

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

4-23-1997

The Stewardship of the Gospel in the Local Congregation

Wayne Braun

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, pastor.braun@trinity-lutheran.de

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Braun, Wayne, "The Stewardship of the Gospel in the Local Congregation" (1997). *Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project*. 65.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/65>

This Major Applied Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

**THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL
IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION**

by

The Rev. Wayne M. Braun

John Oberdeck

April 23, 1997

Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, Missouri

Robert Weise

Advisor

4/29/97
Date

Arthur Graedin

Reader

4/30/97
Date

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

4/30/97
Date

**THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL
IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION**

by

The Rev. Wayne M. Braun

April 23, 1997

Concordia Seminary
Saint Louis, Missouri

Dr. Robert Weise
Advisor

Date

Dr. Arthur Graudin
Reader

Date

Prof. John Oberdeck
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program

Date

CONCORDIA SEMINARY
ST. LOUIS, MO.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL
IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINIARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

THE REV. WAYNE M. BRAUN

TEXARKANA, TEXAS

MARCH, 1997

Dedicated to
the glory of God
in loving memory of
my father
Robert A. Braun
1920 - 1996

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 4:2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
PREFACE	viii
ABSTRACT	x
Chapter	
1. A THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP	1
"Stewardship" Defined	
The Basis of Christian Stewardship	
The Nature of Christian Stewardship	
The Purpose of Christian Stewardship	
2. PASTOR AND PRIESTS: PARTNERS IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL	35
The Office of the Keys	
The Priesthood of Believers	
The Office of the Public Ministry	
The Nature of the Pastor and Priest Partnership	
3. PLANNING AS A STEWARDSHIP PROCESS FOR THE LOCAL PARISH	69
The Planning Process - Some Presuppositions	
The Planning Process	
The Planning Process - The Development Phase	

	The Planning Process - The Implementation Phase	
	The Planning Process - The Evaluation Phase	
	Conclusion	
4.	THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, TEXARKANA, TEXAS	100
	The Ministry Context	
	The Planning Process at First Lutheran	
	Developing a Plan for First Lutheran	
	Implementing the Plan at First Lutheran	
	Evaluating Our Progress	
	Some Conclusions	
 Appendix		
A.	1994 SURVEY RESPONSES	180
B.	BIBLE STUDY ON THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH	218
C.	RESPONSES OF STEWARDSHIP FOCUS GROUPS, SUMMER OF 1995	239
D.	STEWARDSHIP SERMON SERIES, JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1996	244
E.	3 WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON STEWARDSHIP, JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1996	264
F.	STATISTICS USED FOR CHARTS	275
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	282

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following groups and individuals who assisted me in the preparation of this Major Applied Project: Dr. Robert Weise my faculty advisor; Dr. Arthur Graudin, my faculty reader; Prof. John Oberdeck, Director of the Doctor of Ministry program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; the faculty members who served on the oral presentation committee; Mrs. Vickie Smith, my secretary who assisted me in numerous ways; Mr. Matt Smith, who helped me to prepare the charts found in this project; the members of First Lutheran Church, who helped me in so many ways (financing my participation in the Doctor of Ministry program, giving me time to attend classes and complete assignments, participating in and assisting with the planning process described in this paper, etc.); my mother Mrs. Mary Braun, for her support and proof reading; Pastor Norm Hein of Lutheran Social Services of the South, who assisted First Lutheran in starting the planning process; Pastor Ray Schkade, who led our "Faith in Action" Weekend; my children Ben, Jon, Beth and Steve, who were extremely patient and understanding while I worked on this paper; and my wife Linda Braun, whose love, understanding, prayer, encouragement, support and assistance have helped me to complete this project. Most of all I give praise and honor to my Lord and God, by whose grace I have been given the opportunity to share the message of His love as a pastor in His church.

Scriptures taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.
Copyright ©1973, 1978, and 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of
Zondervan Bible Publishers.

THE PREFACE

As I searched for a Major Applied Project which I could work on in order to complete the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry program, I looked for three things. First, I wanted to pick a project that would interest me. Secondly, I wanted to pick a project that would touch on an area of ministry where I felt somewhat weak. I wanted this project to challenge me to grow as a pastor. Thirdly, I wanted to pick a project which could be worked on in coordination with what was going on in the congregation which I serve as pastor.

Because Christian stewardship is one area where I have always felt rather weak, I began to think in terms of developing a project related to this area. Then in 1994, First Lutheran entered into the self-study/planning process outlined in this document. As I started doing some reading on the subject of stewardship, I began to understand that Christian stewardship involves much more than what we do with our time, talent and treasures. In fact Christian stewardship encompasses all that we do as individuals and as a congregation to fulfill the mission God has given to us. In other words, I came to understand that the stewardship God has entrusted to His church is the proclamation of the Gospel to the world. Thus the question which is at the heart of this project, began to take form in my mind: "What can I, as a pastor, do to help the congregation I serve to become a more faithful steward of the Gospel?"

My answer to that question is outlined in this document in a threefold manner. First, I needed to lead the members of First Lutheran to a fuller understanding of what Christian Stewardship is (Chapter One). Secondly, the members and I needed to work together as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel (Chapter Two). In the third place, we needed to develop and implement a plan for the stewardship of the Gospel at First Lutheran (Chapter Three). The Fourth Chapter is a description on how we tried to put these three elements into practice as we sought to be faithful stewards of the Gospel at First Lutheran Church in Texarkana, Texas.

THE ABSTRACT

The question which this Major Applied Project seeks to answer is this: "What can a pastor do to lead the congregation he serves to become a more faithful steward of the Gospel?" I intend to demonstrate that congregations which are growing as stewards of the Gospel are led by their pastor to (1) have a biblical understanding of Christian stewardship, (2) work together in a God-created partnership as stewards of the Gospel, and (3) carefully develop and implement a plan for how they will seek to be faithful stewards of the Gospel, a plan they will continuously evaluate and revise as needed.

CHAPTER ONE

A THEOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Our first priority, as we examine the stewardship of the Gospel at First Lutheran Church in Texarkana, Texas, is to answer the question: What is "Christian stewardship?" Therefore, the purpose of this first chapter is to review and outline a theology of Christian stewardship.¹

Stewardship Defined

The word "steward" is an English word,

which derives from the anglo- saxon word *stiweard* or *stigweard*, literally, the ward, or keeper, of a sty for cattle or pigs. It denotes, as Webster tells us, a man entrusted with the management of the household or estate of another, one employed to manage the domestic affairs, superintend the servants, collect the rents or income, or keep the accounts of the estate's owner.²

Whatever responsibilities are assigned to the steward, those are his *stewardship*.

This old English word, *stiweard*, has given way to the modern word "steward."

"Steward" and "stewardship" are the English words used in biblical scholarship when translating the Greek words *oikonomeo*, *oikonomia* and *oikonomos*. *Oikos*, which means household and *nomos* which means law or manager, are the two root words that form the

¹Please note that "Christian stewardship" and "biblical stewardship" are understood in this paper to be synonymous. They are two phrases describing the same topic.

²E. Calvin Beisner "Stewardship in a Free Market," Crosswinds: The Reformation Digest II:2, 60.

compound *oikonomos*. The noun *oikonomos* refers to one who manages a household, the steward. The other noun *oikonomia* is the actual management of the household, the stewardship of the house. Finally, the verb *oikonomeo* means to manage or to be a steward of a household or family. T. A. Kantonen addresses the theological significance of these words.

Stewardship is the English word used to translate the New Testament word *oikonomia*. . . . In classical Greek it had a variety of connotations but principally that of financial administration, the meaning retained in its direct derivatives such as economy and economics. In the Gospels *oikonomos*, steward, is a slave or hired servant to whom the owner entrusts the management of his household. . . . The term acquires a spiritual significance, however, when our Lord uses it as a metaphor to describe a man's management of his whole life in responsibility to God. In the Pauline epistles *oikonomia* becomes a definite religious concept. Paul uses it in defining his commission as preacher of the gospel. He speaks of himself as steward of the grace of God and of the mysteries of God . He even resorts to this term to define Christ's administration of God's redemptive plan for the world. Stewardship obtains its highest meaning and its strongest theological foundation when the apostle relates it to God's purpose "which He set forth in Christ as a plan [literally *stewardship plan, oikonomia*] for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and on earth."³

The theological literature on the subject of Christian stewardship presents a wide range of different theological definitions. The word stewardship is used occasionally to refer to how individuals manage their time, natural abilities and personal finances. More narrowly defined, stewardship refers to how the individual utilizes these abilities to assist the ministry of the local congregation. More broadly defined, the term stewardship refers to how the church manages its mission and ministry within the local congregation, in the community and throughout the world. At times it is used with an even broader scope,

³T. A. Kantonen, *A Theology For Christian Stewardship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 2-3.

referring to how humanity, as a whole, utilizes all the resources God has provided to manage all the various areas of life (environment, economics, home, church, etc.)

Ronald E. Vallet, in his book *Stepping Stones of the Steward*, quotes the following definition written by John H. Westerhoff, III:

Stewardship is nothing less than a complete life-style, a total accountability and responsibility before God. Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe, that is after we give our love, loyalty and trust to God, from whom each and every aspect of our lives comes as a gift. As members of God's household, we are subject to God's economy or stewardship, that is God's plan to reconcile the whole world and bring creation to its proper end.⁴

The theological flaw with this definition is that it has the believer cooperating in his own conversion. Mr. Westerhoff defines conversion in terms of the individual giving love, loyalty and trust to God. This definition distorts the relationship between the Christian steward and his master. Instead of God being the sole instigator, creator and sustainer of this relationship, the sinner, in this definition, becomes God's partner in his own justification. In the Scriptures we read that faith is created by God through the proclamation of the Word of Christ (see Romans 10:17).

The last definition of Christian stewardship, presented below, comes from the Stewardship Department of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod:

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, as a response to God's love in Christ, in managing all of life and life's resources in a God-pleasing manner and in partnership with Him towards the

⁴John H. Westerhoff III, *Building God's People in a Materialistic Society* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), p. 15; quoted in Ronald E. Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1994), p. 4.

ultimate purpose of glorifying Him by making disciples of all nations.⁵

I will use this definition in the remainder of this chapter as a means of organizing our summary of the theology of Christian stewardship. This definition provides a three part outline for that theology : 1) the basis of Christian stewardship; 2) the nature of Christian stewardship and 3) the purpose of Christian stewardship.

The Basis of Christian Stewardship

Based upon the Synodical definition of Christian stewardship, the Gospel is the basis for such stewardship. Most Lutheran writers define stewardship as a Christian's response to God's act of justification in Christ. Harry G. Coiner writes,

Christian stewardship is an activity which must be understood and accepted in faith as an abiding principle that inheres in the creating, redeeming and sanctifying activity of a gracious God. God has made us, redeemed, called, renewed, and empowered us to live to the praise of His glory and to carry out His holy purposes to bring salvation to men.⁶

In the book *Stewards Appointed* Raymond Olson writes,

Christian stewardship is the response of the Christian to God's love and purpose, the recognition that He is appointed by God to use his life responsibly , productively and thankfully. This is his stewardship because Christ died for him. It is possible because Christ has risen.⁷

Dr. Waldo Werning, who has written extensively on the subject of stewardship,

⁵As quoted by Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann in an interest center on stewardship at the Great Commission convocation of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in October, 1993.

⁶Harry G. Coiner, "The Secret of God's Plan: Guidelines for a Theology of Stewardship," Concordia Theological Monthly (May, 1963): 21.

⁷Raymond Olson, Stewards Appointed: 10 Studies in Christian Stewardship Based on Luther's Small Catechism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958): 13.

provides the following definition:

Christian stewardship is the believer's response to God's love in creating, preserving, redeeming, and sanctifying him. It can be called the Christian's management of his redeemed life and possessions, by the Spirit's power and direction through the Word - to God's glory and for man's benefit. Christian stewardship is the fruit of saving faith, the evidence of how sincerely the child of God believes the truths he embraces. A Christian steward is a person who is entrusted with a life redeemed by Christ. To be a steward is to follow where God leads by the abilities and the strength He gives.⁸

The Gospel must be the basis for all Christian stewardship. Only by God's grace in Christ Jesus can you or I be Christian stewards. Only through faith in Christ can sinners, like us, participate in the "free and joyous activity" we call stewardship.

Apart from Christ we are not free in spiritual matters because we are "slaves of sin" (John 8:34). Because death is the due penalty for our sin, we live life held in bondage by the fear of death (Hebrew 2:14-15). The effect of the fall into sin has been that "we have lost that (divine) sonship and both the willingness and the power to carry out the tasks which it implies."⁹

Dr. Waldo Werning wrote of the effects of original sin:

Know the nature of our Old Adam: he is conceited, arrogant, haughty, a willing lackey for the fraudulent plans of the devil, who suggests that he be lord of the world. He wants to be more than a creature, shunning humility. Intoxicated with greed and self-sufficiency, he is a slave to the devil, the sinful world and his own self.¹⁰

The Lutheran Confessions make clear the fact that the nature of man is totally

⁸Waldo J. Werning, The Stewardship Call (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 18.

⁹Kantonen, 90.

¹⁰Waldo J. Werning, Christian Stewards: Confronted and Committed (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 15.

corrupted by sin:

We believe that in spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart and will of unregenerated man cannot by any native or natural powers in any way understand, believe, accept, imagine, will, begin, accomplish, do, effect or cooperate, but that man is entirely and completely dead and corrupted as far as anything good is concerned. Accordingly, we believe that after the Fall and prior to his conversion not a spark of spiritual powers has remained or exists in man by which he could make himself ready for the grace of God or to accept the proffered grace. . . . but is a slave of sin (John 8:34), the captive of the devil who drives him (Eph. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:26).¹¹

Man is not only completely lacking in spiritual powers, but also possesses the desire to rebel against God and live as His enemy:

The Word of God testifies that in divine matters the intellect, heart and will of natural, unregenerated man is not only totally turned away from God, but is also turned and perverted against God and toward evil. Again, that man is not only weak, impotent, incapable and dead to good, but also that by original sin he is so miserably perverted, poisoned and corrupted that by disposition and nature he is thoroughly wicked, opposed and hostile to God, and all too mighty alive and active for everything which is displeasing to God and contrary to his will.¹²

The fall into sin has made it impossible for man, apart from Christ, to live the life of a faithful steward of God's many gifts. We lack both the desire and the ability to be the stewards God wants us to be. Instead, we possess the desire to do whatever God forbids, to use the resources He provides in a selfish manner, contrary to His will.

Therefore, the Gospel is the only foundation for Christian stewardship. The Gospel provides the only hope for our release from the bondage of sin in our lives. "If the

¹¹Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "The Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration" Article II:7 in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 521.

¹²Ibid., FC, Art. II:17, 523-524.

Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."¹³

This is the Gospel that saves us, the Good News of the freedom won for us by Christ. Paul summarized the contents of that Gospel in his first letter to the Corinthians, "For what I received, I passed on to you as of the first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."¹⁴

Indeed Jesus Christ is the Gospel! He has set us free. By His death He destroyed "him who holds the power of death - that is the devil..."¹⁵ Thus He freed "those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death."¹⁶ In his explanation of the second article of the Apostles' Creed, Luther beautifully describes what Christ freed us from and how He accomplished this freedom for us. "I believe that Jesus Christ... has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with His holy and precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death..."¹⁷ The Gospel is the Good News that God has set us free from "sin, death and the power of the devil."¹⁸ The Gospel is "a good and

¹³John 8:36 NIV (New International Version).

¹⁴1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

¹⁵Hebrews 2:14.

¹⁶Hebrews 2:15.

¹⁷Dr. Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism" in Luther's Small Catechism With Explanation (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 14.

¹⁸Ibid.

joyous message that God wills not to punish sin but to forgive them for Christ's sake."¹⁹

Luther explained the Gospel this way:

Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death and damnation. Now let faith come between them and sins, death and damnation will be Christ's, while grace, life and salvation will be the soul's; for if Christ is bridegroom, He must take upon Himself the things which are His bride's and bestow upon her the things that are His.²⁰

That is why Christ died for us. And that is the heart of the Gospel. Thus a Christian has all he needs in the Gospel. He "needs no works to justify him; and if he has no need of works, he has no need of the law; and if he has no need of the law, surely he is free from the law."²¹

The Gospel has done more than simply free us *from* our enemies. The Gospel has also freed us *for* service to our God. Having been freed from sin, death and the power of the devil, we are not therefore free to do as we please. That would be submitting ourselves once again to the Old Adam. Rather, we have been freed to do as God pleases. Luther wrote that Christ redeemed us from our enemies so that we ". . . might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. . . ." ²² Freed from those enemies which enslaved us, Christ has thus set us free to live as Christian stewards.

¹⁹"The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration" Article VI: 21, 562.

²⁰Martin Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" in Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings, ed. and trans. by John Dillenberger (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), 60.

²¹Ibid., 58.

²²Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism," 14.

Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men , be found in human form, and to serve, help , and every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him.... Behold, from faith thus flow forth love and joy in the Lord , and from love a joyful, willing, and free mind that serves one's neighbor willingly and takes no account of gratitude or ingratitude, of praise or blame, of gain or loss.²³

By and through the Gospel God works this freedom for us. Through the Gospel God sets us free so that Christian stewardship might be for us the "free and joyous activity by the child of God and God's family the church, as a response to God's love in Christ..."²⁴ The activity of Christian Stewardship is free because the Gospel has freed us from those enemies which prevented us from being stewards. Now we may engage in stewardship willingly, not under coercion, but in gratitude for God's grace and mercy in Christ. For that reason Christian stewardship is also an activity the Christian engages in joyfully! This is why stewardship can have no other foundation than the Gospel of forgiveness.

Yet the Gospel is not only the basis for the life of Christian stewardship, but also the motivation and power for that life. In discussing how the Gospel motivates and enables Christian stewardship, "It has become a theological commonplace to speak of the interplay between prior divine action and subsequent human responsibility in terms of the

²³Martin Luther, "The Freedom," 75-76.

²⁴Quoted by Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann at an Interest Center presented at the Great Commission Convocation of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in October, 1993. He quoted it as the Definition for Christian Stewardship written by the Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod.

'indicative' and the 'imperative.'"²⁵ The use of this theological shorthand runs the risk of oversimplifying the relationship between what God has done and our response. "This shorthand may be too compressed to communicate the biblical message without serious distortion."²⁶

In order to illustrate just how much is left unsaid in the modest little 'therefore,' consider the following indicative/imperative sentence: 'Because Jesus rose from the dead, therefore give more money to the church.' The nature of the connection between 'is' and 'ought' is oversimplified to the point of distortion.²⁷

One possible distortion would be the importing of the imperative into the Gospel, thus confusing Law and Gospel. There is a sense in which we speak of a Gospel imperative, the imperative of faith. Yet always we must add that this is really no imperative at all, for what the Gospel asks of us - faith - it also gives to us. To add the imperative of sanctification to justification is a distortion for it adds something (i.e. the life of stewardship) to faith in Christ as being necessary for salvation. We are also faced with the danger of committing the distortion warned against by Walther in his twenty third thesis:

In the nineteenth place, the Word of God is not rightly divided when an attempt is made. . . . by means of the commands of the Law, rather than by the admonitions of the Gospel, to urge the regenerate to do good.²⁸

²⁵Richard D. Nelson, "Biblical Perspectives on Stewardship and the Gospel" Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 3.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 4.

