result when the degree of effectiveness of a high school is measured in terms of the percentage of students who go to college. Other negative effects may be caused when the productivity of a teacher is measured in terms of the number of students who pass some achievement tests. Potential difficulties may be foreseen when the efficiency of a college department is merely measured in terms of student credit hours generated per faculty member, without regard for measurement of other desirable products. What disorientation will happen in a congregation when the productivity of a pastor is measured in terms of the number of official acts he performs in a year, the number of acquisitions to membership in a year, the amount of average cash contribution given by members of the parish, etc.?

Just a note about quality of the product. When measures of productivity are applied in cases where the product is partly tangible, i.e., measureable in a direct sense, but partly intangible, a tendency results to direct *more* efforts towards those goals which are measureable. Often, the result of such an emphasis is *less* effort being directed to achieving less measureable goals, even though these latter goals may be judged to be more important and more desirable. One can get "hung-up" on numbers and give less regard for other aspects of the desired product.

Measurement of productivity is important, but the limitations of measurement should not obscure the *desired* product. Where components of the product are not measurable, they may still be important, and real. The moral is: Use measures of productivity to the extent possible, but don't get hung-up on numbers. They are not valid enough.

J. D. Weinhold
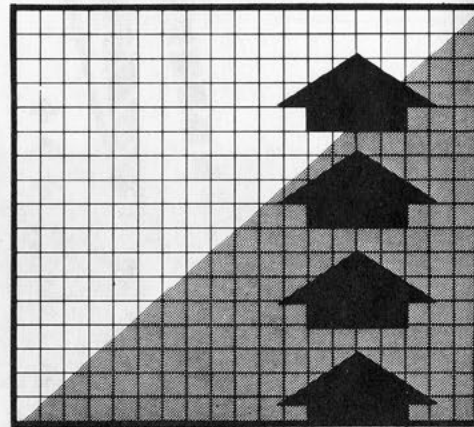
SAYING "NO" IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY

Several weeks ago a worried counselee spoke about her parents who are both professional church workers. She described a maze of meetings and appointments, a whirlwind of activities that had finally taken its toll on her mother who was hospitalized, suffering from physical and emotional exhaustion. Her father was also in the advanced stages of burnout. This problem was highlighted later that day by an item in the mail advertising a workshop on "burn-out" for professional church workers.

In this issue we are addressing the matter of improving productivity in the parish. The important question may be, "How can *I* be more productive and effective in my ministry?" Here is a practical suggestion to begin with. Learn to say "no!" It seems that the more productive and effective people are those who have learned the art of discernment, in this case, when to say "yes" *and* when to say "no."

Why do some of us keep saying "yes" and fear to say"no"? Is it because some of us operate more out of a sense of guilt (Law) than a sense of love and forgiveness (Gospel)? Is it because some of us feel insecure in our profession and need to justify our worth with "busines" and long (but not necessarily productive) hours? We can easily confuse our personal, and sometimes distorted, needs with discipleship and stewardship! Don't we understand that it's okay to say "no"? Saying "no" can be a response of love, too, just as much as saying "yes." The Gospel frees us to say both "yes" *and* "no" in consideration of good discipleship and responsible stewardship — and in concern for both quantity *and* quality.

If one is constantly "putting out" and taking little "in," how long will one remain effectively productive? Our Lord took time to re-create. Everybody needs to take time to recreate, especially professional church workers who must have something worthwhile to give in ministry to people.

Talk about productivity and effectiveness in Christian ministry *must* begin by focusing on our psycho-spiritual nature. It is claimed here that the roots of positive productivity and effectiveness are not found in "something out there," but, first of all, "within." Ministers in the church need to be in touch with their inner spiritual nature, and they need to tap continually the resources of the Spirit. If the spiritual well-spring within is dry, we can hardly speak of productive ministry. It is suggested, therefore, that in this world of technological communication and noise, we take time for some solitude and silence in order to listen to our inner self and the promptings of the Spirit. In this context we might well utilize the art of *Christian* meditation, for the contemplation of Christ and His Word is a dynamic resource for refreshing and strengthening our psycho-spiritual nature. Indeed, when we are filled with the Spirit of Christ, all these other things will be added unto us.

We simply need to say "no" to some things and "yes" to other things in order to gain control of our lives. A responsible balance of "yes" and "no" will better equip us to be more productive and effective ministers of Christ.

Paul Vasconcellos

PRODUCTIVITY & PSYCHOLOGY

Keeping any operation running productively requires both hard work and good psychology. I won't tell you how to work hard, but if you want a little more psychology, here is the first chapter of a book we shall entitle, *Psychology Primer for Parish Productivity*.

1. You cannot fail as a parish leader if you satisfy these two needs of those about you (identified by Glasser):
   a. The need to love and be loved. That is, do loving things for people and ask and let them do things for you.
   b. The need to feel worthwhile. Satisfying these two needs results in people who see themselves as successful and competent. Thus, they become active and responsible — an action stance all leaders desire.
2. Whenever the going is tough, the flak is flying, problems are mounting, the roof is falling in or there are other disasterous situations, remember: Find solutions — not fault.
3. For times of conflict or confrontation use the "no-loss method of conflict resolution." It's best if this has been explicitly verbalized or taught beforehand, but it can be used anyway. If you have forgotten it, one source is Synod's Effectiveness Training for Lutherans program.
4. When responding to a job well done, use constructive, not destructive praise. That is, speak to the situation — not the personality. For example, "That's an excellent report, Charlie Brown," rather than, "you're a good man, Charlie Brown."
5. Give no guilt. Instead, recycle and support.
6. From reinforcement psychology: Reinforce the behaviors you want rather than those you dislike. This requires developing rabbit ears for desirable responses and reinforcing them and ignoring, to a fault, the undesirable responses. Here the techniques of Skinner are probably better than those of Pavlov.
7. When in doubt for presentation, send an "I" message. It's clean, straightforward, honest and irrefutable. You always have the right to say how you see it or feel about it.
8. When in doubt for a response, listen actively. Acknowledge experience, reflect feelings (using the language of Ginnott).
9. Finally, parish leaders should strive to do their best and not their worst. At their best they:
   Demand no promises
   Deal with the present
   Act Deliberately
   Send primary emotions
   Tolerate, accept, love
   Bolster self-esteem
   Allay anxiety
   Diminish fear
   Decrease frustration
   Engender self-confidence.

At their worst, they:
   Find fault
   Badger
   Diminish dignity
   Are inconsiderate and often inconsistent as well
   Use "leader" tone
   Nag rather than motivate
   Overdirect
   Blame
   Label and diagnose rather than solve
   Are artificial and phony.

That is chapter one. The next step is up to you. Write chaper two. Validate in practice chapter one. Go on a picnic.

Gilbert Daenzer

increasing + leader
EFFECTIVENESS
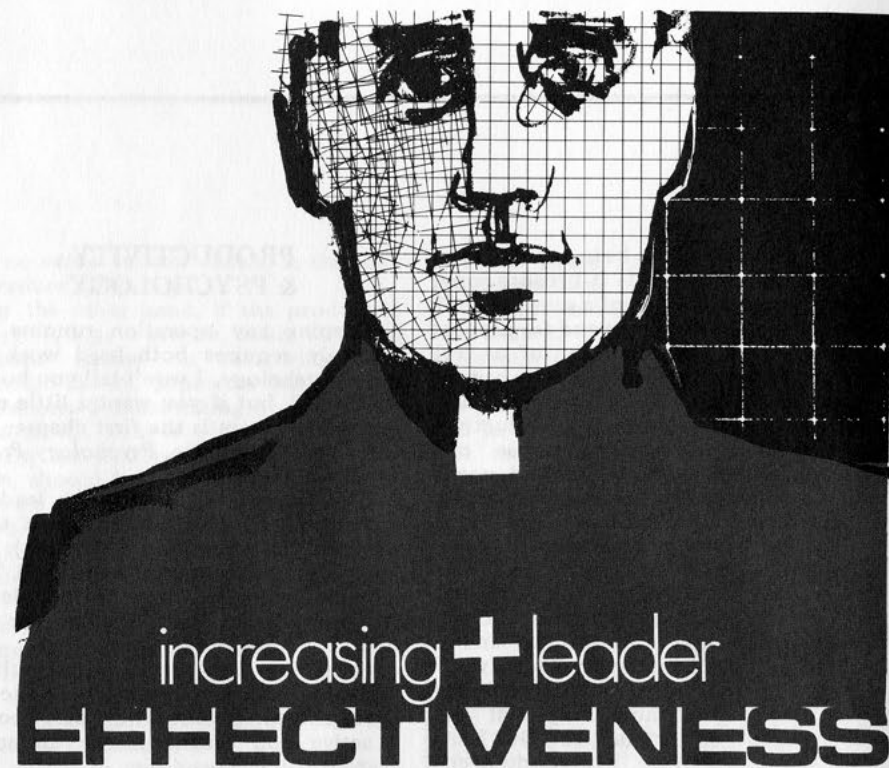
by Charles Reimnitz

Efficiency or Effectiveness?