²⁸Dr. C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel. Reproduced from the German Edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), 4.

Therefore, a clear distinction must be made between our justification through faith and the sanctified or renewed life which follows that justification! The Lutheran Confessions are very clear about what is and what is not to be included in the article on justification.

That neither renewal, sanctification, virtues, nor other good works are our righteousness before God, nor are they to be made and posited to be a part or a cause of our justification, nor under any kind of pretense, title or name are they to be mingled with the article of justification as pertinent or necessary to it. The righteousness of faith consists solely in the forgiveness of sins by sheer grace, entirely for the sake of Christ's merit, which treasures are offered to us in the promise of the Gospel and received, accepted, applied to us and made our own solely through faith.²⁹

Therefore, we are free, in this context, to make the appropriate connection between the Gospel and the sanctified life of the Christian steward. As noted earlier, the Gospel is the basis, motivation and power for that life!

Christian stewardship, as noted in the LCMS definition is the Christian response to God's love in Christ. "As we contemplate the costliness of the love that sought us out in spite of our sinfulness, we are moved by gratitude, repentance and dedication to place our lives completely at God's disposal."³⁰ The Gospel assurance of the "complete triumph of Christ and His kingdom gives Christian stewardship its deepest perspective, its strongest incentive, and its surest guarantee of ultimate worth."³¹ St. Paul expresses this motivational relationship between the Gospel and the Christian life in his letter to the

²⁹"The Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration" Article III:39, 546.

³⁰Roy Bleick, Much More Than Giving: Resources For Preaching Christian Stewardship (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 22.

³¹Kantonen, 61.

Corinthians, "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."³²

Through the Gospel God not only motivates us to be faithful Christian stewards, but He also enables us to be such stewards.

The faith effected by the promise and real presence of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament is above all a living union with Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, in whom we are both forgiven and transformed.³³

This is the sanctifying work done by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in the lives of all who believe in Jesus Christ. All spiritual growth is the result of the Holy Spirit working through Word and sacrament. C. F. W. Walther describes the sanctifying work, which the Holy Spirit does through the Gospel, in his lectures on *The Proper Distinction*

Between Law and Gospel:

In the third place, the Gospel does not require anything good that man must furnish; not a good heart, not a good disposition, no improvement of his condition, no godliness, no love either of God or men. It issues no orders, but changes man. It plants love into his heart and makes him capable of all good works. It demands nothing, but it gives all. . . . The Gospel does not say: You must do good works, but it fashions me into a human being, a creature of such a kind as cannot but serve God and his fellow man.³⁴

The point of all of this is that our ability to be stewards of the Gospel is all God's work and is done by His power alone! The Holy Spirit transforms us through the Gospel and

³²1 Corinthians 15:58.

³³Mary M. Knutsen, "Is There an Imperative in the Gospel? A Systematic Perspective," Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 15.

³⁴Dr. C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between law and Gospel: Thirty-nine Evening Lectures, trans. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis,: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), 16-17.

thus enables us to be Christian Stewards. Thus, St. Paul can write in his second letter to the Corinthians: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."³⁵ In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul described his own experience of this transforming power of the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."³⁶

How does the Holy Spirit accomplish this in the lives of believers? He works through the Means of Grace, those means through which God makes the Gospel available to us. This is how the Holy Spirit enables the life of stewardship in the believer.

The Holy Spirit, using the means of grace, is the divine energizer. Through His work of conversion He not only changes people's attitudes toward God, but he gives them the ability to carry on God's business... The gifts that the Holy Spirit so freely gives through the means of grace make possible all the activities that make Christians good managers of God's business.³⁷

He begins this transforming work at Baptism where we "were buried with Christ" and then raised with Him to new life. Since that day He has worked through the Word and through the Sacrament of the Altar to nurture and strengthen faith in our hearts, day by day transforming our lives and producing in us the fruits of the Spirit, enabling us to live the life of the Christian steward.

Thus we see that Christian Stewardship is the response of the Christian to God's love in Christ, motivated and enabled by the Holy Spirit working through the Means of

³⁵2 Corinthians 5: 17.

³⁶Galatians 2:20.

³⁷Bleick, 24.

Grace. From beginning to end the stewardship of the Gospel is all His work. Wanting and being able to respond to God's gift in Christ, are both gifts given to us by God through His Spirit. The Lutheran Confessions provide a good summary regarding the basis, motivation and power of Christian stewardship.

Hence faith alone is the mother and source of the truly good and God-pleasing works that God will reward both in this and in the next world. For this reason St. Paul calls them fruits of faith or of the Spirit.

For, as Luther writes in his Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, "Faith is a divine work in us that transforms us and begets us anew from God, kills the Old Adam, makes us entirely different people in heart, spirit, mind and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. Oh, faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be constantly doing what is good. Likewise, faith does not ask if good works are to be done, but before one can ask, faith has already done them and is constantly active. . . . It is therefore as impossible to separate works from faith as it is to separate heat and light from fire."³⁸

The Nature of Christian Stewardship

In this section we will examine the nature of Christian stewardship. "Christian stewardship is. . . *managing all of life and all of life's resources in a God-pleasing manner and in partnership with Him. . .*"³⁹ That brings us back to the root meaning of the word steward. A steward is one who manages the household or the property of another. "A steward is a manager of another's belongings: a caretaker, custodian, trustee, chosen servant, an important person in a privileged, responsible position."⁴⁰

³⁸"The Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration" Article IV: 9-12, 552-553.

³⁹Taken from the definition of Christian Stewardship of the Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, as quoted by Dr. L. Dean Hemplemann (emphasis added).

⁴⁰Dick Gahl and Dave Hoover, editors, "What is Biblical Stewardship?" in Congregational Stewardship Workbook (St. Louis, Missouri: Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1993): Section I, C-19.

"They are not owners. They take care of what belongs to another. They have a lot of control, often almost full control. Somewhere out there in the world is another to whom every manager reports."⁴¹ He or she has been entrusted by the owner with overseeing the management of the owners holdings, in accordance with the wishes of the owner.

An excellent example of a steward, found in the book of Genesis, is the story of Joseph. By giving Joseph charge over his household, even though Joseph was only a slave, Potiphar was making Joseph the "steward" of his household. The jailer did the same thing when he put Joseph, a prisoner, in charge of all the other prisoners and all the affairs of the prison. In the Bible we read that Joseph proved to be such an excellent and trustworthy steward that "the warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care..."⁴²

Later, the Pharaoh would also elevate Joseph to the position of steward. He gave to Joseph the responsibility of managing the resources and affairs of Egypt in preparation for an anticipated seven years of famine. In each case, even though Joseph was given great power and authority, he was always the steward for another, never the owner. Always his charge was to manage the resources entrusted to him on the owner's behalf and in the owner's best interests. That's stewardship.

That is also an excellent illustration of our relationship to God. God is the owner of all of creation, for He is the creator. "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the

⁴¹Ibid., Section I, C-1.

⁴²Genesis 39:23.

world and all who live in it."⁴³ As His creatures, we humans are part of His creation, created in His image for a special task ("the stewardship of all of life and all of life's resources in a God-pleasing manner..."⁴⁴) Obviously these two facts are closely connected as Moses describes the creation of humanity in Genesis 1.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'⁴⁵

By the use of the word "and" in the phrase "God blessed them **and**⁴⁶ said to them"⁴⁷ Moses clearly emphasizes the fact that the blessing of being created in God's image is inseparably connected to the responsibility God has entrusted to us for being stewards of His creation.

To understand this connection, we need to understand what is meant by "the image of God." The Hebrew word *selem* or "image" can mean "likeness" or "resemblance."⁴⁸ The Apology of the Augsburg Confession addresses the image of God as follows: "What else is this than that a wisdom and righteousness was implanted in man

⁴³Psalm 24:1, NIV.

⁴⁴From Department of Stewardship definition of Stewardship.

⁴⁵Genesis 1:27-28.

⁴⁶Emphasis added.

⁴⁷Genesis 1:28.

⁴⁸Francis Brown, D. D., D. Litt., S. R. Driver, D. D., Litt. D. and Charles A. Briggs, D. D., D. Litt., The New Brown -- Driver -- Briggs -- Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon, (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1980), 853.

that would grasp God and reflect Him, that is, that man received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, and trust in God?"⁴⁹ Human beings were created in God's image for the dual purpose of having a relationship with Him and for serving as His agents, reflecting His will to the world in their actions. Precisely because we human beings were made in the image of God, He has entrusted us with the stewardship of His creation.

The image of God is closely tied to the dominion which man was given by God as recorded in Genesis 1:28. Here the Hebrew word is *radah* which can mean "tread" or at other times "rule" or "govern."⁵⁰ In the Brown -- Driver -- Briggs -- Gesenius lexicon, this verb is listed as meaning to "have dominion, rule, dominate."⁵¹ The Hebrew word *Kabas* can be translated as "subdue, bring into bondage. . . dominate, the earth. . . tread down."⁵² This word ties man's dominion or rule more closely to his relationship with the ground. "The word indicates the exertion of force against some resistant object which requires coercive effort to bring it under control."⁵³ Thus we begin to see more clearly the connection between "the image of God" in man and the rule over creation assigned to

⁴⁹Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed. "Apology of the Augsburg Confession" Art. II: 18 in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 102-103.

⁵⁰William L. Holladay, ed., A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based on the First, Second, and Third Editions of the Koehler- Baumgartner Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1991), 333.

⁵¹Brown, 921.

⁵²Ibid., 461.

⁵³William J. Drumbrell, "Genesis 1-3, Ecology and the Dominion of Man" Cruce XXI:14 (December, 1985): 18.

man. That rule is the stewardship assigned to man by God as the one creature created in God's image.

The image of God is a complex symbol used of no other creature. It indicates that man has a unique relationship and responsibility to God . Man is made for fellowship with God and obedience to His will. But as image-bearer, man also represents God on the face of the earth. He is God's vice-regent, the rational, responsible creature who in communion and cooperation with God shares in God's work in the world.⁵⁴

The words for "subdue" and "rule" imply that as God's steward or manager over the creation, God has entrusted man "with power to control and regulate it, to harness its clear potential, a tremendous concentration of power in the hands of puny man!"⁵⁵

The problem for people today is that because of the Fall into sin we no longer possess "the image of God" that Adam and Eve possessed. In the first volume of his *Christian Dogmatics* Dr. Francis Pieper writes,

The Lutheran theologians are agreed that the image of God, which consists in the knowledge of God and holiness of the will is lacking in man after the Fall, since Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24 distinctly state that it is being restored in the believer.⁵⁶

In other words, apart from Christ, sinful man is unable to fulfill his stewardship responsibilities in a manner which is pleasing to God. This is possible only for the believer in Christ, in whom the image of God "is being restored."⁵⁷ Even the believer's

⁵⁴Richard B. Cunningham, *Creative Stewardship*. The Creative Leadership Series, ed. Lyle E. Schaller (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon press, 1979), 37.

⁵⁵Drumbrell, 18.

⁵⁶Francis Pieper, D. D., *Christian Dogmatics* Vol. I (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950): 518-519.

⁵⁷Ibid.

stewardship of the creation is tainted by the fact that he is both saint and sinner. What makes his stewardship acceptable is the fact that his stewardship is a spiritual sacrifice "acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."⁵⁸

Another passage which helps us to understand the stewardship of "all of life and all of life's resources" which was assigned to humanity by God at the creation, is Genesis 2:15: "The Lord God took the man and put him the garden to work it and take care of it."⁵⁹ The Hebrew word *abad* means to "work" for some one, to "till" the ground, or to "serve" a master.⁶⁰ This word is used later in the Old Testament to refer to service or worship offered to God (Exodus 3:12). The second important word in this passage is the Hebrew word *samar*. This word means to "keep," "watch," "preserve" or to "have charge of."⁶¹ This word carries with it the implication that the thing cared for is to be protected and preserved.⁶²

Here we see the outlines of how God intends for us to manage life's resources. In this passage God put Adam in the garden to cultivate and take care of that garden. Adam was entrusted with the stewardship of the resources in that garden. In the same way, in the various roles that we fulfill in life (as spouse, parent, employee, employer, etc.) God has entrusted us with a variety of resources (income, family, jobs, possessions, talents,

⁵⁸1 Peter 2:5.

⁵⁹Genesis 2:15.

⁶⁰Holladay, 261.

⁶¹Brown, 1036.

⁶²Drumbrell, 22.

etc.). We are free to "cultivate" and use those resources in a productive manner. Yet He also intends that we use them in such a way that those resources are preserved and protected! We are to work with them and take care of them.

A word of caution is important at this point. In managing life's resources it is always important to remember that those resources are a means to an end. They are never an end in themselves. To make them an end in themselves is a form of idolatry! The resources of life were entrusted to us by God so that we might use them to worship Him, as well as take care of and provide for one another. Proper stewardship will always reflect the two greatest commandments -- to love God above all and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. "To a large degree, Christian stewardship is a matter of priorities. It is not only a matter of how I use God's possessions, but it means putting God first in all areas of life."⁶³

As we put God first in every area of life we are free to receive the resources of life as a gift from Him and to use them responsibly to provide for the needs of our daily lives and the lives of others. That, I think is one of the implications of Luther's explanation to the first article of the Apostles' Creed.

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all I need to support this body and life.⁶⁴

Here we see that Christian stewardship touches every area of life and its resources.

⁶³Bleick, 22.

⁶⁴Martin Luther, "The Small Catechism," 13.

Secondly, we see that God has given us these resources so that we might use them for the support of this body and life. The second table of the commandments emphasizes that God intends us to use these resources not only so that we can care for our own body and life, but also for the good of our neighbor. He wants us to "help and support him in every physical need... to help him improve and protect his possessions and income... to help and be of service to him in keeping" his inheritance and house.⁶⁵

Stewardship is not merely the individual's responsibility for his own life. It includes his social responsibility for the resources and created values of the whole world as he participates at every level of society. Man - both as an individual and as a member of human communities - is ultimately accountable to God for how he lives out his personal relationships with God and man and exercises his own creative responsibility to manage the resources of life.⁶⁶

Every relationship, every possession, indeed every aspect of life is a part of man's stewardship.

The stewardship which is ours is not only religious activity in response to this God. It is an activity in all the areas and avenues of life... It is His intention that in His created world man shall be concerned about the family, the government, industry, business, science, art and education. Interest in and activity in any of these areas is the proper response of the steward to the world in which God has placed him.

Luther describes this stewardship of all things as explaining the vocation of Man. All activity is holy when it is within the intent and purpose of God. Every beneficial occupation has its place in the kind of a world which God has made. . . .⁶⁷

Thus we can see that our stewardship or management of all of life's resources is a worship or service we offer to God, whether it is offered at work, or at home or at church. "In

⁶⁵Ibid., 10-11.

⁶⁶Cunningham, 40.

⁶⁷Raymond M. Olson, Stewards Appointed: 10 Studies in Christian Stewardship Based on Luther's Small Catechism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958), 56-57.

fact, each person will stand in one or more locations at any given time. We may be parents and children, husbands or wives, neighbors and friends, employers or employees, officials and citizens."⁶⁸ Yet in each station we act as stewards of all of life and all of life's resources, responsible to God for how we conduct our stewardship.

That introduces another aspect of our discussion of the nature of stewardship. Stewards are to conduct their stewardship in a "God-pleasing manner." In the Scriptures, three qualities are spelled out as being characteristics common to good stewardship: accountability, faithfulness and wisdom. In the parable of the "faithful steward" Jesus points out that "the faithful and wise manager" is the one who steadfastly carries out the responsibilities assigned to him by the master.⁶⁹ In Matthew 24 Jesus reminds us that the steward left in charge of the owner's property will one day have to give an account for how well he did or did not manage that property.⁷⁰ St. Paul writing about the stewardship of the mysteries of God which had been entrusted to us, adds that the one thing expected of a steward is that he "prove faithful."⁷¹

As those called to be stewards of all of life and all of life's resources, we must always remember that we are not the owners of those things entrusted to us. God is the owner (Psalm 24:1). We are accountable to Him for our stewardship. "Stewardship

⁶⁸Spiritual Gifts (St. Louis: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, September, 1994), 1994.

⁶⁹Luke 12:42ff.

⁷⁰Matthew 24:45ff.

⁷¹1 Corinthians 4:2.

inherently bespeaks accountability; a steward is always answerable to someone greater than himself."⁷²

As we stand in relationship to God as our Creator, we must never forget that human beings are in a position of responsible trusteeship. Anyone who has been entrusted with the property of another is accountable to the owner.⁷³

The fact that a person is a steward does not give him the right to plunder, destroy, and dominate. Rather it entrusts him with "the responsibility to foster, encourage and bless."⁷⁴

Therefore, to be a good steward, one must be faithful to the owner and his or her wishes! A Christian steward's chief desire is to be faithful to God and His will as he manages the resources God has entrusted to him. His first question is, "How does God want me to manage and use the assets He has given to me?" Wisdom is required to be able to answer that question.

Faithful stewardship means using God's gifts for the purpose for which He intended them. . . . Faithfulness in stewardship calls for wisdom in administration of God's gifts. The parable of the unjust steward is to teach wisdom in administering one's trust, using time, opportunities, and gifts to the best advantage (Lk 16), not unjustly as the steward in the parable, but nevertheless wisely. And true wisdom, as Jesus points out, will keep concern for the "eternal dwellings" paramount (Lk 16:9).⁷⁵

That brings us to the final aspect of the nature of Christian stewardship. As

⁷²E. Calvin Beisner, 61.

⁷³Bleick, 21.

⁷⁴Ralph L. Smith, "Old Testament Concept of Stewardship," Southwest Journal of Theology XIII:2 (Spring 1971): 11.

⁷⁵Irwin J. Habek and Armin W. Schuetze, The Shepherd Under Christ: A Textbook for Pastoral Theology (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1974), 250-251.

Christian stewards we are more than trustees. We are sons and daughters of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. We are God's partners in stewardship.