Within the Church we have come to realize what the world of commerce has long known: the greatest production cost is the cost of labor. Parish leaders compound the problem by ignoring possible economies of scale and hiring too many staff members in relation to the needs of the parish as it grows.

Most large parishs tend to be top heavy in terms of full time staff, and most leaders in small parishes feel overworked because they do not employ relatively simple techniques of management. At last count the author's parish consists of 1700 adult members and a total membership of 2300 souls. The staff consists of one full time pastor, a director of Christian education, a vicar, and two secretaries who work a total of fifty-five hours weekly between them. There are additional part time staff who assist in providing music for the worship services. How is it possible for such a small staff to minister to the needs of such a large parish?

All parish leaders draw strength from God and His Word. Is there an additional factor to be considered? Your author feels that practicing some basic manage-ment techniques can lighten the parish leader's task considerably.

An understanding and use of the twin tools EFFICIENCY and EFFECTIVENESS will assist leaders in focusing upon the most important aspects of their jobs. If leaders learn to be more effective, they will find that they are able to perform their tasks more easily and with less need for additional staff assistance.

The simplest and best definition for efficiency we have run across in this: "Efficiency is DOING A JOB RIGHT!" It is important that we understand what is being said here. In the sense of this definition we are not speaking of counting X number of units of production within Y period of time. Here efficiency means only to accomplish the job one sets out to do.

Contrast this with the concept of effectiveness. Effectiveness can be defined as DOING THE RIGHT JOB! That is a deceptively simple explanation and you may be tempted to slide right by it. But unless you begin to live its meaning you are bound to waste countless months of your time doing next to nothing.

The value of the concept of effectiveness is that it forces us to constantly ask the question, "Why are we doing this?" Efficiency without effectiveness is wasted effort. Example: At Christ Lutheran we have a tremendously efficient mimeograph machine. It will duplicate up to six thousand errors an hour! To create this marvelous efficiency one needs only make an error in typing the stencil. Given the instruction to repeat the error, the mimeograph faithfully does what it is told.

One reason we retain so many ineffective programs is that they all seem to have some redeeming value. What we have failed to do is to ask whether substitute programs might have greater value or whether, in fact, some of programs are actually counter productive to the basic purposes we are trying to accomplish.

Better Use of Personal Time, Talents and Energy

Unless we begin to ask probing questions about the structure and programming of our parishes and set our sights on being more effective in the use of our time, talents and energy, we shall be prime "burn out" candidates. Your author is constantly amazed at hearing fellow pastors in parishes with much smaller membership (and often with larger staffs) complain-ing about the fact that they are just worn out with all the work they have to do.

Activity for the sake of activity is a trap which parish leaders must avoid. It may be comforting to hear parishioners say; "Oh pastor, you are soooo busy!" The real question is, "Busy at what?"

In order to become effective in his work every parish leader must define exactly what his purpose in ministry is. Until the leader defines what he wants to accomplish there is no way in which he can create and select the tools which will allow him to accom-plish a goal.

In his excellent book, *Stress Without Distress*, Hans Seyle proposes four types of goals, two of which are long-term and two of which are short-term. You may not buy his definitions, but try them on for size. They can be useful. He says that long-term goals give us permanent directives which can eliminate doubts about action choices. What a wonderful relief that could be!

Seyle states that long-term goals require hard work and the fruits are sufficienty permanent to accumu-late. On the other hand, short-term goals are those which give immediate gratification. These types of goals satisfy during the activity (such as going for a drive through a beautiful countryside area) but they do not accumulate. Example: The pleasure derived from eating ice-cream is gone when the cone is gone. There may be some residual effects in terms of pleasant memories but, beyond that, the results of short-term goals are relatively short lived. This ex-planation goes a long way toward explaining why some things we do fail to give the satisfactions we had dreamed be ours.

Seyle then goes on to state that our conscious aims can be separated into four basic aims: 1. To lean upon the powerful, 2. To be powerful, 3. To give joy and 4. To get joy. He feels that the first two conscious aims are long-term goals or aims, while the latter two can be classified as short-term goals.

If we agree with Seyle's basic concepts we can understand what St. Augustine meant when he said of God, "Our hearts are restless until we find rest in you." Home and family, daily work and friends all can contribute to our giving and receiving joy. But core contentment will be found in leaning on the everlasting arms and in assisting others to do so. Setting and keeping aim on that long-term goal can, indeed, eliminate doubts about action choices.

Avoiding "Burn Out" by Avoiding Stress?

Those who have studied the effects of stress tell us that stress cannot and should not be avoided! Some have even called stress "the spice of life!" Complete freedom from stress is death! "The greatest handicap of early students of stress was their failure to distinguish between distress, which is always un-pleasant, and the general concept of stress which also includes pleasant experiences. Work is a biological necessity. Our principle aim should not be to avoid work but to find the kind of occupation which for us is play".

Some researchers state that to achieve peace of mind and fulfillment through self-expression most men need a commitment to work in the service of some cause that they can respect. We within the Church know perfectly well that respectful cause. Our first step in preventing "burn out" is to set our sights on serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The second step is for parish leaders to select a relatively few strategies they feel best express how they will serve the Master. The third technique to use in avoiding "burn out" is to put some simple management techniques into practice. Here are a few suggestions.

1. Keep a time log to help you discover how you are under utilizing your talents. You will be amazed at how you "spin your wheels" and fail to carry out the activities you think you are doing. To keep this time log, take any kind of paper lined or unlined and at fifteen to twenty minute intervals record what you did in the previous period of time. You may think this a waste of time. However, the only way you can have a totally accurate picture of where your time is going is to record activities in the minutest detail. Keep this time log for at least one week but not longer than two weeks. When you have completed the log to your satisfaction, trace out time use patterns. You will be amazed at how few of your activities contribute to meeting your goals. Eliminate worthless activities. Rerun the survey at least once each year.

2. Use lumps of time. Parish leaders often complain that they have a difficult time getting things done because they are interrupted so often. That is a way of life for us and it is, in part, what

puts bread on the table. It is, additionally, our call to service in the Kingdom. For some interruptions we drop everything and run to give the needed help.

People whose work is mainly more mental than physical must have periods of uninterrupted concentration in order to work at maximum efficiency. An outstanding management consultant, Peter Drucker, points out that we will be from two and one half to four times as effective when working uninterruptedly. That means that at maximum effectiveness we could produce as much between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m as one might do from 8:00 a.m. until noon!

It certainly is stewardship of time and personal resources to produce under such ideal conditions. We may not reach that total four times level, but even at the two and one half level we would certainly do much more for our parish and our people than we have thought possible.

How does one get uninterrupted time? By gradually training members of the parish to help you help them! Set hours, such as from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. when you will accept no calls, personal or by phone. Then use that time to the best of your ability; do not mess around in that time. Yes, I know, you will get emergency calls and even drop in visitors. We all do. But that does not mean you must live the exception each day. If you have no secretary to field your phone calls, either get an answering device or absent yourself to some remote part of the building for a period of time. The phone rings and people drop by when you are at the hospital or elsewhere making calls. It will continue to ring when you are in another part of the building. Use your imagination in discovering other ways to get yourself some 'chunky style' lumps of time.

3. Use a daily "To Do" list. If you are not already doing so, make a list of activities you feel you must perform each day. Do this either at the beginning or end of each day, but do it at the same time each day.

Once you have listed what you feel you must do, go back over the list and place the items in order of importance. It is crucial that you work on the most important "To Do" items first each day. It is terribly tempting to start on easier items first because we can dispose of them so quickly and because doing them results in a sense of accomplishment, but we normally spend so much time getting the little things out of the way that we seldom get to the really important matters until too late. Your list is your plan for the day. For best results stick to the plan as much as possible.

4. Never schedule more than 80% of your day. This sounds like absolutely foolish advice. However the reasons behind it are solid. One of the leading time wasters listed by executives was fatigue. Most parish leaders tend to over schedule themselves and

end up feeling fatigued. Then they seldom realize what has gone wrong. In fact they often end up feeling angry with themselves for not "getting their work done."

Since we cannot plan or schedule emergencies it makes good sense to allow for them. We cannot say, "Let's have an emergency at 3:15," but we can be ready for a 3:15 interruption if we have allowed a little slack in our day. And if the emergency does not come today, we are one up on tomorrow!

5. "Always choose the future over the past!" That is the advice given by Peter Drucker. What Drucker means is that we must always be testing and trying our methods of service to determine whether or not they are as useful now as they were in the past.

Past successes can be most harmful. If we try a new method and it fails, we may give it the benefit of the doubt and try once again. If it bombs a second time, we will probably drop it immediately. But sad to say, if we have had a bang up success with some method in the past, we tend to overlook the fact that just because something worked at one time it may not work well or even at all at another time. When some program bombs, give it another try. If it bombs again, kill it, if necessary.