Another key Biblical term that forms part of the basis for understanding the concept of Christian stewardship is the Greek word *koinonia*. This word can be translated as *fellowship* or *partnership*. It means "having part in a common thing."⁷⁶

Koinonia is a most important word for sharing with someone or something, and it usually stresses a common bond in Jesus Christ, a participation in and with Christ that establishes a mutual community. . . . The type of sharing partnership or communion (all of which are English translations of the word) that *koinonia* describes focuses on our relationship in Jesus Christ and with one another in service.⁷⁷

The New Testament describes Christians as partners who share in the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:23), in faith (Philemon 6), in sufferings and comfort (Phil. 3:10, 2 Cor. 1:7, Rev. 1:9), in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14; Phil 2:1), and in eternal glory (1 Peter 5:1).⁷⁸

The word *koinonia* is closely related to the word *oikonomia*. Having been called by God to be stewards, we have not been called to serve by ourselves. God has placed us into a stewardship partnership. The partnership is a partnership with Him. Yet this partnership is not an equal partnership. The writers of Holy Scripture do not intend for us to read the word *koinonia* and picture in our minds a business partnership between two individual owning equal shares of the company. God is the owner. We are the called

⁷⁶The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship (St. Louis: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran church - Missouri Synod, April, 1981), 8.

⁷⁷Letty Russell, "Partnership in Stewardship: Creation and Redemption," in Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology of Christian Stewardship, ed. Norden C. Murphy (Commission on Stewardship, National Council of Churches, 1985), 3.

⁷⁸The Nature, 8.

servants. God is the Master and we are the slaves! Although we are His adopted sons and daughters, God is the Father. This partnership is established and maintained purely by the power and grace of our God and Father. God in Christ has graciously made us, undeserving sinners, His partners in carrying out His plan ". . . to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."⁷⁹ This plan will only be completed on the day when Christ comes again and takes all believers to be with Him forever. Bleick writes:

It is to be noted that this is not an equal partnership, since the business and all of the resources belong to God. It is also a partnership that God, not we, established. Jesus says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16). The object of all stewardship activity is to use the resources placed in our hands in such a way that people come to know and trust in the only true God. God has placed in the hands of His followers the ministry of reconciliation.⁸⁰

To be God's partners is to be understood as high privilege. T. A. Kantonen describes this high honor:

When the concept of stewardship is developed in its total New Testament context it implies even more than trusteeship and responsibility. It contains the idea of partnership. The relationship between master and slave gives way to the relation between friends working together for the realization of a common purpose. . . . Paul ascribes to Christian stewards the dignity of being God's fellow-workers. This partnership is furthermore the partnership of father and son: "You are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir." Christian stewardship is a family affair. Not merely to work for God as his agents and administrators of his property, but to work with him as his children . . . such is the high status of Christian Stewards.⁸¹

This is a partnership we have with one another as members of the church, the

⁷⁹Ephesians 1:10.

⁸⁰Bleick, 19.

⁸¹Kantonen, 4-5.

body of Christ. In the church we are *sunoikodomeo*: "built together with Christ to form the house where God lives by His Spirit."⁸² God has designed the church to work together in partnership in much the same way that the parts of the human body work in partnership with each other. All the parts of the body, while not all having the same function, are important. No one part, such as the foot, can say that it is unimportant since it cannot do what the eye does. Neither can any one part say to the others that it doesn't need them. The paradigm of the human body thus illustrates how God intends things to work within the church, which is the body of Christ. In the church, we all participate in some way in the stewardship of God's mission plan: "to make disciples of all nations."⁸³ Because no one person can carry out this plan all by himself, God has placed us together in partnership with one another in the Church. The bond we share and which unites us is faith in Jesus Christ.

The church is not the sum of Christian individuals or ministers, but the body of Christ, which gives to its various members their specific roles and vocations, in accordance with the structures of identity of that body. The church is, consequently, not the collective result of individuals, but a communion of saints; a total togetherness in Christ expressed by total interdependence among the Christians.⁸⁴

Raymond Olson emphasizes this partnership we have with one another in his book

Stewards Appointed.

No stewardship is fulfilled in isolation. The family of God in the world is a large

⁸²William L. Hendricks, "Stewardship in the New Testament," Southwestern Journal of Theology XIII (Spring, 1971): 26.

⁸³Matthew 28:19.

⁸⁴Sven-Erik Brodd, "Stewardship and Ecclesiology," Stewardship - Our Accountability to God LWF Document # 4 (April, 1994): 23.

family. Each member of it must recognize that he is dependant upon others if his life is to attain any measure of its God-given possibilities. So intimately are we bound together that we cannot avoid thinking of our stewardship as a corporate responsibility. We are called to work together, to watch over the welfare of the earth together, to nurture the life of the church together. Stewardship is fellowship of the highest order.⁸⁵

"No stewardship is fulfilled in isolation."⁸⁶ In this quote, Olson has summarized the implications of the fact that as stewards we are God's partners. In seeking to "manage all of life and all of life's resources" God has not left us on our own. At our baptism He has called us into partnership with each other, and most importantly with Him! Thus Paul can write to the Philippians: "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now..."⁸⁷ We carry out our stewardship confident that God will equip and strengthen us for that task as His Spirit works through the Word and Sacraments and through the mutual edification of the body of Christ. Paul writes in Ephesians 4:16: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."⁸⁸

In other words, the Christian steward has been called to his stewardship by the Holy Spirit. He has been enlightened through the Word and the Sacraments as a part of the Spirit's work. He has been changed and made holy as a result of the Spirit's being in His life and He has been preserved in his faith as a work of the same Spirit. The Christian steward simply can not consider himself as being a steward of God, except as a work which has been done in him by this divine person. Stewardship is not an

⁸⁵Olson, 7-8.

⁸⁶Ibid., 7.

⁸⁷Philippians 1:4-5.

⁸⁸Ephesians 4:16.

accomplishment of man, it is a divine accomplishment.⁸⁹

If Christian stewardship were not a partnership with God, there is no one who would be able to carry out the duties of such a steward. Yet because of this partnership with God, established and enabled by God, Kantonen can describe the life of the Christian steward in the following glowing terms:

It is life in its joyful spontaneity and exuberant power. It is life consummated in the presence of God and in partnership with God. Its motto is "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It does not know Christ "according to the flesh" as only a historical figure to be remembered, a teacher to be followed, a model to be copied. It knows Christ "according to the Spirit" as a divine presence with whom to walk, a friend to whom one may entrust oneself completely. Faith is realizing the fulfillment of the promise, "Lo, I am with you always." Faith is venturing forth with Him in ever more courageous exploits for the attainment of the purposes which we share with Him, assured that in the new age of his victorious lordship, through the power and guidance of His Spirit, ever 'greater works than these are possible.'⁹⁰

The Purpose of Christian Stewardship

This section defines the purpose of Christian stewardship as that of acting in partnership with God "toward the ultimate purpose of glorifying Him by making disciples of all nations."⁹¹

I believe that the use of the word "ultimate" in this definition of Christian stewardship constitutes a poor choice of words. The word ultimate refers to that point

⁸⁹Olson, 79.

⁹⁰Kantonen, 68.

⁹¹Quoted by Hempelmann, Stewardship definition of the Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod.

"beyond which it is impossible to go."⁹² Based on this definition of the word "ultimate", the ultimate purpose of Christian stewardship is that we would reach heaven. For this reason I would use the word "primary" in place of the word "ultimate" in this definition of stewardship. The word primary means "first in importance; chief, principal; main."⁹³ The point is that although there are many purposes which Christian stewardship serves, the primary purpose is to glorify God "by making disciples of all nations."⁹⁴ In other words the primary purpose of Christian stewardship is to fulfill the Great Commission given to the church by Jesus in Matthew 28:19. As I have already written, in working towards that primary purpose, Christian stewardship also serves many other purposes. The planning and budgeting activities of the local congregation serve as an excellent example of what some of those "other" purposes are.

Still, the Scriptures are very clear about what the primary purpose of Christian stewardship is. Directly or indirectly all Christian stewardship is "to glorify God by making disciples of all nations." Paul makes this clear in Ephesians: "In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will -- to the praise of his glorious grace..."⁹⁵

As Christians we seek to give glory to God, proclaiming His love in Jesus Christ,

⁹²Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, rev. ed. (1980), s. v. "ultimate."

⁹³Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, rev. ed. (1980), s. v. "primary."

⁹⁴Matthew 28:19.

⁹⁵Ephesians 1:5-6a.

we plant the Word and God gives the growth. He creates faith so that others become disciples of Jesus Christ. The ultimate purpose of "making disciples" is that all who believe might live forever with God in heaven. This is what Paul called the *oikonomia*, or stewardship of God when He wrote in Ephesians 1,

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect (*oikonomia*, administered⁹⁶) when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.⁹⁷

God in His grace has called us to be His partners in this plan! Thus "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."⁹⁸ "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known. . . ."⁹⁹

Just as the Gospel is the basis of Christian stewardship, the spread of the Gospel is the primary purpose of Christian stewardship. "God has made us, redeemed, called, renewed and enabled us to live to the praise of His glory and to carry out His holy purposes to bring salvation to men."¹⁰⁰

All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the

⁹⁶This is my insertion. I intend it to show that the word *oikonomia* which means stewardship or administration is here used by Paul with reference to the plan of God.

⁹⁷Ephesians 1:9-10.

⁹⁸Ephesians 2:6-7.

⁹⁹Ephesians 3:10.

¹⁰⁰Coiner, 21.

ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.¹⁰¹

Fundamentally, whether at church, at home, at school or at work, Christian stewards are ambassadors for Christ. That is the ministry God has committed to us. God has called us to be stewards of the message that He forgives all sins for Jesus' sake. Deciding when and how to share our faith, whether to speak of Christ or to first witness by our deeds -- these are stewardship decisions.

Far too often we define stewardship narrowly by making the giving of time, talent and treasure to be an end in themselves. These things are not an end but a means to an end.

The object of all stewardship activity is to use the resources placed in our hands in such a way that people come to know and trust in the only true God. . . . Money, time, and talents are merely resources to be used to accomplish the mission. They are means to an end. The mission is the ministry of reconciliation that God has committed into the hands of His believers. . . . All these resources and anything else that touches our lives are to be used in such a way that God can work through us to further His mission of revealing Himself to the world as Savior.¹⁰²

The danger in losing sight of this primary purpose of stewardship is that "we shall easily fall prey to activistic and naturalistic programs in order to gain service and money from church members -- rendered as a matter of duty rather than as a response to God's grace and love."¹⁰³

¹⁰¹2 Corinthians 5:18-20a, NIV.

¹⁰²Ibid., 19-20.

¹⁰³Waldo J. Werning, The Radical Nature of Christianity (Published by Waldo J. Werning, 1975), 105.

As part of the church, we are called together to carry out this mission in the world. We have, as Paul writes, a "partnership in the Gospel."¹⁰⁴ Together, as Christian stewards we are to contend "as one man for the faith of the Gospel."¹⁰⁵ "The divine stewardship plan for the fullness of time culminates in the Spirit-born and Spirit-enabled community which is to extend to the ends of the earth to bring the saving presence of the living Christ to men everywhere."¹⁰⁶ What does this mean for the church as it carries out its stewardship of the Gospel in this world?

Then its life must be none other than Christ Himself going forth to achieve His redeeming purpose. Its voice must be the voice of Christ proclaiming His eternal Gospel. Its hands must be Christ's hands doing His works of love. Christ Himself must look through our eyes, walk in our steps, love through our hearts. To describe the church as the body of Christ is to describe the church as living out the meaning of Christian stewardship.¹⁰⁷

The activities of Christian stewardship, however, are not limited to activity that takes place at or in service to the local congregation. "We would be misleading people if we taught them that the time and talents they offer in activities centered in their church building are all that is involved in their stewardship responsibility."¹⁰⁸ Our responsibility to be Christian stewards extends to every area of life. The parent leading devotions around the dinner table or saying prayers with a child going to bed at night is fulfilling a

¹⁰⁴Philippians 1:4.

¹⁰⁵Philippians 1:27b.

¹⁰⁶Kantonen, 69.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁸Bleick, 20.

stewardship responsibility "towards the ultimate goal of giving glory to God by making disciples of all nations."¹⁰⁹ The same could be said of the Christian woman who takes food to her neighbor whose husband has recently died. When you give a Christian witness to your employees or employer you are doing the work of Christian stewardship in your workplace. In every area of life, we Christians are to be stewards of our activities, our words, our resources, indeed our entire lives so that they witness to Christ and bring glory to God. That is the primary purpose of stewardship.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the question, "What is Christian stewardship?" We have attempted to answer that question by using a stewardship definition written by the Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod. Using that definition we have discussed stewardship in terms of its basis, nature and purpose.

The basis of Christian stewardship is the Gospel. Only because God has set us free in Christ from sin, death and the power of the devil are we able to live the life of a Christian steward. Indeed Christian stewardship is a free and joyous response to God's love in Christ. More than that, God's Spirit working through the means of grace is the One who enables the Christian to live the stewardship life. Thus one could say that in the Gospel God has provided the basis, motive and power for stewardship.

We come to understand the nature of Christian stewardship when we understand that God is the owner of everything and we are his managers, entrusted with the

¹⁰⁹From our Stewardship definition.

administration of all of life and all of life's resources. As trustees our primary concern is to manage all that has been entrusted to us in accordance with God's will. Yet, we are more than simply trustees regarding Christian stewardship. We are, by God's grace His adopted children. Having adopted us as His children, He has made us His partners. In all our stewardship activities He is with us, at work in us and through us.

Finally, I pointed out that while there are many other purposes for which we carry out the activities of Christian stewardship, the primary purpose of such stewardship is always to glorify God "by making disciples of all nations."

In summary I draw upon the words of T. A. Kantonen:

A Christian is one to whom Christ has given a new life purpose. My life, the apostolic writer tells us, revolved around my own petty self. Christ made me a priest. He took me off my own hands and gave me a new life in consecrated service. He gave me a new perspective, a new attitude, a new objective. He gave me eyes with which to see in every man I meet a brother for whom Christ died and whom I must help to realize his share in the inheritance of the saints. A Christian, as Luther points out, never lives in himself. He lives in Christ through faith and in his neighbor through love. A Christian is one who has come to know the love of God in Christ and whose life has become a stewardship of that love.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰Kantonen, 112.

CHAPTER TWO

Pastor and Priests

Partners in the Stewardship of the Gospel

The next question we need to answer concerning the stewardship of the Gospel in the local parish is this: Whom has the Lord entrusted with this stewardship? Has the stewardship of the Gospel been entrusted only to those who hold the Office of the Public Ministry? Or has the Lord also entrusted this stewardship to all believers as members of the priesthood of believers? Is there any distinction between the stewardship of the Gospel entrusted to the Office of the Public Ministry and that which is entrusted to the priesthood of believers?

These are important questions to ask if pastors and laity are going to function as partners in Christ, rather than adversaries. Frequently, the chief concern of both pastor and church member has to do with the question "Who is in charge?" rather than "How can we serve together?" This disparity is evident through the eyes of the two most recent conventions of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. In both 1992 and 1995, one of the chief items of business before the convention was the issue of how best to resolve conflict between pastors and the congregations they serve. Furthermore, if you were to take a poll of the 43 circuit counselors in the Texas District of The Lutheran Church--

Missouri Synod, most would report that in the past 3 years there has been significant conflict between pastor and laity in one or more of the congregations that comprise the circuit which they serve.

Is there anything that could be more contrary to the faithful stewardship of the Gospel in the local parish than the breakdown of the relationship between clergy and laity? When the relationship between pastor and lay member becomes adversarial, this cannot help but hinder the proclamation of the Gospel within the parish and to the community around the parish.

My thesis is that the Lord does not intend that such an adversarial role exist between pastor and laity in the local parish. He has entrusted the stewardship of the Gospel to both the Office of the Public Ministry and to the priesthood of believers, intending that pastors and members work together as partners. Yes, there are important theological distinctions between the office of the pastor and the role of the lay member as part of the priesthood of all believers. However, those distinctions do not mean that the relationship between the two must be adversarial. I would propose that the exact opposite is true. Our Lord enables men serving in the Office of the Public Ministry and the laity serving in the priesthood of believers to work together as partners with Him and one another in the stewardship of the Gospel.

In this second chapter, I intend to describe the partnership between pastor and the priesthood of all believers. I will seek to answer the following questions: (1) What is the relationship of the Office of the Keys to the task of being a steward of the Gospel? (2) What is the priesthood of all believers? (3) In what manner has the stewardship of

the Gospel been entrusted to the priesthood? (4) What is the Office of the Public Ministry? (5) In what manner has God entrusted the stewardship of the Gospel to this divine office? (6) How are the priesthood and the pastoral office distinguished from and related to one another as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel?

The Office of the Keys

When Jesus said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven,"¹ He was, through Peter, conferring on the church the authority and responsibility which we call "the Office of the Keys."

What is this "Office of the Keys?" According to the Smalcald Articles, "the Keys are a function and power given to the church by Christ to bind and to loose sins..."² What is meant by the term "keys"? Curtis C. Stephan provides an excellent explanation:

The term "keys" is frequently used in both Testaments of Scripture as a symbol of power. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," Jesus said to Peter (Matthew 16:19). "I am He that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death." (Rev. 1:18). Although the Scripture here employs metaphorical language, not figurative but real power is meant and conveyed. The keys signify the power which enables a person or institution to perform certain tasks, the power which can make men inexpressibly happy or inexpressibly wretched.

The metaphor of the keys is used in Holy Scripture because the locking or unlocking of the gates of heaven is concerned and because sins are chains which can

¹Matthew 16:19 NIV (New International Version).

²Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "The Smalcald Articles" Part III, Article VII:1 in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 311.

be loosed or locked by means of keys. The plural of the word "key" is used to indicate the twofold power of the keys. There are both a binding key and a loosing key.³

What is meant by binding and loosing Jesus makes clear in the 20th chapter of the Gospel of John, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."⁴ "Our teachers assert that... the power of the keys... is a power or command of God to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments."⁵

In other words when our Lord gave to the church the Office of the Keys, He was giving the church the power and authority to preach the Gospel. C. F. W. Walther writes, "Now, however, the keys, or the office and power of the keys is nothing else than the ministry of the Gospel, or the office through which the promise of the Gospel is communicated."⁶ The office of the keys involves much more than simply the authority to exercise church discipline.

The opinion is commonly held that the Office of the Keys grants only the dual power of remitting and retaining sins. While this function is one of the most important powers bestowed upon the Church by the Lord, the spiritual power of the Church is much more comprehensive. The Office of the Keys is a concept which includes the

³Theodore Laetsch, D.D., ed., The Abiding Word: An Anthology of doctrinal Essays for the Year 1945 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946). Vol. 1. "The Office of the Keys" by Curtis C. Stephan, 342.

⁴John 20:22b-23.

⁵Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "The Augsburg Confession" Article XXVIII:5 in The Book of Concord: the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 81.

⁶C. F. W. Walther, The Right of the Congregation to Choose Its Pastor . trans. Fred Kramer, ed. Wilbert Rosin (FortWayne: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1987) 27.

possession and practice of all the spiritual powers, rights duties and privileges necessary for the welfare of and promotion of the Church on earth. The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the keys of God's house. Whoever has the keys of a house or a building ordinarily has power over everything in it and the authority necessary for its complete control and management. . . . In whatever ways the Gospel of Christ is taught and applied to mankind the Office of the Keys is put into employment. The Office of the Keys gives the Church the plenipotentiary power to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the Sacraments, to remit and to retain sins, to exercise church discipline, and to perform all other rights and duties pertaining to the well-being of the Church on earth.⁷

As Stephan wrote, "Whoever has the keys of a house or a building ordinarily has power over everything in it and the authority necessary for its complete control and management."⁸ The word "management" is another word for "stewardship." By entrusting these spiritual powers to the church, the Lord has thereby entrusted to His church the stewardship of the Gospel. There you have the significance of the use of the metaphor of the "keys."

For as a bridegroom gives to his bride, if he really accepts her as his spouse, the keys to the entire house, and thereby makes her a participant in all his goods and the mistress of his house, and gives her power over all supplies and treasures of his house: so Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, has also given to all believing Christians, as his bride, the keys of his house, made them partakers in all his goods, and given them authority and power over all the treasures of his house, and therefore also the authority and right of calling their pastors.⁹

Because He has entrusted us with the Office of the Keys, there can be no doubt then that Christ has, by His grace, fully accepted us as His bride. He has made us full partakers in all His treasure, "the mistress of his house." By entrusting us with the Office of the Keys,

⁷The Abiding Word Vol 1, Stephan, 348.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Walther, 13.

our Lord Jesus has thus enabled us to be stewards of the Gospel. Robert Kolb writes:

God has called his church to serve as his hit men, to deliver the death-dealing law to secure sinners. God has called his church to serve as his midwives, to deliver life to despairing sinners through the Gospel. God has called his people to retain and remit the sins of others (John 20:23). Christ has commanded this process of dealing death and dispensing life. Its power lies in the Holy Spirit's use of believers to retain and remit sins. He has selected believers as specific elements of his created order to carry out those tasks that bring sinners back into the family of God. Christ commissioned believers to bind sins and to loose them (Matt. 18:18), to open or shut heaven for others through the use of the Word (Matt. 16:19). This exercise of the keys of the Kingdom of God is entrusted in the formal, public life of the church to pastors. All believers are called to be calling fellow believers and unbelievers to repentance and to be announcing the forgiveness of sins and God's love in Christ Jesus to the repentant.¹⁰

To do these things, that is, to forgive and to retain sins, to call believers and unbelievers to repentance, to announce the forgiveness of sins and God's love in Christ - is to be a steward of the Gospel. This is the stewardship that God has entrusted to His church by conferring upon His church that "peculiar" power which is called the Office of the Keys.

The question now becomes, how does God intend that the powers and responsibilities of the Office of the Keys should be carried out by the Church? To answer that question we must examine the Priesthood of Believers, the Office of the Holy Ministry and the nature of the partnership that God intends should exist between the two.

The Priesthood of Believers

There a number of passages in Holy Scripture that, either directly or indirectly, address the doctrine of the priesthood of believers. In Rev. 1:5b-6 St. John writes, " To

¹⁰Robert Kolb, The Christian Faith (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 210-211.

him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father..."¹¹ Later in Revelation 5:10 the 24 elders of heaven sing a song in which they say the following concerning God's purposes for His people: "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."¹² In Romans 12 Paul uses the language of the priesthood to describe the nature of the worship and service which believers are to offer to their Savior. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living **sacrifices**,¹³ holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."¹⁴ The primary passage pertaining to the priesthood of believers, the *sedes doctrinae* of this teaching concerning the church, is to be found in 1 Peter 2, particularly in verses 9 & 10.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.¹⁵

This will be the primary passage of Holy Scripture that we will turn to guide our discussion of the doctrine known as the "priesthood of believers."

There are a number of things to be learned about this doctrine from this passage.

¹¹Revelation 1:5b-6.

¹²Revelation 5:10.

¹³Emphasis added.

¹⁴Romans 12:1.

¹⁵1 Peter 2:9-10.

The most obvious point is that the whole community of believers is referred to as a "royal priesthood." Franz Pieper explains this in the third volume of his Christian Dogmatics:

All Christians, that is, all who have come to faith in Christ, are spiritual priests and thus have the call to preach the Gospel. In the words of 1 Peter 2:9 "Ye are. . . a royal priesthood [*Basileiov hierateuma*]. . . that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light," not elders or bishops, but all Christians are addressed.¹⁶

The priesthood of believers flows from the priestly office of Christ. By His priestly sacrifice on the cross He has atoned for our sins and purchased us for God. In Him the physical temple in Jerusalem is now replaced by a spiritual temple, the church.

Concerning the church Paul writes in Ephesians, "In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord."¹⁷ The members of the church, those who believe in Jesus Christ, are the priests who serve in this new spiritual temple.

In 1 Pet. 2:5, 9 salvation and dignity are transferred to the community, which, based on Christ as the living stone, is built up into a spiritual temple for a consecrated priestly ministry. The community is a priesthood because it offers spiritual sacrifices. As a priestly company it is immediate to God, but there is no priestly caste, for the whole people is a priestly fellowship. It is royal inasmuch as it belongs to the King, serves him, and shares his glory in a ministry of witness (v. 9).¹⁸

How have Christians become a part of this royal priesthood? The answer is baptism. Luther writes, "The fact is that our baptism consecrates us all without

¹⁶Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 440.

¹⁷Ephesians 2:21.

¹⁸Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.

exception, and makes us all priests."¹⁹ Through baptism God incorporates us into the body of Christ and thus makes us priests to serve in His temple, the church.²⁰

In the Old Testament priests were born, not chosen. Likewise, Walther helps us to understand that in the New Testament, priests are born, not chosen. They are born again by water and the Spirit.

Dear Christian, let the love of God have its way; it raises you to kingship; it bestows the office of priest on you. You were born a priest, anointed a priest. A born priest! In the Old Testament the priests were not chosen; they were born. The tribe of Levi was set aside for this purpose, that they had to be taken from it. Thus birth brought them the priesthood. You also were reborn through holy baptism, and into the right of divine sonship, yes placed into the spiritual priesthood, which is joined to it. . . . This priesthood, says Luther, cannot be made or ordained. Here is no manufactured priest; he has to be born a priest, and must have it by inheritance from birth. However, I mean the new birth of water and the Spirit.²¹

Therefore, all Christians are priests, and holy baptism is the effective means by which God consecrates them for this priesthood. Thus "all Christians enjoy the same status."²²

What does it mean to be a part of this priesthood of believers? Having consecrated us to be priests our God has thereby defined both the nature of our relationship with Him and our "calling to share his word with others and live together

¹⁹Martin Luther, "An Appeal to the Ruling Class" in Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings, ed. and trans. by John Dillenberger (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), 408.

²⁰Kolb, 258.

²¹Walther, 87.

²²James H. Pragman, Traditions of Ministry (St. Louis, MO., Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 14.

with fellow believers in mutual love."²³ That too is obvious in 1 Peter 2:9. First of all, as priests we are "a people belonging to God. . . . Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."²⁴ Secondly, God has made us priests that we might share His love with others. His purpose is, as Peter writes, "that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."²⁵ Walther describes these two dimensions of our priesthood as a twofold glory.

The first consists in this, that such a person can deal with the holy God himself, approach him, step before him, serve him, confidently pray to him, for himself and for others, and can offer him acceptable sacrifices. The other glory which such a priest possesses consists in this that he, as an angel or messenger and as a servant of God, can in the name of God deal with other persons, make the will of God known to them, bring them his Word, preach and interpret, and also bless them in his name.²⁶

In both his relationship with God and in his relationship with other people the Christian priest is a steward of the Gospel. God has entrusted this stewardship, what we have earlier called the office of the keys, to the priesthood of believers.

On the basis of either Matthew 16:19 or John 20:23 someone might suggest that the office of the keys belongs exclusively to the Office of the Public Ministry. After all, in Matthew 16 Jesus speaks to Peter, one of the leaders of the disciples. In John 20 Jesus speaks to all 12 of the disciples, commissioning them to be His apostles. However, in

²³Kolb, 258.

²⁴1 Peter 2:9-10.

²⁵1 Peter 2:9.

²⁶Walther, 64.

Matthew 18 Jesus is very clear that the authority of the office of the keys is an authority which He has conferred upon the whole church, not just the Office of the Public Ministry.

In Matthew 18:15-19, Jesus addresses the subject of what to do if your brother sins against you. If in the course of seeking reconciliation with your Christian brother, he repeatedly refuses to listen to you, Jesus urges, in verse 17, that you should tell it to the church. Why? Because, as Jesus makes clear in verse 18, the church has the authority to either retain or forgive sins. Indeed Jesus uses basically the same words He used in Matthew 16:19, "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."²⁷ In verses 19 and 20 Jesus leaves no doubt that the authority He has given, He has given to the whole church. In these two verses He adds, "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."²⁸

Article VII in Part III of the Smalcald Articles states, "The keys are a function and power given to the church by Christ to bind and loose sins."²⁹ Thus, we see that the keys of the kingdom of heaven are "by no means given to Peter alone, but in and through him to the entire church, that is to all believers."³⁰ "To the entire church, God's 'royal

²⁷Matthew 18:18.

²⁸Matthew 18:19-20.

²⁹Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "The Smalcald Articles" Part III, Article VII:1 in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 311.

³⁰Walther, The Congregation's, 20.

priesthood,' Christ has given the office or power of the keys, that is the power to preach the Gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer and distribute the sacraments."³¹

Walther delineates this in his fourth thesis on the church,

It is to this true church of believers and saints that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and it is the proper and only possessor of the spiritual, divine, and heavenly gifts, rights, powers, offices, and the like that Christ has procured and are found in His church.³²

Thus,

. . . as priests believers not only enjoy great rights and privileges, but also have important duties and responsibilities. Through Christ they have access by one Spirit unto the Father (Eph. 2:18). They may appear before Him in the Holy of Holies with their offerings of prayer, to pray, praise and give thanks. But having done that , they step out of the Holy of Holies, as it were, to minister to those without.³³

As members of the church every believer is a possessor of the keys and thus has the

"unfettered right to exercise the functions of the priesthood..."³⁴

What rights and responsibilities are included in the functions of the priesthood?

James H. Pragman lists six of them in his book Traditions of Ministry.

All Christians are obligated and privileged to make sacrifices to Almighty God. Second, each Christian can approach God in prayer on his own behalf and for the sake of the neighbor. In the third place, all Christians have the right to teach others

³¹Evangelism and Church Growth With Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement (St. Louis: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, September, 1987), 18.

³²C. F. W. Walther, Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt) trans. by J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 49.

³³L. W. Spitz, "The Universal Priesthood of Believers" in The Abiding Word Vol. I, edited by Theodore Laetsch, D. D. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), 331.

³⁴David P. Daniel, "A Spiritual Condominium: Luther's views on Priesthood and Ministry With Some Structural Implications" Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988) 273.

and to proclaim the Gospel for the welfare of others. Fourth Christian priests are also commanded to pass judgement on doctrines taught in the church and on spirits: they have the right to accept or reject doctrines and their teachers. Fifth, all Christian priests have the power of the keys, the power to bind and loose sins. Finally, all Christians have the privilege of receiving and administering the church's sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. . . .³⁵

Another right and privilege that belongs to the priesthood, that is, given to it along with the office of the keys, is the right to call pastors into the office of the holy ministry.

For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing and ordaining ministers.

This right is a gift given exclusively to the church and no human authority can take it away from the church.³⁶

When and where do God's royal priests exercise this power of the keys? They exercise these responsibilities as part of their daily lives, within the various callings in which God has placed them. Every individual Christian has various callings or vocations given to him by God -- as parent or child, as a spouse, as an employee or employer at work, as a neighbor and friend, as a church member and as a citizen.

Believers exercise their priestly rights and powers in the congregation and the family; a third sphere, not included in these first two, is the unbelieving world . Believers are indebted also to the latter. They must confess Christ to the unbelievers. . . . In other words, believers as priests must also be missionaries. What else could these words mean: 'That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light'?³⁷

³⁵Pragman, 60.

³⁶Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" in The Book of concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 331.

³⁷Spitz, 339.

In a sense, within their various vocations Christians are called to be bridge-builders. That is the meaning of one Latin word for priest, the word *pontifex*. Believers, as priests, "build bridges to God not only for themselves but also for others."³⁸

The meaning of all of this is that by conferring the office of the keys on all believers as members of His royal priesthood, God has entrusted the Gospel to all believers. Thus all believers, as priests, have been appointed by God to be stewards of the Gospel. Believers carry out this stewardship in their homes, at work and at school, as neighbors and citizens and in the roles they play as members of a local congregation.

From this fact Walther deduces the following conclusion -

Therefore conduct yourself spiritually; show yourself priestly! This shall redound to your honor before God and all believers: A King and a priest! . . . Therefore a Christian is to walk not only for himself, but also for others, his fellow Christians, and look after their souls. A Christian is another's preacher; one the priest of the other. It is for this that the anointing was given to him. To this end he was filled with the gifts of the Spirit.³⁹

The Office of the Public Ministry

But what about the public preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments? For this purpose God has established within the church another office, the Office of the Public Ministry.

The ministry of Word and sacrament and the public administration of the Office of the Keys is entrusted to the office of the public ministry. In a congregation, therefore, the man who holds the office of the public ministry is a steward of the mysteries of God. He is the shepherd, overseer, and elder of the church in that place. The ultimate

³⁸Kolb, 258.

³⁹Walther, The Congregation's, 87-88.

responsibility for what is taught and for guiding the lives of the flock is his.⁴⁰

In this paper, I shall refer to this office by the title "the Office of the Public Ministry." I believe that a careful examination of this title, word by word, will help us to gain a clear understanding of the nature of this office and the role played by those who hold this office in the stewardship of the Gospel.

Within Lutheranism there has been an ongoing debate over whether or not the pastoral ministry exists by divine institution. Our belief, in The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, is that God has established both the office and functions by divine command. For that reason we call the pastoral ministry the **Office** of the Public Ministry.⁴¹ Over and over again the Scriptures refer to the office of the pastor as one established and maintained by God. This office was established by Christ Himself when He commissioned the apostles. "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'"⁴² In Ephesians 4, St. Paul describes the Office of the Public Ministry as a gift from God. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers. . . ."⁴³ In Acts

⁴⁰The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature (St. Louis: A Report of the Commission on Theology and church Relations of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, September, 1981), 35.

⁴¹Emphasis added.

⁴²John 20:21-23.

⁴³Ephesians 4:11.

14:23, Paul appoints elders (a term that is used in the New Testament to refer to the office of the pastor) to be leaders in every church. In Titus 1:5 Paul writes, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."⁴⁴ The implication here is that a congregation is unfinished until the office of the ministry has been filled. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul writes, "In the church **God has appointed**⁴⁵ first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers. . . ."⁴⁶

For this reason C. F. W. Walther would write,

Therefore it was not men, not the Christians as spiritual priests, but the eternal High Priest Himself, Christ, the Son of God, and because it is a work outside the Godhead, the Triune God himself has established the order of the public ministry. It is a creation of the great all wise God Himself, and an ordinance in His church on earth, even as the secular government in the state. Therefore we read in our symbolical books: "We have a sure doctrine that the ministry of preaching comes from the common call of the Apostles." (Smalcald Articles. Appendix of the Power and Primacy of the Pope) Herewith an immediate divine origin is ascribed to the public ministry, for the call of the apostles -- whose successors in the ministry of preaching church servants are -- stems immediately from Christ the Son of God. Therefore we also read in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "The church has the command to appoint preachers and Diaconis." For that reason whoever troubles the public ministry interferes with it, abolishes it, resists it, troubles with God's ordinance, interferes with God's office, abolishes God's institution and resists God's ordinance, and will have to give God a severe account.⁴⁷

Here Walther makes the point that modern day pastors are "successors" of the apostle's in the sense that they have, as those called to the Office of the Public Ministry, been

⁴⁴Titus 1:5.

⁴⁵Emphasis added.

⁴⁶I Corinthians 12:28.

⁴⁷Walther, The Congregation's, 98-99.

entrusted with responsibility for the public proclamation of the Gospel, the same responsibility which Jesus originally entrusted to the Apostles.

Thus, by establishing this office, the Lord has provided for the public stewardship of the Gospel. This leads to our second question, Why do we call the pastoral office the Office of the **Public Ministry**?⁴⁸ What is meant by this term public?

It may be well to note that the term "public" is here used not as distinguished from "private," the public administrations being restricted to all acts being performed in the presence of the Christian congregation, the private acts performed in the privacy of the home, at the sickbed, etc.⁴⁹

This is most certainly not what is meant by the use of the word "public." The word "public" here means "on behalf of" or "in the place of." The Pastor, as the one called to the office of the public ministry, carries out the functions of his office on behalf of the congregation that has called him. He does his work as their representative. In this sense all his acts as pastor, whether done in the pulpit or privately in someone's hospital room, are done "publicly," that is on behalf of the people who have called him. "Ministers are called to serve the Word in the midst of, on behalf of, and for the benefit of the whole community of priests to which they have been properly called."⁵⁰ Hence their office is called the Office of **Public Ministry**.⁵¹

This public aspect of the pastoral ministry is part of what distinguishes this office

⁴⁸Emphasis added.

⁴⁹Spitz, 333.

⁵⁰David P. Daniel, "A Spiritual Condominium: Luther's Views on Priesthood and Ministry With Some Structural Implications." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988), 274.

⁵¹Emphasis added.

from the priesthood of believers. "The public ministry of the church is distinct from the universal priesthood and is not derived from it. It is derived from God's mandate.

Believers exercise their priesthood privately in many ways."⁵²

This is one of the reasons why only those of God's priests may serve in the office of the public ministry who have been rightly called. Our confessional documents are clear on this point. "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call."⁵³ What is meant here by a "regular call?"

A person is "called" when he. . . . is summoned by the church to the office of Word and Sacrament or to an office auxiliary to it on a full-time basis and by education, by certification, and by solemn and public act. . . .

It is God's call mediated through the church (as a single congregation or a group of congregations) as it is guided in prayer and by the Holy Spirit that makes a man "overseer" in the church. All who serve in the pastoral ministry. . . . must be called by the church.⁵⁴

The call of God through the congregation for a man to serve in this office is thus an essential part of the public nature of this office. Indeed the call itself is part of what distinguishes the office of the public ministry from the priesthood of believers. As Walther says, it cannot be tolerated for someone to arrogate this office to himself simply

⁵²The Ministry, 25.

⁵³Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., "The Augsburg Confession" Article XIV in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 36.

⁵⁴The Ministry, 29.

on the basis of the fact that he is one of God's priests.⁵⁵ This would be destructive of good order and thus divisive in the church.

Baptism makes all Christians members of the priesthood of believers. It does not make them public ministers of the church. The call of God, issued through the church, makes some of the priests holders of the office of the public ministry and thus responsible for all of its functions. The holder of such an office represents the church, but he does so as a representative of God. He is bound to the word of God and his response to the call of the church is to be bound to proclaim God's Word.⁵⁶

Please take note in this last quote that although the call is "issued through the church" it is still a "call of God." The pastor ministers "on behalf of" the congregation to which he is called, and yet, "he does so as God's representative." Even though priests, as possessors of the office of the keys, they elect to call a pastor, God is the One calling that pastor through them. Although God has given the office of the keys to the priesthood and pastors are called to exercise that office "publicly" on behalf of the priests of God, this does not mean that the Office of the Public Ministry is derived from the priesthood. The office exists, as we have already stated, by the command of God. It grows out of the ministry of Christ and the apostles.