6. Make future affecting decisions. The vast majority of decisions we make require very little in terms of mental gymnastics. Most are made "off the top of our heads." A minimum of eighty percent of the decisions you are called upon to make can be made in a matter of moments. Do not waste time agonizing over such matters.

In your personal life and the life of the organization you serve you will have the opportunity to make a relatively few "future affecting" decisions. Such decisions will have a profound effect upon your life. Consider for example your decision to accept a position with your present employer. That decision determines where you see the sun rise each day! For twenty-three years the sun has risen for me at Lincoln, Nebraska. Some years ago I turned down an offer to see the sun rise each day at Colorado Springs!

After setting goals and determining long-term priorities for your life it is important to make use of the management techniques noted above and to assist other staff members and lay leaders to do so. If parish leaders will put forth their best efforts in the pursuit of carefully chosen goals, they should be relatively free from guilt about how they are doing.

Time Tight Compartments

One final suggestion for making better use of personal time, talents and energy to avoid "burn out" is for church leaders to live their lives in "time tight" compartments. This concept is built upon Dale Carnegie's suggestion that we live our lives in "day

tight" compartments. Carnegie proposes that we live our lives in the day tight compartments suggested by Jesus when He said, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." As each day closes we are to slam the door upon the worries it possessed and refuse to allow them to come into our tomorrow.

Let us use the same idea in a slightly different fashion. We can divide our days into "time tight" compartments. We will label the compartments Pay Out Time, Growth Time and Leisure Time. In essence we can make the best possible use of our time by keeping these time compartments separate, not allowing one type of time to leak over into either of the other two compartments. We will not allow our personal and family problems to affect us while at work. While we are at home we give 100% to our personal problems and needs and the problems and needs of our family. We shut out "Pay Out" or work distractions. We give family members "quality time" as some have called it.

If we will begin to carry out this type of compartmentalizing in our work and in our personal lives apart from the work situation, we can do our best, accomplish much more in a relatively shorter period of time, and have a great deal less guilt. Begin mentally to "compartmentalize" your efforts.

The third compartment we have mentioned is Growth Time. Growth Time is any and all time you use for the purpose of growing personally and as a worker in the kingdom of God. What is interesting about growth time is that it can occur at totally unexpected times. We can carefully design the time as we do when we read selected periodicals, attend workshops, take selected courses or in any way attempt to further our education. But often growth takes place without calculated design. For example, a flash of inspiration may hit us as we hear some statement made by a radio or TV commentator, or when we read of some event in a magazine or a newspaper. Some have called such a fortunate happenstance a serendipity. But although Walpole's princes had the luck of discovering good things accidentally, it is hard work and willingness to pick up little cues from the environment which creates our luck!

The basic point we wish to leave with you in this section is that we can avoid "burn out" and tons of guilt by the simple expedient of giving our best efforts at home or work when we cut the one off from the other. Use the best possible combination of management techniques suggested in the previous section together with compartmentalization of time for guilt free results.

Volunteerism and Delegation

One of the secrets of organizational success is multiplication. Delegation means that we use the talents and abilities of as many individuals as we can

motivate to join us in attaining mutual goals.

Parish leaders will accomplish only as much as they, together with ALL volunteers from the parish, can accomplish. Imagine the pastor attempting to teach all the Sunday school classes, attend all meetings, sweep the floors . . . It makes good sense to delegate and to get the maximum number of volunteers one possibly can.

This leads us to the first concept in volunteerism: Delegate anything anyone can do as well or better than you can! That concept is not as crazy as it sounds. The fact is that you are going to get the over — all credit as a parish leader, so why "sweat it" if someone within the parish gets a little credit for doing a good job in one particular area. The leader must understand that it is not important that he be particularly good at anything other than theology, but he must be extremely good at finding and inspiring those who can carry out the tasks needed to strengthen and feed the parish.

In order to delegate effectively one must seriously ask, "What is my job all about?" "What really are the core, the most important aspects of what I am doing or attempting to do?" It means that one must restudy one's goals and purposes and begin trimming away wasted effort. Ask yourself, for example, "What function of my job would I fight for if I were allowed to retain only one?" The author's response would be "PREACHING!" Each must respond for himself. This activity is called prioritizing or getting back to the basics of how one perceives his task and the methods of discharging the task. Once an individual's number one has been uncovered he can move on to the number two, then the number three, and so forth.

How far you are willing to cut back your own areas of activity will hinge on your ability to cope with supposed status loss. Do you enjoy having others receive credit for a job well done, or does that go against your grain? If you cannot openly and honestly give credit where credit is due without feeling a sense of personal loss, do not delegate.

If you do delegate, then make sure that credit IS given, and that it is given loud and clear. When you wish to thank a fellow worker or a volunteer, do not lead them to the end of a long, dark hallway and whisper into their ears, "You did well!" Rather, take them out into the sunlight and assemble as many witnesses as possible. Then, with a loud voice heap as much praise as you can upon the person who has helped you. The results will be impressive. People will gladly work for you.

Elements of Delegation

Benefits derived from exercising delegation fall into three categories, namely, benefits accruing to the delegator, to the delegatee and to the organization. That may not be surprising. What is surprising is that

by far the largest number of benefits listed accrue to the delegatee! Your author has a list of forty-nine direct benefits which workshop participants have identified as being enjoyed by delegatees!

The following "elements of delegation" are not intended to be exhaustive. Book upon book has been written on the subject. Your author, however, is bold enough to state that the parish leader will be equipped to do a fairly good job of delegating if he will put into practice the following simplified activities.

Now obviously when we want to delegate, there has to be some type of duty which we wish to delegate to another individual. A desire to delegate will begin to be formulated when we realize that we have more work than we can tend to. So out of the mass of activities we will select some task or tasks which we feel we can safely entrust to others.

Having identified the task and recruited a volunteer to perform the task it becomes necessary for us, first, to specify some action steps for the discharge of the duty. Notice that in most cases we specify SOME, not ALL of the action steps which must be carried out to get the job done. If the task is highly complex and of a deeply technical nature, a step-by-step check list of activities may be spelled out to avert disastrous results. However, in most work carried on by parish leaders, successful completion of tasks may be dependent more upon the ingenuity of the person performing the task than upon a preordained sequence of activities.

Part of the reason that we specify SOME action steps is that there are pitfalls to be avoided, and we need to help most volunteers so that they do not make some foolish mistakes which could have been avoided. If, however, we spell out the task in too great detail, we lose the creativity which the volunteer brings to the situation.

Secondly, the delegator needs to grant authority to the person given a job to do. Granting authority means that you back up the person who is doing a job for you. In essence the volunteer is "going forth in your name" and thus needs to have it made clear that he has your blessing. If anyone questions the right of the delegatee to carry on the activities necessary for job completion, he should feel perfectly at ease in saying that you sent him.

In addition, granting authority means that if the volunteer "messes up," you stand ready to take the blame. One can grant authority but can never escape responsibility when delegating. President Truman said, "The buck stops here." In a similar way you will be called into account if a project which you headed fails. It does little good to accuse the volunteer. Yes, they may have failed; but it is as if you, yourself, failed. Hint: delegate only to capable people, and to people you trust to do a good job.

The second part of authority includes the granting of resources. This means that you must give to the volunteer anything and everything necessary for task completion. For example, if a certain project can be carried out only if certain supplies are purchased, you must come up with the money needed. If you cannot get the money from the budget, you will have to tap donors or take it out of your own pocket if you are set on getting the job done. Other resources needed may include time or perhaps man power. You must supply the volunteer with the things he needs in order to complete your project.

Finally, the delegator must create obligation or get agreement from the delegatee to perform a task in a specified manner. The volunteer shows that he understands and accepts the obligation when he is able to show the delegator that he fully grasps what is specified and is willing to perform accordingly.

At this point only the follow up or control portion of the process is left. There is an old maxim in time management, "Follow up or fix up!" Exercise control. How much control? Ah, the secret of how to exercise just the right balance of control by the freedom in supervision is something you can learn only by experience. Some tasks will require rigid control and careful attention will be given to following exact specifications. It is more likely that in the realm of church work a great deal of freedom of action will have to be given to those who volunteer their efforts. In the final analysis successful use of volunteers in dependent upon the leader's ability to match the needs of volunteers to the needs of the parish.

Summary

Parish leaders who wish to be effective in their ministries while avoiding the problem of "burn out" would be wise to concentrate their efforts through a process of prioritizing their personal goals for ministry. In addition they will exercise basic management concepts for proper utilizaton of time. Leaders will also carefully distinguish between pay out, growth and personal or leisure time, and will be careful not to allow elements in one time frame to impinge upon another. Finally, they will enlist the efforts of a large number of volunteers and delegate duties and responsibilities to capable people. Under God's blessings this combination of techniques will result in both an efficient and an effective ministry.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS IN TEACHING THE FAITH
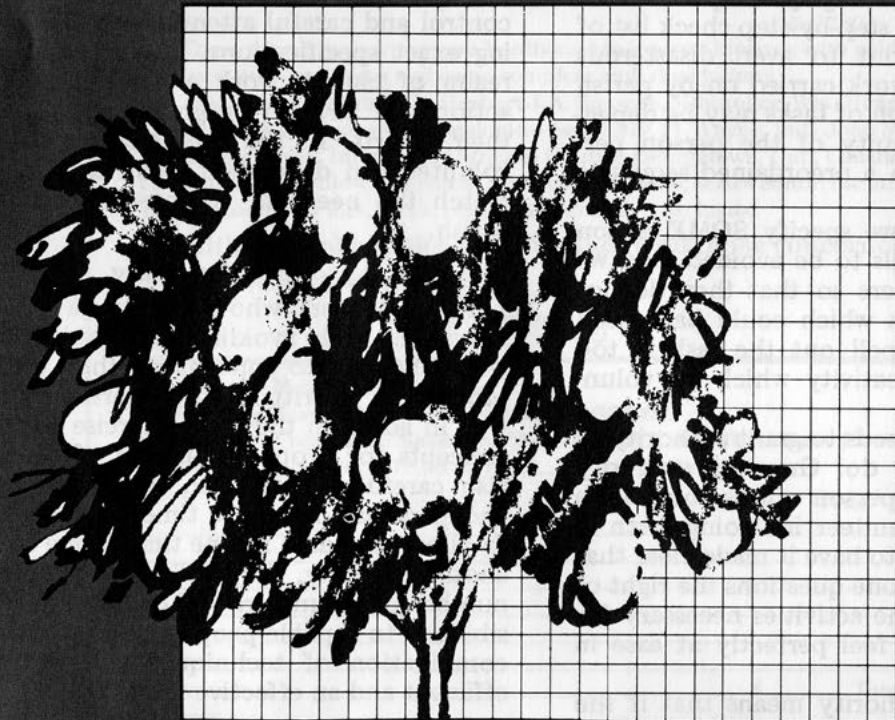
by marvin bergman

Two adults have been engaged in teaching Sunday school for a year. Both are committed Christians; both are students of the Bible; both are intelligent; both are articulate and can engage easily in conversation; both say that they are very interested in young people; both place a high priority on teaching. There is, however, one factor that distinguishes their teaching. One feels that she is a successful teacher while the other does not. One feels good about what is happening in the classroom and receives much positive feedback from students. The other teacher is unhappy about his performance and is discouraged by the number of student absences.

Observations of the two classes coupled with conversations with each teacher reveal a difference. One teacher demonstrates a number of skills important in the teaching-learning process; the other teacher does not. The first teacher knows how to ask a variety of questions, develop a plan for teaching, write clear goals and objectives, and engage learners in a variety of learning activities, while the second teacher does not. What the observer has seen in the classroom is confirmed in conversations with both teachers who are quite candid in assessing their own competencies as teachers.

One of the teachers expresses confidence in being able to utilize a number of skills learned in a leadership training course. The other reports that he was given a teacher's guide one week prior to the first class accompanied with the not unusual benediction, "Good Luck!" He simply was not helped to develop and implement those skills essential in teaching the faith.

This failure to be equipped to teach should come as a surprise, since we live in a day when so many attempts have been made to teach the faith in more effective ways. The design of a large number of church school curricula in recent years, such as Mission Life, New Life in Christ, Good News, Proclaim, Eternal Word, and Educational Ministries, was intended to equip men and women as successful teachers. This same goal was the basis for the development of a number of innovations that included learning centers, individualized instruction, and learning packages. Reflection upon the number of teaching strategies and resources available today will reveal a greater abundance than at any time in the history of the church.

The Problem

That some teachers in the church today remain ill-equipped to teach that faith in the context of a multitude of tools is the result of a glaring oversight on the part of some church educators who have given surprisingly little attention to the *practice* of teaching, that is, to the concrete and specific activities of teaching. What teachers can do to stimulate inter-action with students, the writing of goals and objectives, ways of securing feedback and making evaluations, asking questions that will elicit responses at various levels, using and developing media, and other essential skills have not been taught to thousands of teachers in the church today.

This assessment of the current situation has been made by Locke Bowman, a church educator who has worked with lay teachers for more than forty years. After describing various movements in Protestant church education in the last thirty years, Bowman concluded:

> Too much stress had been laid on curriculum materials and not enough effort had been made to show people how to teach effectively from them. The training events related to church education were feeble when viewed nationwide. Only a small percentage of the teachers in the church could actually use the materials with skill. Locally the parish programs suffered, and that more than any other single factor really precipitated the general decline in local church school attendance. What we needed was a lot of serious help in how to teach, in how to perceive and implement an effective ministry of teaching in the parishes. Pastors were at a loss to cope with this dilemma, for they were not skilled in the kinds of teaching the curricular materials demanded. They had few mental images of what to do to help lay teachers.[1]

This writer affirms both Bowman's analysis and prescription that church education will not be improved significantly or made more lively on a wide scale until practitioners 1) invest more time, effort and money in the practice of teaching, and 2) explore questions related to how people learn, the explicit function of a teacher, and the details of teacher-learner encounters.[2] While affirming the Biblical witness that the key motivation in one's faith development and teaching is the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, we are saying that the learning and practice of a number of teaching skills can have a major impact in one's teaching and that they deserve high priority by church educators.

With these assumptions in mind, the purpose of this article is to present an overview of teaching skills that have been identified by educators within and outside the church. Those included are based on the experience of veteran teachers as well as on the findings of research.

Bowman's Five Essential Skills

Bowman, after suggesting that lay teachers often have been overwhelmed by a vast array of ideas, materials, techniques, and gadgets, has identified five teaching skills which he believes to be the most essential for church school teachers.[3]

1. **The ability to define and select concepts that are to be taught**

With much of the freight of Scripture being carried by concepts, such as faith, grace, sin, and justification, the development of this skill will enable teachers to select and focus on one, two, or three

concepts in a class rather than attempt to cover thirty concepts in a passage or six pages of material in a teacher's guide.

2. **The ability to develop practical, attainable objectives for teaching, stated in terms of observable learner performance**
This skill directs a teacher to focus on what the *learner* is to achieve rather than the teacher. Developing clear objectives also points to the importance of focusing on attainable outcomes rather than vague, general targets that can never be achieved.

3. **The ability to select appropriate teaching strategies**
By being able to distinguish between *inductive* and *deductive* methods, teachers can select learning activities from a multitude of techniques and resources as tools that will enable learners to achieve stated outcomes.

4. **The ability to analyze patterns of interaction in a classroom setting**
Competency to analyze the interactions ocurring in a class, using such instruments as the Flanders and Amidon observation categories, can help a teacher to stimulate learner reactions, respond to learner ideas and feelings in sensitive ways, and go beyond a lesson plan or a textbook in engaging learners in probing issues on *their* agenda as well as the teacher's.

5. **The ability to use a wide variety of media in teaching**
Living in a multi-media society, teachers today have many opportunities to enliven their teaching by using and creating their own media. Development of this skill also pays attention to the power of images in one's faith development.

Bowman and associates have led workshops and institutes throughout our country and overseas, involving both lay and professional church school teachers. They have convinced thousands that these five skills indeed are the most essential.

Grigg's Ten Important Teaching Skills

A somewhat expanded list of teaching skills has been offered by another church educator, Donald Griggs. After spending more than fifteen years in conducting workshops for lay teachers in various parts of the United States and some countries overseas, Griggs has identified ten skills needed by teachers.[4] Some overlap with those in the previous list.

1. **Focusing and teaching key concepts**
Rather than teachers laboring under the illusion that they must "cover" all of the materials in one lesson (to prevent hiding important learnings from students), teachers need to be selective in identifying and teaching a small number of concepts in a single class.

2. **Developing instruction objectives**
While goals are defined as broad targets which cannot be attained (such as loving your neighbor), objectives written in terms of the learner can be achieved (such as presenting a gift to a friend during the coming week).

3. **Selecting appropriate teaching-learning activities**
Instead of the teacher asking, "What am I going to do in this class?" the focus of one's preparation and teaching is engaging the learner in activities that will enable one to reach the objectives.

4. **Choosing resources that can be used by both learners and teachers**
Resources can be as costly as a video-tape recorder and monitor, or as inexpensive as a picture clipped from a magazine. Because publishers' resources provided in most curricula are limited, it is especially important for teachers to be able to identify and develop resources available within their own homes, churches, and communities.

5. **Writing a lesson plan**
Teachers need a plan that is simple, complete and easy to use. A plan developed by Griggs includes:

MAIN IDEAS (concepts):

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Time	Activities Teaching	Resources
Opening		
Presenting		
Exploring		
Responding creatively		
Concluding		

Though additional components could be added, this does include key parts of a teaching plan.

6. **Establishing criteria for evaluating lesson plans**
After a plan for teaching has been developed, one can assess its adequacy by asking such questions as:
a. Is the focus on a few key concepts?
b. Are the goals and objectives appropriate for the age group?
c. Will the teaching-learning activities and resources engage learners in a *variety* of experiences?
d. What kinds of questions will the teacher ask? Will one go beyond asking mere factual questions?
e. What choices do students get to make during the session?

f. Will learners have appropriate opportunities to practice or experiment after learning something new?
g. Has the room arrangement been changed in a way that will contribute to the achievement of the objectives? As one looks at the classroom, what does it say?
h. Has sufficient time been allowed for each of the learning activities? Have additional activities been planned for students who work more quickly or have more ability?