At the same time, the priests called to this office are not thereby elevated to a higher spiritual estate than other priests in the church. Those called to the office of the public ministry do not, because they hold this office, possess a higher righteousness in God's sight. Robert Kolb, in his book The Christian Faith, helps us to understand this by distinguishing between the believer's vertical relationship with God as a priest, and the

⁵⁵Walther, The Congregation's, 88.

⁵⁶The Ministry., 26.

pastor's horizontal relationship with God's people as their called servant. As you read what Kolb writes, please note that Paul does affirm that priests like pastors have a call to witness to the Word in their daily lives. Yet He differentiates the office of the pastor from the priesthood by use of the word "public." Only those called to the Office of the Public Ministry have a call to be God's public instruments, to preach the word and administer the sacraments on behalf of God's people.

God has called all believers to approach him and to serve him as His priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 12:1). This relationship is anchored first of all in the realm of the vertical. Above all, it involves being the child of God in His presence - although it also involves worshiping and witnessing alongside other believers in the horizontal realm, in the church, where God's people are gathered by the Word in oral and sacramental forms. The public ministry, on the other hand, is firmly anchored in the horizontal realm, as a calling of service to other believers. It brings the power of God in His Word, the instrument of God's kingdom, to His priests. Thus the calling of the horizontal realm is God's public instrument for establishing and sustaining the vertical relationship of the members of Christ's body.

Those who hold the office of the public ministry do not, by virtue of their office, have a vertical relationship that is different from other members of the congregation. They differ only in the horizontal calling God has given them in the church. God calls the public ministers of the church to serve him by serving their fellow believers with the public application of God's Word to their lives.⁵⁷

If, however, as Kolb makes clear here, the call to the office of the ministry does not elevate the pastor to a higher spiritual estate, why does the Lord in His word (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1), stipulate that those called to the office of the ministry must meet certain moral, and ethical standards which He does not require of the priesthood? In 1 Timothy Paul writes as follows

Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate,

⁵⁷Kolb, The Christian Faith, 276.

self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.⁵⁸

God desires that every Christian priest, pastor and lay person, be above reproach, self-controlled, respectable and so on. However when, as a Christian, anyone of us fails in one or more of these areas, we do not necessarily cease to be a Christian. There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent and believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, a pastor who fails in these areas may not be able to continue to serve in the office of the public ministry.

Is this some kind of spiritual double standard, one for pastors and the other for other Christians? No, as we have already stated, pastors are not, because of their office, placed into a higher spiritual estate than other Christians. The reason God has required these ethical and moral qualifications of those who are pastors has to do with the "public" nature of the office to which they are called. Because this is a "public" office, it carries with it the public reputation of the Gospel God has called them to proclaim. Their reputation, their words and deeds have a direct impact, for good or ill, on the reputation of the Gospel they proclaim and the Lord Jesus whom they represent. Therefore Paul prefaces his words to Timothy, quoted above, with these words: "Here is a trustworthy

⁵⁸1 Timothy 3:2-7.

saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task."⁵⁹ Paul's point is that how pastors direct their public and private lives has a direct relation to their ability to be faithful stewards of the Gospel in the office of the public ministry.

If a pastor, because of some moral or ethical failure, becomes disqualified for holding the office of the public ministry that does not necessarily mean that he therefore no longer belongs to the priesthood. Remember the office of the ministry "is firmly anchored in the horizontal realm, as a calling of service to other believers."⁶⁰ In the realm of his vertical relationship with God there is still full and free forgiveness for the fallen pastor, as there is for any other Christian who repents. In the horizontal relationship of the fallen pastor with other believers God calls us to forgive that pastor in the same way that we would forgive any other sinner. The issue of whether or not we should forgive the man is unrelated to whether or not he may remain a pastor. The issue of forgiveness has to do with God's free grace which forgives all our sins and moves us to forgive one another. The issue of his continued service as a "public" steward of the Gospel has to do with the public nature of his sin and what kind of negative impact that sin will have on the reputation of the Gospel he seeks to proclaim.

Accordingly, the call to the office of pastor is not a call to a higher spiritual estate or to a closer relationship with God not enjoyed by other Christians. Instead, the call to the office of pastor is a call to service. This is why this office is called the Office of the

⁵⁹1 Timothy 3:1.

⁶⁰Kolb, 276.

Public Ministry.⁶¹ "This office is one of service, not of domineering."⁶² This becomes clear in Peter's own words to pastors in his first epistle:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.⁶³

All the words which are used in the New Testament to refer to the office of the public ministry appear in this passage. Each of these titles reinforce the idea that the pastor is called to be a "minister," that is, a servant of God's people. The word *presbyter*, translated "elder," and the word *episkopos*, translated "overseer," are the primary titles given to this office in the New Testament. We see very clearly that the "elders" are to be those who are "eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you. . . ."⁶⁴

The word *episkopos*, which is either translated as "bishop" or "overseer," may give the impression that this office is primarily one of authority over others rather than of service to others. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. This word and other related words used in the New Testament relate to service, not to lordship. In Matthew 25:36 the verb form of this word is used to describe the action of visiting the sick. In

⁶¹Emphasis added.

⁶²H. Armin Moellering, "Some New Testament Aspects of the Ministry Identified and Applied," Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988), 236.

⁶³1 Peter 5:1-4.

⁶⁴1 Peter 5:2b-3a.

James 1:27 it is used with reference to visiting widows and orphans. In 1 Peter 2:25, Jesus, as the one who died for our sins, is described as "the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."⁶⁵ Paul instructs the elders in Ephesus to "keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."⁶⁶

As the office of pastor grows out of the ministry of Christ, so pastors, like their Lord, are to be servants of God's people. "As Christ was the Father's obedient Suffering Servant, so His ministers are servants, even slaves. . . ."⁶⁷ Jesus made this abundantly clear when responding to the competition for primacy among his disciples.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."⁶⁸

Notice that two different words are employed here by Jesus to describe this service. One is the word *diakonos*, translated deacon or servant. The other is the word *doulos*, translated slave.

Diakonos is distinct from *doulos* in that it denotes "personal service" such as waiting on tables. This word has with it the connotation of personal, one on one, loving service. One interesting use of this word is found in Acts 6:2 where the deacons were

⁶⁵1 Peter 2:25.

⁶⁶Acts 20:28.

⁶⁷Ministry, CTCR, 27.

⁶⁸Matthew 20:25-28.

given the job of supervising the whole meal from planning and preparation to serving. They were appointed to be "stewards" of the meal.

The word *doulos* refers to a slave, one who belongs to and is totally dependant upon another. As a slave your will is subservient to the one to whom you belong. As those redeemed by Christ and called by Him into pastoral ministry, pastors are thus "slaves of Christ." Thus, though pastors serve God's people, they are to serve in obedience and submission to Christ's will, not that of His people!

In what sense are pastors servants and slaves? Paul makes that clear in 1 Corinthians 4. "So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God."⁶⁹ Please remember that the word translated here as "those entrusted" is the word for "stewards." Therefore, pastors are to serve God's people by their faithful stewardship of the secret things of God, that is the Gospel. Pastors "are not spiritual lords but spiritual servants of the Word."⁷⁰ There is no job description for the office of pastor provided in the Bible. Yet throughout the New Testament the heart of the pastor's work is "the public proclamation of the Word."⁷¹

No specific "checklist" of functions of the office of the public ministry is presented in the Scriptures. For instance, nowhere are we told specifically that an elder "celebrated communion" or that only the elders spoke the words of institution at the celebration of the sacrament. The supervision of the shepherd-elder-bishop is a supervision of the teaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments. In this way they are leaders to be obeyed in their speaking of the Word of God. They are

⁶⁹1 Corinthians 4:1.

⁷⁰Daniel, 269.

⁷¹Kolb, 278.

supervisors of the spiritual life, the faith and the Christian service of the church and its members.⁷²

This is the service, or if you would "ministry," that is at the heart of the Office of the Public **Ministry**.⁷³ Our Lutheran confessions are clear on this. "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is provided the Gospel and the sacraments."⁷⁴ Pastors carry out this "ministry" in all the places where they act as the "public" servants of the Word -- in the pulpit, leading the divine service, in Bible Class, in the confessional, with the Shut-in, at the hospital bed and at the grave. They carry out this "ministry" in the various roles they play in the life of the parish -- preacher, teacher, counselor, administrator, leader, planner, care giver and so on. In all these ways, pastors, as those called to the office of the public ministry, serve as the "public stewards" of the Gospel! They do so recognizing that both the Gospel and the people they are called to serve have been entrusted to their pastoral care.

Each person in the ministry is responsible to his Lord, who has entrusted him with the stewardship of these mysteries and treasures. He is responsible to those entrusted to his care -- to offer them, in accord with Christ's will, Gospel ministry.⁷⁵

⁷²Ministry, CTCR, 15.

⁷³Emphasis added.

⁷⁴Theodore G. Tappert, trans. & ed., "The Augsburg Confession" Article V in The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 31.

⁷⁵Jonathan F. Grothe, Reclaiming Patterns of Pastoral Ministry: Jesus and Paul (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 93.

The Nature of the Pastor and Priest Partnership

As we have seen in this chapter, our God has entrusted the peculiar church power known as the office of the keys first, to believers, who by baptism have been consecrated by God as His royal priests, and secondly, to all who have been properly called to serve in the office of the public ministry. Thus He has entrusted the stewardship of the Gospel in the local parish to both the office of pastor and to the priesthood of believers. My thesis in this chapter has been that the Lord's intention in assigning this stewardship to both pastor and priests was to create partnership between them, a partnership similar to the partnership which Paul referred to when he wrote to the Philippians, "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. . . ." ⁷⁶

For this reason and others, God has designed the pastoral office and the priesthood to fit together in much the same way that two pieces of a puzzle fit together. In order to fit together two pieces of a puzzle, they must have both similarities and differences. This is true of the pastoral office and the priesthood. Pastor and priests are best able to work together as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel only when both the similarities and the differences between them are recognized and honored.

We have already noted the most important similarity between the two. To both the pastoral office and the priesthood, God has given the office of the keys. For this reason Walther can write as follows of the priesthood of all believers and the pastoral

⁷⁶Philippians 1:4-5.

office:

Although a spiritual priest is a long way from being a pastor or public preacher, one can nevertheless by no means say that the spiritual priesthood has nothing to do with the public ministry; on the contrary, it is very closely connected with it. Only consider: what a preacher has to do is all priest's work; whether he teaches, prays, blesses, absolves, administers the sacraments, admonishes, rebukes, comforts, watches over his flock, etc. . . .⁷⁷

It is this very sharing in common of the stewardship of the Gospel, which is at the heart of the office of the keys, by which God creates the partnership between the office of the pastor and the priesthood of believers.

At the same time, the differences between the priesthood and the office of the public ministry are what makes possible the partnership which God intends for pastors and priests as they carry out the work being stewards of the Gospel. We have already noted that the primary difference between the priesthood of believers and the office of the public ministry, has to do with the fact that the ministry is a "public" office. When a believer as a priest witnesses about the Gospel to his neighbor, he does so privately. Yet when the pastor preaches that same Gospel to that same neighbor, or prays with that same neighbor in the hospital, he does so publicly, that is "on behalf of" or "representing" the whole congregation.

A second difference has to do with the pastor's call. The pastor is one of God's priests, who has a divine call from God, issued to him through the congregation, to serve in the pastoral office. As stated earlier, for the sake of good order in the church, only those who are rightly called may publicly preach the word and administer the sacraments.

⁷⁷Walther, The Congregation's, 100-101.

In a sense, through the call God assures us, first of all, that the man preaching to us does so as His representative and, secondly, that this man has met the qualifications for holding the office which are set forth in Scripture.

With all these similarities and differences, how is this pastor and priest partnership intended to work? The first place that pastor and priest come together in partnership is in the area of the divine call itself. As we have already seen, although the call of the pastor is a call from God, it is mediated through the local congregation, that is through the priesthood of believers. Because God has given the office of the keys to the whole church the right of calling a man to fill the office of the public ministry (wherein the office of the keys will be exercised publicly) belongs to the priesthood gathered together in a local congregation.

For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers.

This right is a gift given exclusively to the church and no human authority can take it away from the church.⁷⁸

This act of calling a pastor is one of the primary ways in which the priesthood acts together to provide for the stewardship of the Gospel in the local congregation. An illustration from Walther may help us to understand the nature of the partnership that is formed, via the call, between the congregation and its called pastor.

Walther illustrated the Lutheran position with the picture of Christ (the bridegroom) giving His bride (the church) the keys to His household. The bride, in turn, engages a servant, and gives him the keys to use in his duties. Though the servant ordinarily

⁷⁸Tappert, "Power and Primacy," 331.

uses them, the keys remain the possession of the bride who originally received them her Husband. . . .

The import of this illustration for church and ministry is fairly straight forward: the church, the bride, entrusts to ministers (servants) the keys (authorization to administer the Gospel) which Christ first gave to her. Still, the keys belong principally and immediately to the church and so individual Christians can, for example, baptize in emergencies. Likewise, the churches responsibility to call a servant is based on her possession of the keys as a gift and task given by Christ.⁷⁹

The distinctive roles of both pastor and priests as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel become obvious when you understand the differences between the two. The role of the pastor in this partnership is a public role. His is a public stewardship of the Gospel carried out, as previously noted, in his preaching, teaching and pastoral care on behalf of the congregation to which God has called him. Through his public proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments people, young and old, are brought to the faith, nurtured, strengthened and kept in the faith by the working of the Holy Spirit. The pastor is called by God to be a steward of the Gospel on behalf of, in the stead of and for the benefit of the priests through whom God has called him. Thus Peter writes to pastors, "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve..."⁸⁰ St. Paul urges the elders of the Ephesus congregation, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own

⁷⁹Ken Schurb, "Melancthon on Church and Ministry," Concordia Journal 15:4 (October, 1989), 448.

⁸⁰1 Peter 5:2.

blood."⁸¹ In their public office God has called pastors, by their faithful preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments, to be stewards of the spiritual lives of the priests they have been called to serve.

Parishioners are a trust, a treasure, a stewardship. Too often pastors for various reasons (some of which may be caused by the laity themselves) are afraid of their parishioners, as though the congregation or the elders or some such body, were their "bosses." Too often pastors, again for various reasons, are tired of their parishioners, as though the parishioners were all pesky children. Too often pastors are frustrated with their congregation, usually because of a lack of vision of what the church is... In reality parishioners are a trust, a stewardship, an opportunity for service: they are the task and therefore a part of the life and being of the pastor himself.

Each member of a congregation - no, let us go beyond the membership rolls, every person who comes into contact with a pastor - deserves to receive from him the ministry of the Word of God. Each such person is an encounter which provides for that pastor an opportunity for gathering more fruit to be a sacrificial offering on the last day. Each such person is to be protected, defended, encouraged, strengthened, nurtured, and kept in the faith.⁸²

This role as the public steward of the Gospel in the congregation is a very important leadership role. The pastor is very appropriately involved in casting a vision, setting goals and planning for the future work of the congregation in sharing the Gospel with one another, the community and the world. The perception that the pastor has no more authority in choosing what color the carpet should be or in what brand of computer to buy than any other member is true. The Word of God is the foundation of the pastoral office. In His Word, God has much to say about the mission of the church. As the pastor preaches and teaches God's Word, one of his goals is to assist the priests of God to

⁸¹Acts 20:28.

⁸²Grothe, 58-59.

understand the role God has given to them in the mission of the church. The pastor has been given the task, by God, of training and equipping the priesthood for the various works of service to which God has called them as stewards of the Gospel. God gives pastors

to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.⁸³

As those who hold the office of the public ministry, this is the role pastors are to play in their partnership with the priests of God in the stewardship of the Gospel.

The fact that God has established this public office and placed men to serve in this office and carry out these functions in every congregation does not relieve the priests of God of their role as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel. Nurtured, fed, equipped and enabled by God through the Gospel proclaimed by the holders of the pastoral office, the role of God's priests is to carry that Gospel with them into their daily lives -- to their families, their co-workers, their friends and neighbors and to one another in the congregation of believers. As they witness to Christ by their words and deeds, they serve as bridges across which the Gospel is taken to other people. They are to give this witness by making use of the gifts, talents and opportunities that God gives to them.

⁸³Ephesians 4:12-16.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. ⁸⁴

Thus the Lord, through His priests is able to reach people with the Gospel who might never be reached through the office of the public ministry.

Yet the role of the priest in this partnership takes place not only out in the world where that priest lives, but also within the life and ministry of the local congregation. The priest is to use his gifts and talents to aid in the ongoing work of the congregation, supporting the pastor by his prayers, his offerings, his words of encouragement, his willingness to help out and work wherever possible - consoling and caring for other members, teaching Sunday School, visiting the sick, caring for the inactive member, comforting the grieving and so on. Paul wrote, "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, **as each part does its work.**"⁸⁵ In this manner, through their private exercise of the office of the keys, the priesthood of believers works in partnership with the pastor in the stewardship of the Gospel.

Yet always, as pastors and priests work together as partners in this stewardship, it is important that they remember who is really at work through them in this partnership. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only

⁸⁴1 Peter 4:10-11.

⁸⁵Ephesians 4:16 (emphasis added).

servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."⁸⁶ Both pastors and priests have the role assigned to them by God in this stewardship partnership, yet God is always the senior partner. He is always the One who is at work. We are really only the instruments through which he works to bring his Gospel to people in need. Yet what a privilege to be chosen by Him to be the instruments He uses, to be those to whom he has entrusted the stewardship of the Gospel. What a comfort to know that God asks and enables us to be faithful in that stewardship. He does the real work. He gives the growth! He creates and strengthens faith through the Gospel. He heals the wounds of sin that we find in the hearts of those with whom we share the Gospel! Our partnership is first and foremost a partnership with God.

The partnership between pastor and priest is a partnership God desires. Robert Kolb does an excellent job of summarizing what kind of partnership God intends for there to be between the pastor and the rest of God's priests:

Pastors and people do not divide power between them, They share the power of the Word. Pastors who are "strong" strengthen their people in exercising the common callings of worshiping the Lord in all areas of life and in witnessing to the Word of God wherever and whenever they have opportunity to do so. "Strong" congregations support their public ministers in all their activities, with admonition, when necessary, as well as encouragement and cooperation. Both pastor and congregation support one another modestly and humbly. Working together in the Lord's callings, pastors and people do not worry about dividing "power" between them. They focus their concern on bringing the power of the Gospel to all who need to hear it, inside and outside the congregation.⁸⁷

⁸⁶1 Corinthians 3:5-6.