7. **Asking questions that will stimulate learner-teacher interaction**
Questions are perhaps the most important strategy for guiding students thinking and learning and can serve a variety of purposes, such as introducing a topic or interpretation of a Biblical passage.

8. **Developing and using media**
Because so many learners today are television-oriented, teachers can no longer depend on such traditional learning techniques as listening to teacher talk for forty-five minutes or filling in blank spaces in a workbook. Students seem to learn best when verbal and visual activities are combined. Teachers can help themselves and their learners by using and developing their own media.

9. **Teaching through values clarification**
The confusion in values in our society and the impossibility of changing anyone's values through moralizing or exhortation are unique challenges and opportunities for church teachers to help learners reflect on value conflicts in the light of the Gospel.

10. **Findings ways of increasing student participation**
Assuming that students will be motivated to participate more in learning activities when they have made an investment in making decisions, teachers can develop skill in findings ways of engaging learners in deciding what and how they are going to study.

Important Teaching Skills Identified By Research

Another perspective is offered by researchers who have investigated the relationship between teaching skills and learner outcomes. Findings which would point to positive relationships between identifiable teaching skills and changes in learner behavior could advance teacher education in significant ways. Unfortunately, this quest remains more of a dream than a reality. At present there are few, if any, teaching skills whose superiority have been empirically established.[5] In addition, efforts that have been made to develop teaching methods on the basis of empirical data have resulted in a limited pay-off. Many teaching methods currently used are based on folklore rather than on research.[6] Other limiting factors include the fact that studies often

cannot be generalized to larger populations or that they are contradictory. One reason for this state of affairs is that research in teacher effectiveness is much more difficult and expensive to do well than research in most other aspects of the educational process.[7] Possible contributions of research in church education are even more restricted, due chiefly to the lack of investment of time, energy, and money in such research.

Despite these and other limitations, enough research has been conducted in public education to warrant the attention of church educators interested in identifying those skills that may be helpful in teaching the faith. One example is a recent study involving students in grades ten through twelve, parents, first year teachers, tenured teachers, administrators, and experts in teacher education. They were asked to rank order thirty-six teaching skills that had been identified. Here is the rank ordering of the six most important teaching skills by the six groups previously identified.[8]

A Rank Ordering of Six Important Teaching Skills

1. **The ability to identify student's individual needs**
The development of this skill by church school teachers can promote a greater correlation between the Christian faith and the questions, concerns, and interests of learners. Identification of learner needs can help one avoid teaching "above" or "below" the development level of the learner.

2. **The ability to demonstrate enthusiasm for teaching and the subject matter**
Teachers who believe and confess that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the center of His-story and their own story can have a powerful impact in the faith development of learners. A mere intellectualization of the faith, on the other hand, will likely result in minimal impact.

3. **The ability to encourage positive student behavior and keep disruptive and nonproductive activity to a minimum**
With learner disruptions of classes being high on the list of problems cited by both professional and volunteer teachers, the development of skill in coping with such misbehaviors deserves a high priority by church educators.

4. **The ability to guide the learning of basic academic skills**
The relevance of this competency to church educators becomes apparent if the statement is interpreted to point to the importance of helping learners to develop such skills as engaging in personal witness and evangelism, personal prayer and Bible reading, family and congregational worship, interpreting the Bible, and making decisions in response to the Gospel.

5. **The ability to help students feel positively about themselves and others**
   Teachers who help learners with many personal problems to see themselves as God's children through their baptism and others as people for whom Christ died and was raised from the grave will contribute a significant service.
6. **The ability to evaluate and improve teaching skills**
   Teachers who know how to solicit and receive feedback as the basis for their own self-evaluation will become more effective teachers both by making correctives and retaining that which is helpful.

A Summary of Research Findings

The following list identifies teacher skills and behaviors that have been found by researchers to be positively related to desired learner outcomes.[9]

1. Effective teachers behave approvingly, acceptably, supportively, and speak well of students and people in general.
2. Effective teachers like and trust people instead of fearing them.
3. Percentage of teacher statements that make use of ideas and opinions previously expressed by pupils is directly related to average class scores on attitude scales of teacher attractiveness, liking the class, as well as to the average achievement scores adjusted for initial ability.
4. Furnishing of completely explicit rules is relatively less effective than some degrees of arranging for pupils to discover rules for themselves.
5. Effective teachers conduct class and present materials with more enthusiasm than do less effective teachers.
6. Effective teachers spend less time answering questions which require interpretations of what the teachers said.
7. Effective teachers phrased questions so that they are answered the first time without additional information.
8. Effective teachers use fewer "vagueness" words such as "some," "many," "of course," and "a little."
9. Effective teachers provide a variety of instructional procedures and materials.
10. Effective teachers vary the cognitive level of discourse and of student tasks.
11. Teachers who focus upon the learning of cognitive tasks obtain the highest student achievement in this area.
12. Time spent on areas learners have already covered is not functional.
13. Time spent on seatwork or on individually prescribed learning activities is positively related to achievement. (Findings are opposite for high socio-economic-status students.)

14. What is taught and how long it is taught are at least as important as how something is taught.
15. Time students spend working independently of adult supervision is negatively related to achievement.
16. Lower-order questions (questions that focus on factual information) tend to be more positively related to achievement; higher order questions (questions that involve learners in application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation) tend to be unrelated; and personal questions tend to be negatively related to achievement.
17. Effective teachers devote more time to academic-lesson content activities than less effective teachers.
18. More effective teachers spend less time discussing matters unrelated to lesson content.
19. Achievement is less for students who spend much of their time working independently in small groups.
20. Teachers who permit more independent work have classes who like school better, but learn less.
21. Teachers who permit the least amount of individual work have students who achieve highly, but have mixed attitudes about school.
22. Teachers who permit a lot of non-independent small group work have classes who neither like school nor learn much.
23. There is less defiant or disruptive behavior in classes taught by effective teachers.
24. Teacher rebukes are less frequent in classes taught by effective teachers.
25. Effective teachers spend less time managing their classrooms than do ineffective teachers.
26. Effective teachers tend to make more use of praise or positive motivation.

Ten Important Teaching Skills: A Personal View

The writer will risk offering a personal perspective on ten important teaching skills that can be developed by lay and professional church school teachers engaged in teaching the faith. This selection is based on a consideration of the lists of teaching skills named previously by practitioners and researchers as well as theological considerations. No ranking of skills in terms of importance is intended.

1. **The ability to demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to the number one task of teaching the faith and equipping Christians for their ministry**
   With Ephesians 4:7-16 serving as the platform of a teacher's ministry, a good case can be made for giving specific attention to helping teachers express their enthusiasm and commitment to people, to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and to the relevance of the daily living. Such an effort could help to overcome dry, lifeless, boring, non-relevant, and fact-centered teaching.

2. **The ability to develop relationships with learners**
   When young and older adults are asked to recall learning experiences in their earlier years, they often will remember learning which occurred in an atmosphere of positive, open, and trusting relationships between teacher and students. Recognition that a teacher is more than a "buddy" and less than a parent occurs when teacher-learner relationships are marked by a mutual commitment to the achievement of goals and objectives. Teachers who learn to develop such relationships will increase their own and students' level of satisfaction.

3. **The ability to identify learner capacities and needs**
   Teachers who know where learners are in their moral, intellectual, social and faith development will be better able to "tune in" to learners and discover particular interests, needs, and issues on the agendas of students. This also could serve to eliminate some of the "guesswork" in teaching and stimulate important dialogue in a class.

4. **The ability to use a variety of teaching-learning models**
   In planning to teach, one may focus on a number of areas in the lives of learners, such as forming concepts, acquiring facts, learning stories, developing skills, clarifying values, making moral decisions, developing attitudes, and responding to Law-Gospel. For each of these areas, teaching-learning models have been designed and can be used by both lay and professional teachers.

5. **The ability to interpret Scripture and teach Law-Gospel**
   Since Scripture is the primary source and norm in teaching the faith, skill in interpreting the Bible is essential. In addition to learning key principles of Biblical interpretation, teachers can interpret a passage through a triple lens that identifies goal, malady, and rescue.[10] This could help to reduce the number of classes that focus only on the Law and engage in moralizing.

6. **The ability to write goals and objectives**
   By identifying both broad targets for a particular session as well as instructional objectives written in terms of the learner, teachers will have a base for both selecting learning strategies and making an evaluation.

7. **The ability to select and use a variety of learning activities and resources**
   With learner boredom (which results from a lack of stimulation) being one of the big challenges facing teachers, development of the competency to utilize a variety of learning methods and resources will enable one to cope better with this challenge.

8. **The ability to plan and teach modules**
   Modules can be seen as the key building blocks of

a class. They consist of one objective and one or more activities designed to enable learners to reach the objective. In planning several modules for a class, a teacher can avoid a "shot-gun approach," in which one scatters a lot of words, by focusing on specific targets and activities.

9. **The ability to use and design one's own resources and media**
   Curriculum writers can provide an important service in stimulating ideas for teaching but cannot supply all of the needed resources and tools. However, teachers can develop an eye for discovering tools and resources in their own homes, churches, and communities, such as newspapers, television, parish and community events, and household objects.

10. **The ability to analyze classroom interaction and respond to learner difficulties and class disruptions**
    By recording a class on cassette or a video recorder and analyzing learner-teacher interactions, one can get a handle on how learners are performing and feeling about the class. Teachers also deserve help in learning how to cope with learning disabilities and student misbehaviors better, even though such problems often are difficult and complex.

In this discussion, a number of skills seen to be important in teaching the faith have been identified and discussed. Perhaps by this time you are ready and anxious to make your own response to the question, "What are the most important skills in teaching the faith?"

ENDNOTES

1. Locke Bowman, Jr., TEACHING TODAY: THE CHURCH'S FIRST MINISTRY (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 14-15.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. _____. ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR GOOD TEACHING (Scottsdale: National Teacher Education Project, 1974). p. 1.2.
4. Donald Griggs, TEACHING TEACHERS TO TEACH (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974).
5. Othanel Smith, RESEARCH IN TEACHER EDUCATION: A SYMPOSIUM (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 4.
6. N.L. Gage, Ed., HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), pp. 465-466.
7. Donald Medly, TEACHER COMPETENCE AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS (Washington D.C.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1977), p. 1.
8. Lynn Mortensen and Michael Burger, "NCTE Teacher Education Study," unpublished paper presented to the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, 1980, p. 47.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.
10. Richard Caemmerer. PREACHING FOR THE CHURCH, Concordia Publishing House, 1959.

Increasing the Effectiveness of Church Meetings

by Robert O. Bartz

My wife threatens to have chiseled on my tombstone the following epitaph: *"He is gone to his last meeting."* In the American Reverse Version we read: *"Of holding many meetings there is no end."* The question is: *Could the church of the latter half of the 20th century survive without meetings?* I doubt it.

Yet, half of all the meetings held in the majority of the churches could be more effective and productive. There are no statistics to undergird this. But, how many meetings have you attended, listened to endless and meaningless reports, members droning on for hours, and have come away frustrated with little accomplished? This need not be.

Focus on Purpose

A meeting is a means to an end. It should be held with a purpose in mind, so constructed and conducted to achieve that purpose or purposes. Otherwise it is only a social gathering, a general waste of time. Activity does not necessarily mean an accomplishment.

In a congregation there are large group meetings and small group meetings. They range from the Voters or General Assembly meetings, thru the Church Council or Board of Directors, to commissions and committees and ad-hoc committee meetings. They may range from several hundred in attendance to five or three. But regardless of the group or the size of the group, they should be held with a purpose in mind and with order and direction.

Have Devotions

In the large group meetings, a Voters meeting or General Assembly meeting, hereinafter referred to as a General Assembly meeting, the tone of the meeting can be set with a devotion, the first order of business. It is inconceivable that a congregation in assembly, attempting to conduct the *business of our Lord*, whether it be beamed at the spiritual or at the temporal, would not invoke the Lord's guidance, direction and blessing upon it thru a devotion. The devotion may consist of the invocation, an applicable hymn with selected pertinent verses (not necessarily all), an appropriate text followed by a brief, pointed meditation which keeps the purpose of the meeting in mind, and a brief closing prayer.

Prepare Materials and Publicity

Following the devotion, the roll may be taken. In the interest of time, this can be done by "a sign-in sheet" at the door. The next point of business would be the acceptance of new voting members. The official church publication, whether it be the church bulletin or the monthly newsletter, should inform the entire congregation of the purpose of the meeting, its date, time, place, specific items and resolutions on the agenda for consideration, plus the encouragement for all voters to attend and the invitation for any member wishing to become a voter to secure a copy of the Constitution at the Church Office prior to the meeting and to read the same. All new members should have familiarized themselves with the congregation's Constitution, By-Laws and Policies prior to the meeting and be asked, prior to being accepted as
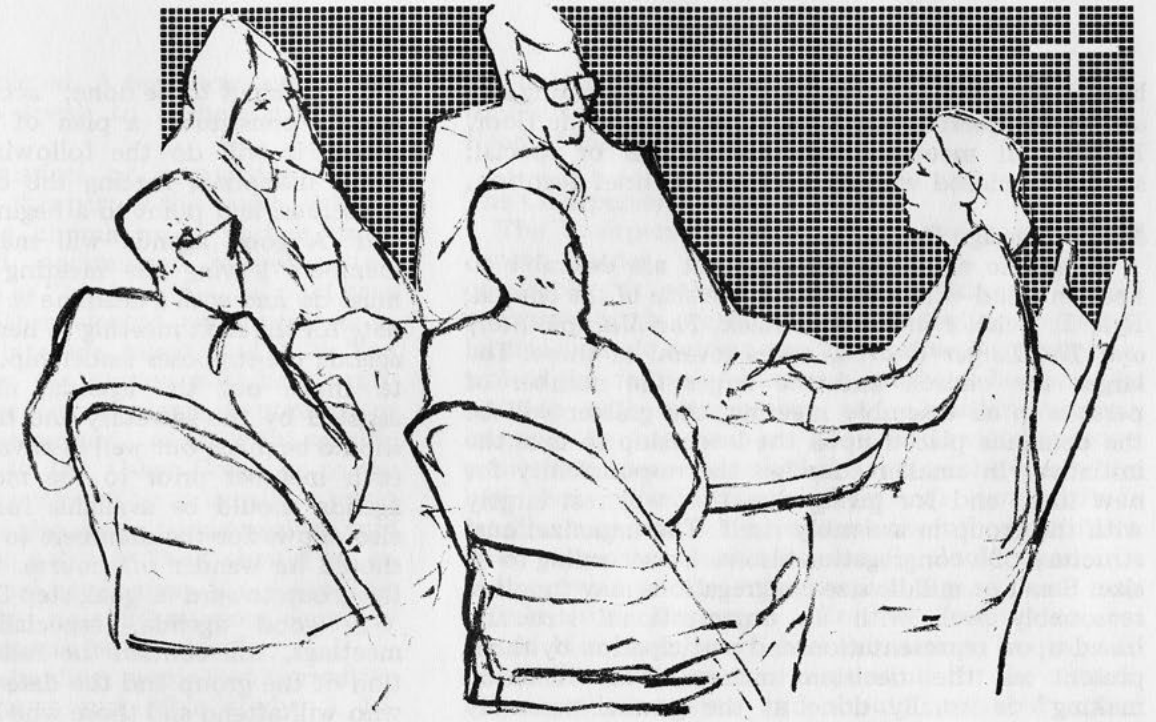
voting members, whether they have read the same and are in agreement with it and will support it. Voting membership in an organization pre-supposes that the individual has familiarized himself with the goals, objectives and procedures of the organization. Following the acceptance of new members, the minutes of the congregation may be read and approved. For the sake of saving time, these could be mailed to all voting members prior to the meeting, or placed at the door upon entrance. If members are encouraged to read the minutes before the congregation meeting begins, they may be approved without being read during the meeting.

The agenda for the meeting should be printed, listing the order of business and, if possible, specific resolutions from the various reporting boards or committees. If the assembly is a regular meeting, reports from the various boards or committees should be brief, to the point and if possible, printed and distributed. Verbage should be held at a minimum. All resolutions, to be considered should be printed, clearly stating the resolves and the reasons for them. Ample time must be allowed for discussion. Roberts Rules of Order may serve as a general guideline for the meeting but should always be coupled with Christian love and concern.

Role of the Pastor

The chairman is in control of the meeting and is responsible for the construction of the agenda, assisted by the congregation's secretary and the pastor. A well constructed agenda, coupled together with the chairman's evangelical control of the

meeting, should allow the pastor to sit in the back of the room, relax and watch things happen.

This raises the question of the role of the pastor in the meeting. During the French Revolution, a general looked over the balcony on which he was standing at a river of people rushing through the streets below toward the Bastille. Spinning on his heels he shouted to his aide: *"Quick my tunic and my sword. I am their leader and I must follow them."* Discretion should be used by the pastor in meetings as to when he leads and when he follows.

Special Meetings

If the General Assembly meeting is called for a special purpose, the meeting date, place, time and specific purpose should be announced verbally, at least the Sunday before the meeting, and if at all possible, published in the official publication of the church. The agenda for the special meeting again is the responsibility of the chairman and should include a brief, pointed devotion, the roll call with the acceptance of new members (if the congregation's Constitution permits it at a special meeting), and then the specific purpose of the meeting. No other business should be conducted at this meeting. All information that is required to intelligently and comprehensively present the specific purpose of the meeting should be made available to all. For example, if the purpose of the meeting is to purchase or construct a parsonage, all information necessary, including bids, construction costs, maintenance costs, and general blueprints should be available in printed form. The responsible presenting committee should

have thoroughly done its homework, anticipating any and every question that might arise from the floor. Finally, all meetings, whether general or special, should be closed with an appropriate, brief devotion.