⁸⁷Kolb, 280.

CHAPTER THREE

PLANNING AS A STEWARDSHIP PROCESS FOR THE LOCAL PARISH

Now that I have defined what Christian stewardship is and who God's stewards are, my next priority is to answer the question, "How does the local congregation carry out the responsibility, given by God, to be a steward of the Gospel?" I am not referring here to how individual Christians carry out their stewardship responsibilities, but to how Christians acting together, as members of a local congregation, carry out their corporate stewardship responsibilities. These responsibilities include preaching and teaching the Word to young and old, faithfully administering the sacraments, providing spiritual care (visitation, prayer, counseling, etc.) to the members of the congregation, reaching out to evangelize the local community and supporting mission work around the world.

I believe that careful planning by the leaders and members of the local congregation will help that congregation to be a more faithful steward of the Gospel (a) among the members of the congregation, (b) as the congregation reaches out to the community and (c) as the congregation supports mission work around the world. In this chapter I will attempt to outline a planning process which the local congregation can use to develop, implement and evaluate a strategy for the stewardship of the Gospel within that congregation's ministry context.

The Planning Process - Some Presuppositions

Because the planning process is not essentially spiritual or theological, a number of theological presuppositions should guide the use of this process by the church.

First of all, we must always remember that *"all spiritual growth is a result of the effective work of the Holy Spirit."*¹ This means that although God has given us each roles to carry out in His service, He is the one who causes and empowers spiritual growth not us. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow."² We are God's servants. He has given to each of us a task - preaching, teaching, planning, counseling, care giving and so on. Each of those tasks is a part of the stewardship of the Gospel, which God has assigned to His people. As we carry out those tasks God works through us. Yet, whether planning or preaching, we must always remember that we are simply servants being used by God. He is the One who gives the growth!

Our second presupposition is related to this. *God always works through the Gospel to give this spiritual growth.* The Gospel "is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..."³ Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For the message of the

¹Dr. Glenn Nielsen, Lutheran Theology and Communication Practice: Some Propositions, A handout presented as part of the seminar DM - 928 "Communication Skills for Pastors" At Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 5-16, June, 1995 (Emphasis added).

²1 Corinthians 3:5-7, NIV.

³Romans 1:16.

cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."⁴ The Gospel of Jesus Christ is primarily and always forgiving. As noted in chapter one, by forgiving our sins, God has set us free from sin, death and the power of the devil, so that we might serve our God as stewards of His precious gifts. This gift of love and forgiveness, bestowed freely through the Gospel, motivates the Christian to be a faithful Christian steward out of gratitude for what God has already done, rather than out of fear of what God might do. Yet through the Gospel God does more than motivate our activity as Christian stewards. He also empowers that activity through the Gospel. As noted in chapter one, the Holy Spirit transforms us through the Gospel and thus enables us to be Christian stewards. What does all this have to do with our use of the planning process? Quite simply, this presupposition means that in all our planning, the application of the Gospel must be of central importance.

This leads to our third presupposition. *The Gospel is conveyed through the means of grace (the word and sacraments)*. "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."⁵ At the heart of our plans for ministry to the congregation, the community and the world, the church must always be asking, "Since these are the means through which God conveys the Gospel, how can we provide more opportunities for all people to hear the Word and for Christians to receive the sacraments?"

Fourth, as discussed in chapter two, *Pastor(s) and the other members of the*

⁴1 Corinthians 1:18.

⁵Romans 10:17.

priesthood of believers are partners in the stewardship of the Gospel. This means that both must play a vital role in the planning process. The Pastor, quite naturally, plays an important leadership role in casting a vision for the future of the congregation, as well as mapping out a strategy for accomplishing that vision. Yet the pastor cannot do this alone. The thoughts and opinions, gifts and talents of the rest of the priesthood of believers must also be incorporated into the process of developing, implementing and evaluating a stewardship strategy. Both pastor and priests must work together as partners in the planning process, if that process is to be effective.

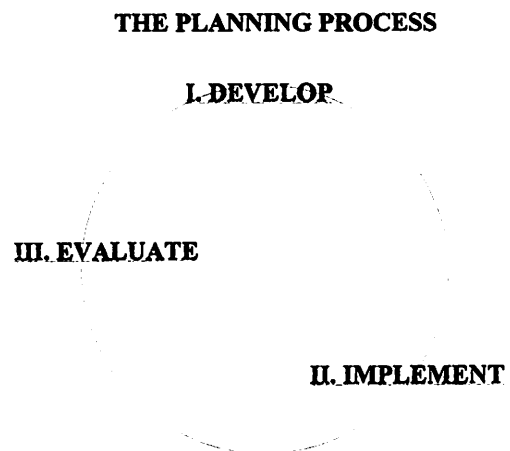
Finally, *the planning process is an appropriate function for the local congregation to engage in as that congregation seeks to be a faithful steward of the Gospel.* As long as we remember the other presuppositions outlined here, the use of the planning process is as appropriate as the use of any other talent or ability in the service of the Gospel. Indeed, the word *oikonomos*, which we translate as "stewardship" is sometimes also translated as "plan," or "purpose to be put into effect." Paul uses the word this way in the first chapter of Ephesians. "And he made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment -- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."⁶ In other words, God's act of planning ahead of time how he would save us in Christ was an act of stewardship. One could make the case that Paul had planned out a preaching strategy for his work among the people of Corinth. Paul writes, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus

⁶Ephesians 1:9-10.

Christ and him crucified."⁷ In other words, Paul planned out ahead of time a strategy as to how he would preach the Gospel to the people of Corinth. By employing the planning process we are seeking to do much the same thing as we seek to be stewards of the Gospel in the local parish.

The Planning Process

As noted earlier, there are three phases in the planning process - development, implementation and evaluation. This process is perhaps best pictured as a circular process. You develop the plan. Then you implement the plan. Once you have implemented the plan, you then evaluate your progress, which in turn leads you back to the development phase.



In all three phases, every step along the way, one essential task for Christians involved in the planning process is to pray. If we truly believe our first presupposition, that "*all spiritual growth is a result of the effective work of the Holy Spirit*,"⁸ then our prayer throughout the planning process must be that the Holy Spirit would work through the means of grace to cause the growth of God's Kingdom. Our attitude throughout the process should be the same as that of Moses as he prepared to lead God's people from Mt.

⁷1 Corinthians 2:2.

⁸Nielsen (emphasis added).

Sinai to the promised land. At that point Moses prayed, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."⁹ Just as there was no use in Moses leading God's people any where without God's guidance and help, even so there is no use in us going through the planning process without God's guidance and blessing.

Who is responsible for the planning process? The Pastor? The Church Council? The Voters? Always remember that pastors and priests are partners in the stewardship of the Gospel. In order for a plan to work both the pastor and the members of the congregation need to have input into the planning process. This will help to insure that both the pastor and the members begin to see the plan as "our plan," rather than "his plan" or "their plan."

A common temptation is to assign the planning process to the Board of Elders, or the Church Council, or some other regularly elected standing committee or Board. The problem with assigning long term planning to such groups is that they tend, because of the very nature of the offices they hold, to think and plan in one year increments of time. Those doing the planning need to be able to view the ministry of the congregation from a long term perspective of four to five years. They need to be able to dream about and plan for the future in a manner that looks beyond the various constraints that limit what the congregation can or cannot do at the present time. Thus the best solution is to assign the planning task to a special "Planning" or "Futures Committee" organized for this one specific purpose. This Committee should be made up of the pastor and of various

⁹Exodus 33:15.

members of the congregation (new and long time members) who have the ability to plan and to think long term. The purpose of this committee should be clearly stated and be limited in scope. In addition the congregation should set a time frame within which the committee will finish its work.

The Planning Process - The Development Phase

How then do you begin to develop a plan for the stewardship of the Gospel in the local parish? The first step is to *listen* -- listen to the people of the congregation, listen to the people of the community, listen to the trends in the culture and listen to God's Word.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

I. DEVELOP

A. Listen

*to the congregation
to the community
to the culture
to God's Word*

PRAY

Although only the first step in the development phase, listening is perhaps the most important step. In discussing the role of listening in the process of communication, Dr. Tom Nash writes, "You can improve your communication most dramatically by learning about your audience. If you know your audience, you can tailor your message to meet particular needs."¹⁰ In the planning process, getting to know your audience is equally important. In the case of the stewardship of the Gospel, the audience being targeted includes both the members of the congregation and the members of the

¹⁰Dr. Tom Nash, The Christian Communicator's Handbook: A Guide to Help You Make the Message Plain (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1995), 41.

community which the congregation is trying to reach with the Gospel. Once you know the interests, and needs, strengths and weaknesses, talents and abilities of your intended audience, you are then able to develop your plan accordingly. You will be able to develop your plan in a way that applies directly to those you are trying to reach. The plan you develop will then also communicate to your audience the fact that you are taking them seriously.

An important factor to take note of at this point is that listening to what people tell you means that you must be willing to receive and use feedback. "In a communication situation feedback is essential. If we get accurate feedback, we can correct misunderstandings before they become serious."¹¹ This allows you to structure your plan specifically for your intended audience. However, seeking, listening to and accepting feedback is not always easy. Very often you feel threatened by feedback, especially if such feedback sounds critical. For this reason you must work hard to make people feel that they are safe in giving you much needed feedback. Nash writes:

Before people will tell us the truth, they must believe that we really want to hear it. They must also believe we are mature enough neither to be hurt nor to hurt them with what they tell us. Building trust requires effort and consistency. In our personal relationships we must communicate clearly that we want to hear the truth. When someone takes the risk and gives me some negative feedback, I should be very appreciative. If I prove myself able and willing to hear negative truth with appreciation, others will learn to trust me, and I will grow. . . . If however I punish a truth teller by attacking or sulking, I will probably not hear negative truth from her again unless she comes to have so little regard for me that she doesn't mind hurting my feelings.¹²

¹¹Ibid. 71.

¹²Ibid., 65.

There are any number of ways of carrying out this listening step. You might conduct a survey of the congregation and/or of the community. You might hold small focus groups to which you invite seven or eight members of your target groups. Another method of listening would be to study statistical trends in the life of the congregation (i.e., worship attendance, Sunday School and Bible Class attendance, financial trends, etc.) A demographic study can be an excellent tool for helping the congregation to learn about the community around it. Invite city planners, school district officials, police officials or Chamber of Commerce leaders to come and share with your congregation how they see trends developing in your community. A number of good books are available from people like George Barna on how our society and culture will probably change in the years ahead.

The study of God's Word is also an essential part of the listening process. In developing a plan for the stewardship of the Gospel, the congregation needs to be guided by God's Word. In His word He lays out for us the mission He has given to his church here on earth. He describes for us, as we noted in chapter one, just exactly what Christian stewardship is. If we are to develop a stewardship plan, we must do so keeping with God's will and purpose. Thus St. Paul urges us as he did Timothy, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good

work."¹³

After you have done a careful job of listening, the second step in the development phase is to determine what goal the congregation is going to work towards. Only when the congregation has a clear vision of the goal being aimed at, can that

congregation then begin to develop a plan for working towards that goal. In order to do this the congregation will need to develop two very important statements -- a *mission statement* and a *vision statement*.¹⁴

What is meant by the terms *mission statement* and *vision statement*?¹⁵ First of all, "a *mission statement*"¹⁶ is a clear, concise affirmation (25 words or less) of the unique reason for the existence and efforts of the organization."¹⁷ The mission statement of a congregation grows out of what God says in His Word about the "mission" of His church.

¹³2 Timothy 3:14-17.

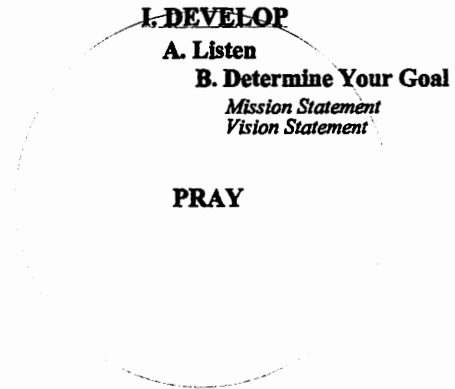
¹⁴Emphasis added.

¹⁵An important item to note at this point is that different authors use terms like *vision*, *goal* and *objective* differently, What one author defines as a goal, another calls a vision statement. What one author calls an objective, another defines as a goal. Because this can be very confusing, I will try to carefully define how I am using these terms.

¹⁶Emphasis added.

¹⁷Les Stroh, "One Step At a Time" (September, 1988), 2, photocopied.

THE PLANNING PROCESS



The local congregation, having studied and prayed about what God in His Word says about the mission of His church, develops a statement which reflects how that congregation will seek to carry out this mission within the unique ministry context of that congregation. With the mission statement the congregation seeks to answer this question: "For what purpose has God placed this congregation in this community at this time?"

Although both a congregation in a growing suburb of a large metropolitan area and a congregation in a small rural community have basically the same God given mission of "making disciples of all nations,"¹⁸ the two congregations may have two entirely different mission statements. The congregation in the growing suburb may well find itself in a community of young families, while the rural congregation ministers to mostly older couples. Thus the suburban congregation may write a mission statement which emphasizes parochial school education, while the rural congregation may emphasize ministry to Senior Citizens.

Whatever the ultimate wording, a mission statement is of primary importance to the plan eventually developed by that congregation. Before a congregation can move forward with any proposed plan, the members of that congregation must have a clear understanding of what their purpose as a congregation is. In the world of business, those companies that have a clear and accurate definition of their mission are the ones that are able to adapt to change and continue to make a profit. The reason that most 19th Century railroad companies have gone out of business is because they did not have a clear and

¹⁸Matthew 28:19. NIV.

accurate understanding of their purpose. Because they narrowly defined their business as that of railroads rather than transportation, they were not able to adapt to such changes as automobiles and airplanes. The case of the Sears Company is quite different. Sears, founded in the 19th century when America was a mostly rural nation, defined its mission as "service to people" rather than "catalog sales." For this reason Sears has been able to adjust to the changes of industrialization and urbanization by adding department stores and eventually ending catalog sales.¹⁹

In the same way the congregation that has a clear and accurate understanding of the mission to which God has called it, will be able to more easily adapt to changes in the membership of the congregation, the community around the congregation and in the world. On the basis of a clear and accurate *mission statement*, taking into account all that was learned during the listening stage of this process, the congregation will then be able to determine an appropriate goal to work towards in order to more faithfully fulfill that mission. The analogy of a retired couple taking a trip might be helpful. If the purpose (mission) of their trip is get away from the cold and snow of a northern winter, then they will probably choose either Florida or South Texas or Arizona as their destination. In the same way the *mission statement* together with what has been learned about the changing wants and needs, strengths and weaknesses of the congregation, the community and the culture will determine what goal the congregation decides to work towards.

"A goal is a description of a preferred, future condition of individuals or groups

¹⁹Kent R. Hunter, Moving the Church Into Action (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 53-54.

that contributes to the achievement of the mission statement."²⁰ The *vision statement* is the written statement of this desired goal. The purpose of a *vision statement* is to describe how a congregation needs to change and what a congregation needs to become in order to better accomplish its mission. A number of goals will be indicated in the congregation's *vision statement*. Once *the vision statement* is completed, the congregation may then wish to write out a series of goal statements which will serve to clarify what goals for the future are included in that statement.

At this point you need to understand that the *mission* and *vision* statements serve two different but related purposes. A *mission statement* is a broad statement that gives definition to the reason and purpose of a congregation's ministry. The *mission statement* is not meant to describe what makes a congregation's ministry unique or distinctive.²¹ That's the role of the *vision statement*. "Vision is specific, detailed, customized, distinctive and unique to a given church... detailing how the church will influence the world in which it will minister. Thus, while the mission statement is philosophic in nature, the vision statement is strategic in character."²²

Although writing about the mission of the adult educator, Malcolm Knowles can perhaps help us to understand this distinction:

This mission can best be described in relation to three distinct sets of needs and goals: 1) the needs and goals of individuals, 2) the needs and goals of the institution,

²⁰Stroh, 2.

²¹George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), 38.

²²*Ibid.*, 39.

and 3) the needs and goals of society.²³

This assists us in understanding the distinction between *mission* and *vision statements*.

The *mission statement* relates to what Mr. Knowles calls the "needs and goals of the institution." The *vision statement*, on the other hand, relates to "the needs and goals of individuals" and "the needs and goals of society." For the church, the needs and goals of the institution are determined by God and revealed to us through His Word. In the church we look to God's Word to discover the mission He has given to the church. The *mission statement* is the congregation's attempt to articulate that mission in terms of the local ministry context. The *vision statement* seeks to make practical application of that mission to the specific needs and goals of the members of the congregation and of the community that the congregation is seeking to reach. For instance, if the congregation has defined its mission as "teaching the Gospel to all nations," that congregation will study its membership and its community to see what specific educational needs need to be fulfilled. If the congregation discovers that there is among the members of the congregation and the community a strong desire for Christian elementary education, the congregation may then write a vision statement that states, "we will work towards starting a Christian Day School." This is how a congregation can go about choosing what goal or goals it will work towards as it develops a plan that will enable that congregation to be a more faithful steward of the Gospel.

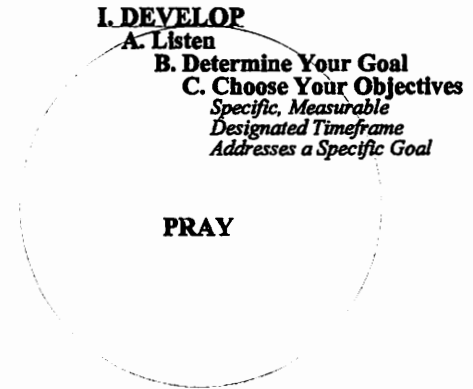
²³Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy (NY: Association Press, 1970), 22.

The final step in the development phase of the planning process is to choose the objectives the congregation will need to reach while working towards the accomplishment of the goal or goals set forth in the vision statement. "An objective is a statement of specific, measurable circumstances to be achieved by a designated time that may be attained by any number of approaches and that addresses a particular goal."²⁴

In order to understand the importance of writing objectives, let me for a moment return to the analogy of an elderly couple planning a winter trip to the south. Having chosen Florida as their final destination, they will begin to map out the route they will take to get to Florida. The couple will determine how far they will seek to drive each day, where and when they will stop along the way. In other words they will choose objectives. In the planning process, the process of choosing objectives is the process of mapping out the route the congregation will take in seeking to reach the goals described in the vision statement.

In writing objectives there are some important considerations to keep in mind. First of all a good objective needs to be *specific* and *measurable*. When an objective is specific and measurable we are then able to determine whether or not we have

THE PLANNING PROCESS



²⁴Stroh, 2.

accomplished that objective. For this reason the stated objective of increasing worship attendance is not complete. More specific information is required. A better objective would state that the congregation will seek to increase Sunday morning worship attendance by 10% per year. Related to this, objectives should be written in such a way as to challenge the congregation. An objective that is too easy will not motivate the congregation to make real and necessary changes in order to accomplish that objective. On the other hand an objective that is too difficult may have the effect of frustrating the congregation. For example, an objective of increasing church attendance by 100% per year is, in most circumstances, unreasonable and will have the effect of discouraging the congregation from even trying.