Meeting Design Related to Size

There are some differences that are desirable to keep in mind which vary with the size of the church. Lyle E. Schaler in his paperback, *The Multiple Staff and The Larger Church*, notes several of these. The larger the church and the larger the number of persons in an assembly meeting, the greater will be the demands placed upon the leadership to take the initiative. In smaller churches the responsibility for new ideas and for giving direction will rest largely with the group in assembly itself. The organizational structure of a congregation also varies according to its size. Small or middle size congregations may function reasonably well with an organizational structure based upon representation and participation by those present as the decision makers. The "decision making" is usually done at the general assembly meeting. However, in a larger congregation it is necessary to limit the size of the governing body to a Board of Directors or Church Council, whichever serves as the Executive Board. It is usually this Board that is the "decision making" body, legislating and implementing all policies. Or, in a larger congregation, it can be agreeably affirmed that the Senior Minister "really runs the church and we watch and agree with what he does." Smaller congregations are usually more tolerant and readily accept any ad-hoc, "off-the-cuff" presentations. They are usually willing to rule with poorly planned programs and modify and update them "on-the-run." However, tolerance begins to erode as the size of the congregation increases. In larger congregations there is little tolerance for lack of quality, poor performance, inadequate planning, scheduling conflicts, poor communication, poor facilities maintenance, a poor worship and music program, and departure from agreed upon schedules and expectations. The larger the church the smaller the governing body, and the less the tolerance by its members of inadequacies and poor performances.

The Agenda

Meetings should meet needs, and these needs should be clear. *The greatest of these is clarity.* There is a story of the village blacksmith who was giving instructions to his new apprentice. "*See the horse-shoe I now have in the fire? In a few minutes I will take it out and lay it on the anvil. Then, when I nod my head, hit it with the hammer.*" The apprentice did as he was told and the village now has a new blacksmith. The key or magic word for clarity in meetings, I believe, is *the agenda.* A written agenda! The word "agenda" has a greater implication than most realize. Its meaning is more than "A memoran-

dum of things to be done," according to Webster. An agenda constitutes a plan of action. Properly prepared, it will do the following: Clarify problems; inject discipline, forcing the committee to be time conscious; and point to a beginning, a middle and an end. A good agenda will make assignments, with members leaving the meeting knowing what they must do and with a deadline to get it done. It sets the date for the next meeting to hear progress reports. An agenda pre-supposes leadership. Someone is obligated to make out the agenda, usually the chairman, assisted by the secretary and the pastor. The agenda should be made out well in advance and mailed out to each member prior to the meeting. Copies of the agenda should be available for every member. This also allows for the members to prompt the chairman should he wander off course. A good agenda moves the group toward its goal, step by step.

A good agenda, especially for small group meetings, will contain the following: the identification of the group and the date of the meeting; those who will attend and those who cannot be present and the reasons given for their absenteeism; the purpose of the meeting; the announcement of the opening prayer or devotion; the specific items to be considered at this particular meeting, noting the required action to be taken and the assignments to be given; the date for the next meeting; and, the closing prayer or benediction. An agenda moves a committee forward in a series of action steps, giving the members the satisfaction of attacking problems that should end with results, basically attaining the objectives successfully.

Utilizing Committees Effectively

A word about using committees effectively. This is the day of specialization. Specialization requires a greater widespread use of boards, commissions, committees, panels. Using committees in planning and in conducting business has its definite advantage by bringing the insights and abilities of many talented people into play. A well-staffed committee increases the potential for sound and timely decisions by involving a greater number of people in the decision making process.

I enjoy this definition of a five man committee: Three members pat the chairman on the back and the fifth member brings in a minority report. This is what you do not want to happen on a committee. A committee consists of a group of people, duly elected or appointed, to fulfill a given task. All boards and standing commissions or committees within the congregation should have a clearly defined *task description.* The "task description" should state the number of members to serve on the committee, the basic objectives and the required action necessary to achieve the objectives. A committee is either perpetual or temporary and, if temporary, is to be disbanded

when the task is completed. A temporary committee usually is formed to speak to a specific need or objective.

Any board, commission or committee should always remember that it is part of the whole, with no one group within the church as an end in itself. Members of a board, commission or committee, hereinafter referred to as "a committee," should have members that are either elected or appointed in accordance with their interests, talents and skills. Too often a church makes the glaring mistake of misplacing talents. An executive of a large corporation or a certified public accountant, each with specific talents, is appointed to the Usher Corps or to the Grounds Keeping Committee. This is usually a waste of talents. Committees also are to be task groups void of inter-congregational politics. They should be established only when real needs arise. If a committee in existence finds it has no solid mission, economy demands that the committee be dismissed.

Furthermore, each standing, permanent committee should open with prayer and Bible study. A 15-minute Bible study may be held with all participating, jointly discussing a given portion of Scripture and answering three pertinent questions! What is it saying? What is it saying to me? and, What is it saying to us as a committee? This pre-supposes that every committee member carry a Bible. Ad-hoc or temporary committees should, at a minimum, open with prayer and close with a benediction.

The members of a committee have three basic responsibilities. The existence of the committee demands that the group members realize and live up to their responsibility as a team. The most obvious responsibility of a committee member is attendance. Without attendance little can be accomplished. Members have the responsibility to ask discerning, incurring questions. Attendance is valueless without attention, and attention naturally makes for inquiries as members contribute their insights and seek to clarify matters on the agenda. Membership requires constructive participation in all deliberations with no one abstaining from discussion or the decision making process. A genuine *give and take* must occur, offering ideas, weighing alternatives, voicing objections, yet all within the framework of getting the job done.

A committee can be productive. If it has a realistic purpose, and its members engage in responsible preparation and regular planning, there will be reasonable productivity and a rewarding performance. To this end, each member of the committee should thoroughly understand the assigned areas of responsibility, and each committee should be able to see the relationship of its task to the on-going effect it will have on the church. It must understand the short and long range planning programs of the congregation and understand its obligations as part of the whole. To this end the committee members must be committed

not only to the task of the committee, but above all, to Jesus Christ, Him crucified and resurrected as the Head of the Church.

The Chairperson's Role

The chairperson of the committee should be a chosen leader, one who has proven himself accountable for policy, for failure or success. Special authority lies in presiding over the meeting. Responsibilities include setting the agenda, maintaining control of the course of business, lending a business-like attitude with congeniality and Christian concern, keeping the discussion on track, and reserving judgements and comments until the rest of the committee has been polled. The chairperson's own attitude readily rubs on or rubs against the other members. The committee members usually look upon the chairperson as an authoritarian figure, and may refrain from discussion after the chairperson has stated his views, or in their estimation, has pontificated. The chairperson is responsible for the crystalization of discussion and should withhold actual voting on any issue until a consensus is evident, and thereby avoid an undesirable decision. The chairperson should attempt to summarize the discussion in assisting the secretary to take adequate, concise minutes.

The chairperson, with the permission of the committee, may allow non-members to attend, if warranted. Personally, I frown upon "open meetings," permitting any one to attend, such as the so-called "sunshine laws" advocate, requiring that practically all meetings of all official bodies be open to the public view. This may sound reasonable, but in actuality it is no way to run anything, whether it be a trade union, a government agency, a Christian Day School Board, or a Church Council meeting. It penalizes candor and compromise and rewards aggressive grandstanding. Do you believe for one moment that the General Motors Company and the United Automobile Union could reach any agreement if their negotiations were televised live? The contents of a committee meeting should remain private, at least until the next regular meeting when the minutes of the previous meeting have been read and approved.

In conducting a meeting, two things are noteworthy: the length of the meeting and the subject matter for discussion. The length depends on several factors: the number of items on the agenda; how well the agenda has been prepared; the promptness with which the meeting begins; the ability of the chairperson; and the commitment of the members. Only those items listed on the agenda should be discussed. Ample time must be allowed for discussion before bringing it to the point of decision. If necessary, an item may be carried over to the next meeting if the committee has not arrived at a satisfactory point of decision. A decision should not be forced. Many a

good idea brought up for the first time at a committee meeting has gone down the "proverbial tube" because ample time was not allowed for discussion, the question being "called" too soon. Usually the first reaction to a new suggestion is negative. The second reaction is one of hesitant discussion and the third reaction usually one of acceptance. No proposal should be so urgent simply because someone has procrastinated or forgotten to introduce it well in advance of its due date. The key is *planning*.

Planning and Meeting Place

If a meeting is to be productive, planning must take place. *To fail to plan is to plan to fail.* Special attention should be given to the place of meeting. It should be a room large enough to hold the entire committee, have comfortable chairs, be well ventilated and furnished with the necessary supplies and equipment to conduct the meeting properly. If it is a permanent, standing committee, it is advisable to have preferably a three-ring binder for each committee member, all of the same color with a committee imprint on the cover and with adequate index dividers for filing of minutes, the agenda, the appropriate papers and materials and each containing a copy of the congregation's Constitution and By-Laws. They should be brought to every meeting.

Scheduled meetings should be planned around the work schedule of the members. Since the church is a voluntary, not-for-profit community, most committees are comprised of elected or appointed volunteers, men and women who have other jobs to earn a livelihood. Avoid as many conflicts as possible in scheduling, remembering that most committee persons have already put in a full day's work before coming to church for an evening meeting. Meetings should therefore be scheduled to begin on time and end within a designated period. It is well to mail a postcard or a reminder to each committee member a few days before the meeting. This announcement may also be done via a letter, the mailing also containing the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda. This provides each committee member with the opportunity to digest all printed materials and allow for an intelligent discussion of the same at the meeting. Wherever possible, not only for the sake of the secretary taking the minutes, but also for the sake of intelligent discussion, all reports should be in written form, featuring brevity and clarity.

The Effects of Group Dynamics

The chairperson and pastor should be especially aware of the principles of *group dynamics* in a meeting. Both should be aware of the forces that are at work in a committee and what motivates members to do what they do. They should be alerted to members' feelings of hostility, risk, frustration, loyalty, and aware of natural biases that may be brought into the meeting as well as conflicts of personality or biases that may be caused by the items under discussion. The chairperson should be alerted to hidden agendas that may be brought in by any member of several members. A teetering marriage, a collapsing business, occupational frustrations, "cold beans for supper" — all have a way of suddenly being introduced into the discussion at a committee meeting. The relationship between the confronter and the confrontee, the manner of confrontation, the responses that take place, and the flight behavior pattern of withdrawal into silence by members because of hurt egos, hostility, etc. — all should be constantly noted. The composition of the committee should also be noted: male vs. female, the professionals, the white collar executives, the blue collar workers, etc. On a typical committee you will find those who are less constructive. They may include: the *stuffed shirt type*, refusing to get involved, donning an air of professionalism, enjoying the attention received from church members and yet having little interest in the task of the committee; the *climber* who is on the committee strictly for prestige; the *rubber stamper* who is the inevitable yes-man; the *back scratcher*, working hand in glove with another back scratcher, supporting each others points of view in turn; the *executive set*, a clique within a committee attempting to dominate it by having their officers elected to control the meeting and the agenda; the *mind sets*, those who already have their mind made up and do no want to be confused with facts; the *watch-in-hand* member, watching the clock and letting the chairperson know, regardless of where the discussion is or the sacredness of the items on the agenda, that it is time to adjourn. Such behaviors are counter-productive.

An old adage states: "*A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.*" Unfortunately many church committee members are still of the opinion that church committees are merely a rubber stamp, to agree with the ideas, plans and programs presented by someone else, usually the pastor. Many challenge the necessity of a committee, and in some instances, the criticism is justified. We may laugh at jokes about committees, such as the one suggesting that a camel is nothing more than a horse put together by a committee. Often the inept method of operation that is followed by committees with the less than adequate results after endless hours of wasted time are the brunt of laughter and ridicule, and should be.

The ultimate goal, however, is to conduct all meetings in a manner that is pleasing to God. To Him be the honor and the glory, now and forevermore! ▪▪

A Theology of Church Leadership by Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980.

Maybe the best word to use to describe the undergirding assumptions and explicit content of this book is "unconventional." The selection of the word "unconventional" as a descriptor hints at both the strength and weakness of this book.

Most of the books on the subject of leadership development printed by denominational publishing houses contain a wide variety of business, management, educational, psychological and sociological theories and models concerning leadership which are employed by the authors to assist the reader to serve as a more effective enabler of lay individuals who have been chosen as leaders in a parish. Many such books tend to be theological only in the sense that certain scriptural passages are selected, seemingly almost as afterthoughts, as proof texts to legitimatize using the theories and models that are espoused.

No one can accuse Richards and Hoeldtke of taking such a conventional approach to the subject of leadership development. Instead they posit an approach which they believe is the "Biblical model" for leadership development within the life of parishes. They provide lengthy and detailed exegetical analyses of entire sections of significant scriptural texts in their contexts prior ostensibly to deducing the "Biblical model" for leadership development in congregations. Because of the painstaking presentation of their exegetical conclusions and the deductions drawn from these conclusions, a critic of their conclusions needs to demonstrate that their exegesis and/or their conclusions are flawed. Yet, because of the illustrations in the final chapters of the book, which describe congregations which are conducting themselves according to the guidelines of the "Biblical model," one suspects an *a priori* commitment on the part of the authors to a radical congregationalism which would be unacceptable to the vast majority of most congregations and denominations. These illustra-

tions further underline the unconventional content of the book.

Perhaps the content of the book is most vulnerable to criticism when it is noted that the authors take very seriously the power of the Gospel to motivate Christian people but seem to ignore the problems inherent in mankind's sinful nature. The book's content thus seems rather idealistic to the unsophisticated reader. One Concordia Teachers College student said, "It seems that they are talking only about the invisible church." The more astute reader will recognize the need for organization and form in the visible church to confront even Christians with the *peccator* side of their personalities.

This book ought to be read by professionals who are interested in the development of lay leaders and in the measurement of the productivity of such leaders. The book needs to be read critically with the recognition that its primary value may well be that it serves as a helpful foil over against which other books on the subject of leadership development may be evaluated.

Alan Harre

Adams, Arthur Merrihew. Effective Leadership for Today's Church, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1978.

Attempts to fuse middle Twentieth Century leadership theory with Biblical characters leaves the reader wondering if the successful congregations (church) of today is a result of Jesus modeling the process of good administration or if American administrative "expertise" is due to enterprising and successful business administrators being avid readers of Scripture.

Adams wordy approach appears to be a "preachy" style in which he uses Biblical references to suit his purpose. For example, Chapter 7, entitled, "Leaders Involve People in Planning," has an early sub-title, "Faith Planning." Both are fitting, but this review sees exemplatory biases in this paragraph:

"Jesus began His ministry with
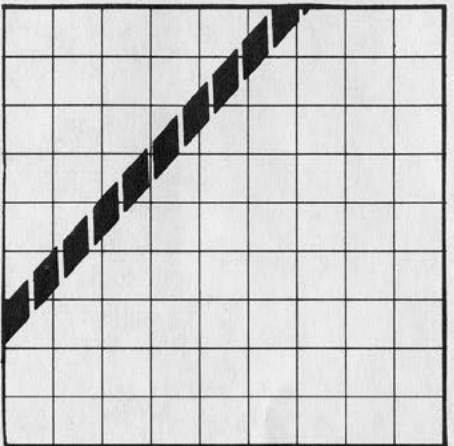
thirty days in the wilderness. During that time He clarified His purpose, examined the prospect before Him, faced problems, explored possibilities, decided on a program, and established a pattern of action. Over and over in the brief ministry that followed, He drew aside to pray and plan."

The author refers often to generally accepted organizational development theorists (Maslow, Myers, McGregor, Blake) and indicates how their ideas can be used by leaders in the church. The problem seems to arise when the author repeatedly uses or misuses Bible references to prove his theory. Adams seems to be stretching another point when he reaches the conclusion that church meetings hold an important place in the life of the church because "Our Lord gathered people into groups wherever He went and regularly presided over meetings of the Twelve."

The money and time involved in reading *Effective Leadership for Today's Church* is not necessarily wasted, but modern leadership approaches can be and are different today than in Biblical times. The book is described as "down-to-earth advice anyone can follow to become an effective church leader." Advice is given in a well-meaning manner.

Herman L. Glaess

book reviews

Byrne, Herbert W. **Improving Church Education.** Religious Education Press, Inc. Birmingham, Alabama, 1979.

This practical 352 page book has tremendous value for your parish. The realities and potentialities of a total parish education program are clearly and concisely assessed. Solid scriptural support as well as thorough educational theory is interwoven throughout this brief six chapter capsule covering "supervision" and "evaluation" in the total parish's "Church Education." Improvement and supervision are Byrne's themes. He also believes that evaluation is essential for a proactive rather than the typical reactive method used for solving problems in life-long Christian education.

Though this booklet is not intended for "school" people, this reviewer found it quite stimulating for an old hand of 27 years experience. Byrne presents a mature assessment of the realities and potentialities for effective church education from the cradle to the grave. He is parish oriented and provides thirty-eight appendices filled with suggestions for program analysis and improvement.

Although this book would be most helpful to pastors, board of parish education members and directors of Christian education, anyone interested in improving the parish's total program will find it stimulating, thought provoking and helpful in a practical way. Parishes no longer can afford *not* to assess their programs. Careful planning for supervision and evaluation is essential for the preservation and re-creation of viable programs of effective Christian education. For too long tradition and routine have dominated programs that could stimulate a radiant living Christianity for all ages.

This book is an excellent investment. I heartily recommend it.

Glenn O. Kraft