A second important consideration in writing objectives is to set a designated time by which the objective is to be completed. Having such a deadline builds accountability into the process and has the effect of keeping the process moving forward. The absence of such a deadline has just the opposite effect. In such situations procrastination becomes too easy an option. If a congregation continually puts off working towards a specific objective, it will eventually drop that objective altogether. Other activities and priorities can then more easily intervene and sidetrack a congregation, preventing it from moving forwards towards the goal(s) stated in the vision statement. The retired couple making their way south, will make fewer side trips if they have a specific date and time by which they must reach a certain objective. The same is true in the church.

One consideration in writing objectives is to remember that each objective should address only one particular goal. While the vision statement may set forth two or three

goals for the congregation, each goal should have its own specific set of objectives. The reason for this is obvious. If you throw only one ball up in the air at a time, you will probably catch that ball. However if you throw many balls up in the air at the same time you may well miss catching most of them!

Finally, having chosen appropriate objectives, the planning committee should now do two more things. First, they should prioritize those objectives. This is the process of determining which objectives are most important and therefore need to be done first! This will help the congregation to understand where to start once they begin implementing the plan. A simple way for the committee to prioritize the objectives is by majority vote.

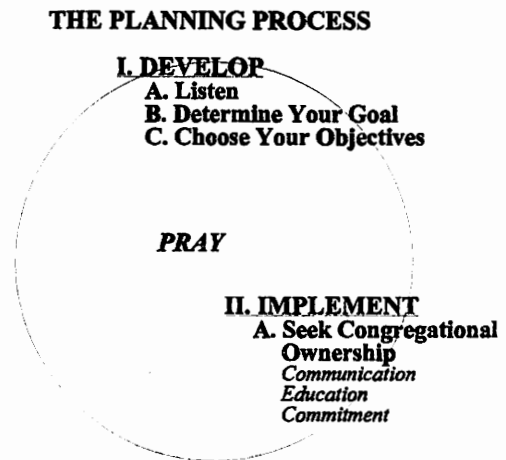
Secondly, the committee should designate what individual, groups or groups will be responsible for carrying out each objective. This process of delegating responsibility is extremely important. Each objective must be delegated to someone, otherwise that objective will most likely never be completed.

The Planning Process - The Implementation Phase

The second phase of the planning process is the implementation phase, the phase where the congregation actually puts the plan into action. The first step in this phase is to seek congregational ownership of the plan. In reality the

process of trying to get the congregation to accept the proposed plan as its own, has already been started by heavily involving the members in the development phase of the process. This was done by asking a number of members to serve on the "planning committee," as well as by the process of soliciting the opinions, concerns, dreams and hopes of the members of the congregation. At this point the "planning committee" needs to *communicate* the plan to the congregation, *educate* the congregation concerning the plan and invite the congregation to *commit* itself to the plan.

Communication and education are both extremely important tasks in the planning process. Not only are these tasks an important part of gaining congregational commitment to the plan, but they are also essential to the process of maintaining that commitment. Therefore, although the process of communicating and educating the congregation about the proposed plan begins at this point, this work does not end here. As new members join the congregation, as different members move into leadership positions, as you move from objective to objective and goal to goal within the plan - you



will again and again need to communicate the plan to the members of the congregation and educate them concerning it.

The responsibility for this step in the process falls primarily to the members of the planning committee and to the pastor, since they were the ones involved in designing the plan. As they take ownership of the plan, committing themselves to it, they will communicate that to the congregation and lead the other members of the congregation to follow them in accepting the proposed plan. The pastor's leadership is extremely important at this point. Harris W. Lee, in a book about church leadership, writes:

This is because of the central role the pastor plays in the life of the congregation. It is the nature of the congregation's leadership that more than anything influences how a congregation will function. At the center of the leadership is one who can facilitate or block the enabling process in the congregation's life, namely, the pastor. For good or ill, he . . . is at the focal point of the life of the congregation.²⁵

There are some obvious reasons why this is the case. The pastor is the "called and ordained servant of the Word" in the midst of the congregation. As the called preacher and teacher, he is the primary communicator in the congregation. He is the called shepherd through whom the Lord says to His church, "Follow Me." Pastors are leaders. "their effectiveness as pastors, as well as the effectiveness of the congregations they serve, is dependant to a great degree on how they assume the leadership role."²⁶ Thus the pastor has an extremely important leadership role to play in the process of getting the congregation to take ownership of the proposed plan. Kent Hunter writes,

²⁵Harris W. Lee, Effective Church Leadership: A Practical Sourcebook (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 97.

²⁶Ibid., 106.

God calls His pastors to lead. That means being out in front. It requires taking the initiative. It means directing, guiding, empowering, and releasing people for their work of service. It also includes setting the vision and motivating others.²⁷

Yet we must once again remember that the pastor is not alone in this task. The pastor and the members of the congregation are partners in the stewardship of the Gospel. They are partners in this planning process. In this process of getting the congregation to take ownership of the proposed plan, the lay leaders themselves first need to be committed to the program. You will not be able to lead the congregation any further than you are able to lead the leadership. For this reason the lay leaders need to be involved in persuading the congregation to accept the proposed plan. The congregation needs to be made aware of the fact that the lay leaders, along with the pastor, are in favor of the proposed plan.

How do you go about communicating and explaining the plan to the congregation? The first thing the planning committee should do is put together a booklet or pamphlet which outlines and explains the plan. This pamphlet could include any number of items - a short explanation of how the plan was developed, the mission and vision statements, the goals and their accompanying objectives. This pamphlet can then be mailed out to every member of the congregation and be handed out at every event where the proposed plan is being discussed. Even after the congregation has committed itself to the plan, this pamphlet can be used again and again to keep the congregation and its various committees focused on accomplishing the plan.

²⁷Kent R. Hunter, Moving the Church into Action (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 93.

Secondly, the plan should be brought up, explained and discussed in a variety of settings -- sermons, Bible classes, fellowship groups, congregational gatherings, informal get togethers and so forth. The important thing is that the plan is presented to the members of the congregation in a variety of formats and settings. The pamphlet and other appropriate visual aids should be used wherever possible. People will understand the plan better as you help them to visualize the changes being proposed in the plan. Care should be taken to insure that the members of the congregation are given ample opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the plan.

As the planning committee and pastor design the manner by which they will educate the congregation concerning the proposed plan, their focus needs to be on the hearers for whom they are designing the message. The question the committee continually asks itself needs to be "What will be the best way to help the hearers hear and understand our message?", not "what will be the best way for us to say this?" Focus on what best helps the audience to hear and understand what you are saying. This is one of the laws of teaching. "Teaching must excite and direct self-activity by the pupils. As a rule, teaching should tell them nothing that they can learn by themselves."²⁸ The role of the planning committee and the pastor is to focus on the hearer and his needs, not on themselves and their needs as the designers of the proposed plan!

In seeking to clearly communicate and explain the plan to the members of the

²⁸Carl Shafer, Excellence in Teaching with the Seven Laws: A Contemporary Abridgement of Gregory's Seven Laws of Teaching (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), 85.

congregation those responsible for this need to remember that not everyone learns alike.

Penny Zettler, in an article for Leadership identifies four types of learners:

Innovative learners seek meaning. They learn as they listen and share ideas. For them, being personally involved in the learning process is important. McCarthy writes, "They are divergent thinkers who believe in their own experience, excel in viewing concrete situations from many perspectives, and model themselves on those they respect. . . ."

An analytic learner says, "Just give me the facts." Analytic learners like to know the mind of the experts. For them, learning comes through thinking through ideas to form reality. They tend to have less interest in people than in ideas and concepts. They like to critique information and collect good data.

These are the people who love the traditional classroom. Straight lecture suits them well, as long as the lecturer is qualified. . . .

Common sense learners don't want to talk about something; they want to do it. Nothing is more important for common sense learners than practical, hands-on approaches. Learning is filtered through the screen of usability. A "fuzzy idea" that they can't take apart to see how it works makes them uneasy. You'll often hear from the them, "How does this work?" But they may actually resent being given answers. they would prefer to solve the problems themselves. . . .

Dynamic learners want to discover truth for themselves. Hidden possibilities excite them. Their favorite questions: "What can this become?"

The world comes to people like these in rather concrete principles, but they process it actively and with flair. They don't so much absorb reality as enrich it. . .

This group functions best by acting and then testing their experience. To best reach them, I need to make things happen in the classroom, to inject action into mere concepts. dynamic learners need variety and flexibility, which makes them greatly adaptable to change.²⁹

Those involved in communicating and educating the congregation concerning the proposed plan will need to take all four learning styles into account as they design the formats and choose the settings through which they will present the plan to the congregation. They will need to assume that each type of learner is present in each group to whom the plan is presented.

²⁹Penny Zettler, "Not Everyone Learns Alike: How to Teach in the Ways People Learn Best," Leadership VIII:3 (Summer, 1987), 29-31.

During this process of communication and education the pastor and the planning committee need to listen carefully to the questions and suggestions being made by the members of the congregation. Remain open to possible flaws in the proposed plan. Be flexible and ready to change. Take suggestions seriously and where appropriate make the necessary changes in the plan. This will both improve the plan and reinforce to the congregation that they are being listened to and taken seriously. They will know that they have played an important role in designing this plan. In other words, the congregation will get the message that this plan is their plan.

Once the congregation has been thoroughly educated about the plan, and been given ample opportunity to discuss and ask questions concerning it, the planning committee will then need to ask the congregation to commit itself to the plan. Commitment is very important. The members of the congregation, as much as possible need to claim the plan as their own.

This commitment may be sought in a number of ways. You may seek approval from the church council and voters. Rather than voting on the plan, you may survey the congregation concerning their support for the plan. Or you may ask the members to make some kind of public pledge towards the accomplishment of the proposed plan. For instance, you might seek a financial pledge or a pledge that they will help work in some manner towards the accomplishment of a particular part of the plan. If appropriate, commitment may be sought in all the ways just listed.

If you choose to have the congregation vote on the plan, there are a couple of important considerations to keep in mind. First, do not ask people to vote prematurely.

Lyle Schaller offers some sage advice on this point:

If no one can accurately predict the outcome of the voting , it probably means the vote is being held too soon. There has not been enough time for the necessary study, analysis, reflection and discussion. . . . A voluntary association can act most effectively when moving from the base of a consensus, or at least with the support of a seventy- or eighty- or ninety-percent majority. A fiftyone-percent majority is often the same as a negative vote. Perhaps most important of all, it is important to see a formal vote, not as the decisive point in the implementation process, but rather as the legitimatizing of a decision that already has been arrived at informally.³⁰

Secondly, do not create a situation where there are winners and losers by asking for a yes or no vote. A better tactic is to confront people with two affirmative choices, even if one of the choices is to continue things the way they are. This will help to produce an affirmative sense of direction, no matter how the vote turns out.³¹

The next step in the implementation phase is to write out an *action plan* for each objective. There are those who would include this step in the development phase. I choose to include this step now because this is the point at which the work of the planning committee ends. When writing objectives for each goal care was taken to clearly designate what individual, group or groups within the congregation would be responsible for the accomplishment of each objective. The implementation of the plan now becomes the responsibility of those designated individuals, or groups. As these individuals or groups begin working towards the accomplishment of their assigned objective(s) their first step should be to write an *action plan*.

³⁰Lyle E. Schaller, Parish Planning: how to Get Things Done in Your Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 148-149.

³¹Ibid., 148.

The *action plan* will describe a step by step process by which the individual or group will work towards the accomplishment of a specific objective. This *action plan* will include the following elements: (a) what activities will be carried out, (b) in what order those activities will happen, (c) by what date the stipulated activities will be completed, (d) who will be responsible for each activity and (e) what each activity will cost the congregation.³²

THE PLANNING PROCESS

I. DEVELOP

- A. Listen
- B. Determine Your Goal
- C. Choose Your Objectives

PRAY

II. IMPLEMENT

- A. Seek Congregational Ownership
- B. Write Action Plan
*Activities? What order?
By whom? By When?
What Cost?*

Each of these elements is essential to a well written action plan. Carefully determining the step by step order of activities will prevent the individual or group from taking giant leaps that might skip necessary activities. By determining who will carry out the activities and the deadline by which they must be completed, you will, once again, build accountability into the process. The development of such an action plan will also aid the process of budgeting and will show the congregation that the actions being taken are being carefully thought out ahead of time. Once costs are determined, if those costs exceed the budgeted amounts already approved by the congregation, the responsible individual or groups may need to ask the congregation to amend the budget by the

³²Dick Gahl and Dave Hoover, editors, "Planning Effective Parish Ministry" in Congregational Stewardship Workbook (St. Louis, Missouri: Department of Stewardship of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1993), Section II, C- 15.

appropriate amounts before proceeding with the implementation of the plan.

When writing the action plan the responsible individual or group should also include, where necessary, training experiences. For instance, if the objective is to start a "Caring for Inactives Ministry Team" then one of the activities that will need to be included in the action plan is some kind of training program for those who will be members of this team.

Once the action plan or plans has been written, the final step in the implementation phase is to carry out those action plans. Actually begin doing the planned activities, working towards the accomplishment of the assigned objectives. Put the plan into action. At this point the congregation, the lay-leaders and the pastor need to remember that three things are of crucial importance to the success of the plan -- *accountability* and *a willingness to trust* one another and *flexibility*.

Accountability is extremely important. Those who make a commitment to accomplish a certain activity need to know that they are going to be expected to fulfill their commitment. Set up a system wherein they know that they are going to be asked to report on their progress. Make certain that those involved know to whom they will report and when they will report. Accountability provides the discipline needed to insure that the planned activities are actually carried out on a timely basis.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

I. DEVELOP

- A. Listen
- B. Determine Your Goal
- C. Choose Your Objectives

PRAY

II. IMPLEMENT

- A. Seek Congregational ownership
 - B. Write Action Plan
 - C. Put Plan into Action
- Accountability*
Trust
Flexibility

A willingness to trust those responsible is equally important to the implementation process. If you are going to ask someone to do a certain job you must give them the authority to accomplish that task. Beware of the temptation to micro-manage the efforts of those involved. Unfortunately, when things aren't done the way we would do them, in the time period within which we would like them to be done, we are too easily tempted to intervene and do the activity ourselves, rather than waiting and expecting those responsible to fulfill their responsibilities. *A willingness to trust* means that we are giving those responsible permission to try to do things their way. We are also giving them permission to fail! A congregation will never be able to move forward successfully if this willingness to trust is absent. If people are not given permission to try and possibly fail, they will fail to try. Lyle Schaller is absolutely correct when he writes, "The greater the sense of mutual trust, the fewer the limitations on what a congregation can do."³³

Finally, those involved need to seek earnestly to maintain *flexibility* in the implementation process. The plan must never be written in stone as if there is no possibility of altering the plan. As the plan is carried out, ideas that looked good on paper may not work so well in reality. If those involved see that there is a better way to accomplish a certain objective they must have the flexibility to alter the plan and accomplish their task in that "better way."

³³Schaller, Parish Planning, 156.

The Planning Process - The Evaluation Phase

This brings us to the final phase of the planning process, the evaluation phase. During the evaluation process the congregation and its leaders take a critical look at how they are progressing towards the goals that were set forth for the congregation in the vision statement. The evaluation phase is what "allows the planning process to stay in a cyclical pattern."³⁴ In a sense, upon reaching the evaluation phase the congregation has returned to the listening step of the development phase of the process. Careful evaluation will enable the congregation to adjust the present plan, add to that plan and/or do further planning that will enable the congregation to better accomplish the goals set forth in the vision statement.

Who is responsible for seeing that this necessary evaluation is carried out? The church council should be delegated this responsibility and be required to make an annual report to the congregation. The church council may wish to carry out this responsibility by appointing a small sub-committee composed of some members of the planning committee and of others who were not originally a part of that committee. This is important because the members of the original planning committee will have a natural tendency to be biased in favor of the plan they helped develop. They will quite naturally wish to prove how effective that plan has been and this could be a roadblock to honest evaluation of the how well the plan is working. This bias can be easily neutralized by appointing people to the evaluation committee who were not a part of the original

³⁴Stroh, 2.

planning committee.

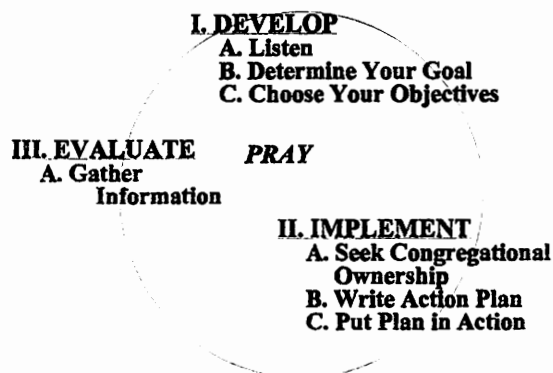
The first step in this phase of the process is to gather the information that will be needed in order to accurately evaluate how the congregation is progressing. As you will remember from the development phase, each of the objectives that were

chosen were to state "specific, measurable circumstances to be achieved..."³⁵

Appropriate statistical information should now be gathered to determine how well these "measurable" circumstances have or have not been achieved. Gather information on how closely the deadlines have been met, and how many of the activities have been carried out.

Part of gathering needed information is to survey the members of the congregation. Usually, so that the evaluation phase does not become too daunting a task, the group appointed by church council might want to ask small groups of members the same series of questions that were asked during the initial listening step of the development phase. However every three to five years they may want to once again survey a large cross-section of the congregation. The answers received may help the council's sub-committee in evaluating how effective the plan has been in bringing about

THE PLANNING PROCESS

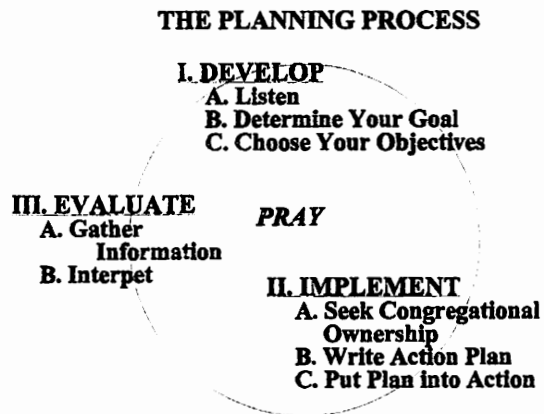


³⁵Ibid., 2.

needed change within the congregation's ministry.

Once you have gathered the needed information, the next step is to interpret that information. Ask the question, "What does this information tell us about whether or not each step in the process is contributing towards the congregation's ability to realize the goals set forth in the vision statement?" One simple way to carry out the task of

interpreting the gathered data is to ask the questions which follow. These questions are related to the various steps in the planning process.



- 1) Are the activities helping to achieve the objectives?
- 2) Are the objectives addressing the goals included in the vision statement?
- 3) Does the vision statement flow from the mission statement?
- 4) Does the vision statement still accurately reflect the needs and wants of the congregation and community?
- 5) Is the mission statement still valid?³⁶

As you answer each question, you must then ask and answer the question, "Why?" For example, if the activities have not been helping to achieve the objectives, we need to understand why. Then you will be able to revise the plan appropriately. That's the purpose of interpretation.

³⁶Stroh, 2.

The goal in this evaluation phase is to learn what has been done well, what has not been done well, what needs to be changed for the future. Recognize and celebrate progress and learn from the things that have not worked well.

As stated earlier the planning process is a circular process. The evaluation phase leads us right back to the beginning of the planning process. Using what has been learned during the evaluation the congregation is now ready to adjust or rewrite the plan in an appropriate manner.

Conclusion

There is truth in the statement that the congregation that does not plan, plans to do nothing. The failure to plan is similar to shooting a gun with your eyes blindfolded. Whatever you hit, you will hit purely by accident. Careful planning gives the congregation the opportunity to carefully aim all its stewardship efforts at a clearly identified target (the vision statement). Whether seeking to minister to the members of the congregation, or to reach out to the community around the congregation, I firmly believe that the planning process provides an excellent tool for any congregation to use in order to more faithfully fulfill its responsibilities to be a steward of the Gospel.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL
AT
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
TEXARKANA, TEXAS

How does all of this work within the context of the life and ministry of a local congregation? In order to answer that question, I will, first of all, describe how the planning process depicted in Chapter Three was implemented at First Lutheran Church in Texarkana, Texas. Secondly, I will describe how I was able to use of the opportunity provided by the implementation of the planning process to lead the people of First Lutheran to a biblical understanding of what Christian stewardship is. Thirdly, our experience at First Lutheran will illustrate the fact that the use of planning process will only be helpful to the ministry of a congregation if the pastor and the people he serves are willing to work together as partners in the stewardship of the Gospel. This will then demonstrate the validity of my belief that these three elements, when combined, will enable a congregation to more faithfully fulfill the God given calling to be a steward of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Ministry Context

First Lutheran Church was founded in 1919. The congregation remained on subsidy from the Texas District of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod throughout the first twenty-five years of its existence. First Lutheran was served during that period by a number of short-term pastorates. In 1945 Pastor Robert Helberg arrived. He was a 1945 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Pastor Helberg spent his entire ministry, some 35 years, as the pastor of First Lutheran. The period of his service as pastor was a time of tremendous stability and growth for the congregation. Within two years the congregation was completely off of district subsidy. In the late 1950's new property was purchased on the northern edge of town. In the mid 1960's the congregation built a new sanctuary, Sunday school and fellowship building on the new property. In 1972 the congregation built a parsonage on land adjacent to the church property. Pastor Helberg retired in 1980.

The early 1980's offered many challenges, victories and difficulties for First Lutheran. The congregation was served during that period Pastor D.R. Nelson. Under his pastoral leadership the congregation grew numerically. They applied for and were served by a series of four vicars. First Lutheran assisted in the founding of a new congregation in Atlanta, Texas and attempted to start a new mission congregation in New Boston, Texas. In the years which followed Pastor Nelson's ministry, the congregation was gripped by controversy when one of the former vicars was arrested and convicted for the murder of his wife. This controversy, combined with a long vacancy, made this a particularly difficult period for the congregation.

Then, in 1987, the Rev. William Ellis became Pastor of First Lutheran. The two and a half years of his pastorate were a time of healing and renewed growth. One of the hallmarks of his brief pastorate was a renewed emphasis on the study of God's Word. Pastor Ellis took a call and left First Lutheran in September, 1989.

After a brief vacancy, I became Pastor of First Lutheran Church on February 4th, 1990. During my tenure here as Pastor, the paramount question has been, "How can we, at First Lutheran, be more faithful stewards of the Gospel?"

This question was understood as a stewardship question as a result of my growth through the Doctor of Ministry program and as a result of the self-study and planning process the congregation undertook in 1994. One of the most obvious conclusions of that self-study was that Christian stewardship was one area wherein First Lutheran needed to grow. For this reason, I chose stewardship as my area of study for this Major Applied Project.

While studying for this project, I have come to understand that Christian stewardship is much more than faithfully managing our time, talents and treasure. The goal and purpose of Christian stewardship is to be faithful stewards of the Gospel. The primary purpose of Christian stewardship is to fulfill the Great Commission which Christ has given to His church. In this way I came to understand that the purpose of the self-study and planning process, undertaken First Lutheran in 1994, was to answer the question, "How can we, as a congregation, be more faithful stewards of the Gospel that has been entrusted to us?"

In this chapter, I intend to reflect on that self-study and planning process, which

began in 1994 and continues until today. I believe that there is much that the church at large can learn from our experiences here at First Lutheran. The experiences of First Lutheran are an excellent case study that provides us with a practical application of the theological issues raised in chapters one and two, and the practical issue of planning described in chapter three.

The Planning Process at First Lutheran

Before we proceed I must confess that although the planning process implemented at First Lutheran to a large extent parallels the process described in chapter three, the process described in that chapter is a refinement of the process we used. In fact, many of the points which I make in chapter three are the result of what we learned about planning through both our successes and failures at First Lutheran.

When I first became pastor of First Lutheran in February, 1990, the congregation engaged in a small scale self-study process. One of the results of that process was the formation of a "Futures Committee." This committee was charged with developing a long range plan for expanding the staff and adding to the physical facilities of the congregation. After three years of stops and starts, successes and failures, the Futures Committee recommended in the fall of 1993 that the congregation engage in a long term planning process with the help and guidance of the Rev. Norm Hein a consultant employed by Lutheran Social Services of the South.

We engaged the Rev. Hein primarily because the services he offered as a consultant were different from those offered by other church consultants. Unlike other consultants he did not offer to come and do the self-study for us. He did not offer to

develop a plan for First Lutheran which we could then take and implement. Indeed, the Rev. Hein's role as a church consultant was very limited. His role was quite simply to train us in the planning process so that we could then develop and implement our own plan. The members of the Futures Committee saw this as the primary advantage of the services offered by the Rev. Hein. We at First Lutheran would do all the work of developing, implementing and evaluating a long range plan for the ministry of First Lutheran. This would provide an excellent opportunity to put into practice the pastor/priest partnership which I described in chapter two. In this way, the plan that we developed and implemented would be First Lutheran's plan and not a plan developed by someone else for the congregation. As stated in chapter three, congregational ownership of the plan is always of critical importance to the successful implementation of that plan.

Developing a Plan for First Lutheran

The listening step of the planning process outlined by the Rev. Hein involved seeking the answers to three important questions - 1) "Who are we?" 2) "Where are we?" 3) "Why are we?" Based on the answers to these three questions we would then be able to formulate the answer to a fourth question - "What should we do?"

The first question - "Who are we?" - asked us to reflect on who we were as a congregation. We sought the answer to this question by a) examining the history of the congregation (already briefly described in the introduction to this chapter), b) taking a close look at the congregation's facilities and grounds, c) scrutinizing the financial and membership growth trends of the congregation over the past ten years, and d) by

conducting an extensive survey of a large cross section of the congregation's membership.

When we examined the history of First Lutheran a couple of lessons became obvious. First, the short tenure of many of First Lutheran's pastors has always seemed to have a detrimental effect on the growth of the congregation. In contrast to this, the long tenure of Pastor Helberg parallels the congregation's only period of sustained growth. Secondly, First Lutheran has had the courage to move from one location to another within the community in order to build newer, bigger facilities which would be able to accommodate the future growth of the congregation's membership. That fact leaves open the possibility that the congregation may be willing to do so again, should this prove necessary in the future. Finally, a study of the congregation's history also reveals that First Lutheran has not engaged in any major building project or incurred any major debt since constructing the new church in the mid 1960's.

First Lutheran Church is located on three and a half acres of ground, on one of Texarkana's major boulevards. At the time when the congregation began the planning process, the buildings included an office center with three offices and a workroom, a sanctuary with a capacity of 250, a Sunday School area with nine rooms (7 were used for classrooms, one for a nursery and one for an office), and a fellowship hall which can comfortably seat about 100 to 120 for a sit down dinner. There are also two church-owned houses on the property and one garage (used for yard equipment storage). On the east side of the church, next to the Sunday School and Fellowship Hall, is a parking lot with spaces for about 75 vehicles.

There are many strengths to this present facility. One obvious strength is the

highly visible, easy to find location of the church on one of Texarkana's busiest roads. A second strength would be the size and layout of the Sanctuary. With a capacity of up to 250, the Sanctuary is large enough to accommodate growth by simply adding a second Sunday Service and then possibly an evening service. The sanctuary is laid out in such a way that no matter where you sit, you are close to the front. Another strength would be the size of the property on which the buildings are located. There seems to be adequate room for future expansion.

As I describe the weaknesses of First Lutheran's facilities, I will be describing those facilities as they existed when we began the planning process. For this reason I will describe the facilities using the past tense. Please understand that although I use the past tense, many of these weaknesses still exist.

Unfortunately there were a number of glaring problems. For one thing the bathrooms were small and cramped, totally inadequate when compared to the size of the facility and of the congregation.

Although large, the balcony was poorly laid out and has a circular staircase that made access difficult even for people who have only the slightest handicap or disability. The Allen Organ in the balcony was thirty years old, outdated, in need of many repairs, and no longer able to make many of the musical sounds it was designed to make.

Another problem with the Sanctuary had to do with the narthex, which was narrow and poorly lit. This had the effect of limiting fellowship among the members before and after the service. If too many people stood around in the narthex prior to the service, this hindered others from entering the church. As people left a worship service

the narrow design of the narthex served to push people out the door and to their cars.

Because the Sanctuary relied primarily on natural lighting from outside and on recessed lights in the ceiling, poor lighting was a problem on dark cloudy days and during evening services.

The entire facility was in poor repair and dirty. There were many leaks in the roof in various sections of the buildings. The heating and air-conditioning system was antiquated and costly to operate. Throughout the building there were ceiling tiles that needed to be replaced, as well as walls and doors that needed to be painted.

In the Sunday school area many walls which had been damaged by termites and water leaks were badly in need of repair. The Sunday school hallway was narrow, and poorly lit. The classrooms were inadequate and unable to handle the number of children that attended Sunday school. There was no room for growth and no room for additional adult class offerings.

The fellowship hall, while adequate for one good sized adult class, was far too cramped for fellowship events and dinners that involved large numbers of members. The kitchen had good equipment but was cramped and had very little storage space. The result was that the kitchen often looked messy and unkempt. Indeed, many items from the kitchen overflowed into the fellowship hall area. The brick walls in the fellowship hall were dirty and in need either of painting or of some kind of cleaning.

The office space was also far too cramped. This was especially evident in the secretary's office, which also served as a reception area. More than one or two visitors could cause the office to feel extremely overcrowded. Although there were many file

cabinets, shelves and cabinets, these were full and overflowing. The workroom was full of office equipment with very little room to move around. One of the most glaring problems of the present facilities was the lack of storage. Even after much that was not needed anymore was thrown out, the existing storage areas were still cramped and overflowing.

The parking lot, although large, was full every Sunday and some cars were parked on the street. The parking lot needed to be striped in order to provide for more efficient use of the available space.

What does all this have to do with the stewardship of the Gospel at First Lutheran? For one thing, the repair and cleanliness of the facilities are a non-verbal part of the witness First Lutheran gives to the community. Visitors to First Lutheran will form an opinion of the congregation, at least in part, based on what they see. As Christ's ambassadors, how we care for our facilities will ultimately reflect on the Lord whom we represent. A building in poor repair also has a detrimental effect on the morale of the congregation's membership.

There is a second respect in which the facilities are related to the congregation's efforts to be a faithful steward of the Gospel. For one thing, the size of the classrooms limited in both size and numbers how large our Sunday School program could grow. It also limited the number and size of Sunday morning adult classes. The small size of our fellowship hall discouraged people from attending events, because the hall was too crowded and cramped, or because of a long wait to get food and be seated.

As part of answering the question - "who are we?" - we also carefully studied the

congregation's financial and membership statistical trends over a ten year period. First of all, we looked at the trends in total membership and average worship attendance from 1980 through 1993.¹ This is pictured in Chart # 1 on the next page.

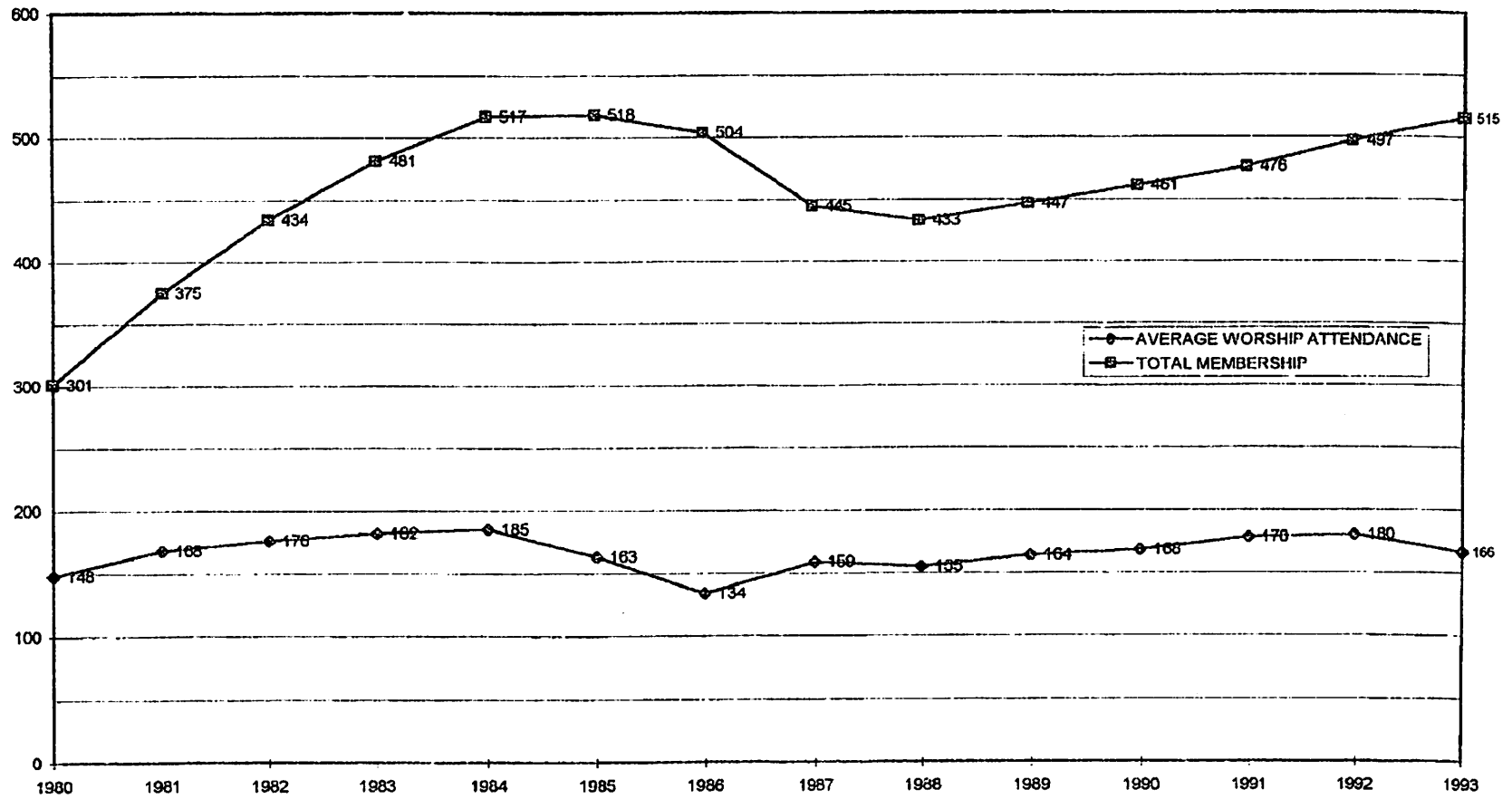
As we looked at this chart a couple of things become obvious. First of all, the dip in membership and average worship attendance between 1984 and 1986 reflects the pastoral vacancy that occurred within the congregation at the time, as well as the crisis surrounding the fact that during that same period of time a former vicar of the congregation was found guilty of murdering his wife. The dip in worship attendance in 1993 reflects the fact that I served a vacant congregation during that period. Secondly, when we examined this chart we noticed that both total membership and average worship attendance grow between 1980 and 1984, and then again between 1987 and 1992. However, during both periods total membership increases at a much faster rate than average worship attendance. In the third place, in both the 1980's and in the 1990's average worship attendance inched up towards the 200 mark and then fell back again.

How did we interpret this information? First of all, this chart reflects the importance of the pastor as leader of the congregation. This is reflected by the negative impact that a vacancy in the pastoral office and the scandal involving a former vicar had on both membership and on worship attendance. Secondly, we noted that the rapid growth in total membership without a correspondingly rapid growth in average worship

¹You will notice that the period 1980 through 1993 encompasses a 14 year rather than a ten year period. We choose to do this because 1980 marked the end of Pastor Helberg's 35 year ministry at First Lutheran. We felt that starting here rather than in 1984 would give us a more accurate picture and understanding of the membership trends we were trying to track.

CHART # 1

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP / AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE 1980 - 1993



attendance could point to any number of problems in the way the congregation was fulfilling its responsibility to be a steward of the Gospel. This chart made two facts quite obvious to us. First, there were a large number of non-attending, inactive members who belonged to First Lutheran. Secondly, we, as a congregation, were having trouble growing our worship attendance past the 200 mark.

As we continued forward in this self-study process, we needed to pay attention to a number of important issues. We needed to listen carefully in order to answer the following questions. Why does First Lutheran have so many inactive members? Do we have a problem assimilating new members? If so, what is the nature of that problem? Do we need to develop some kind of a process for reaching out to inactive members and for preventing active members from becoming inactive? Why has First Lutheran been unable to grow past the 200 mark in average worship attendance? Is the size of our sanctuary limiting our weekly worship attendance? Do we need to add a second weekly worship service? Is our ministry staff large enough? With over 500 baptized members and with close to 200 worshipping every Sunday, have we reached the point where we need to add to our ministry staff? If so, what kind of staff should we add? Do we need to evaluate the style and conduct of our worship services? Could this be part of the reason that average attendance has stagnated below the 200 mark?

The second set of trends we looked at had to do with our the program of Christian education offered at First Lutheran. After all, if the primary purpose of Christian stewardship is glorifying God "by making disciples of all nations. . .," then Christian education of young and old is one of the central stewardship tasks of the local

congregation. Therefore, we needed to examine our stewardship of the Gospel in this area.

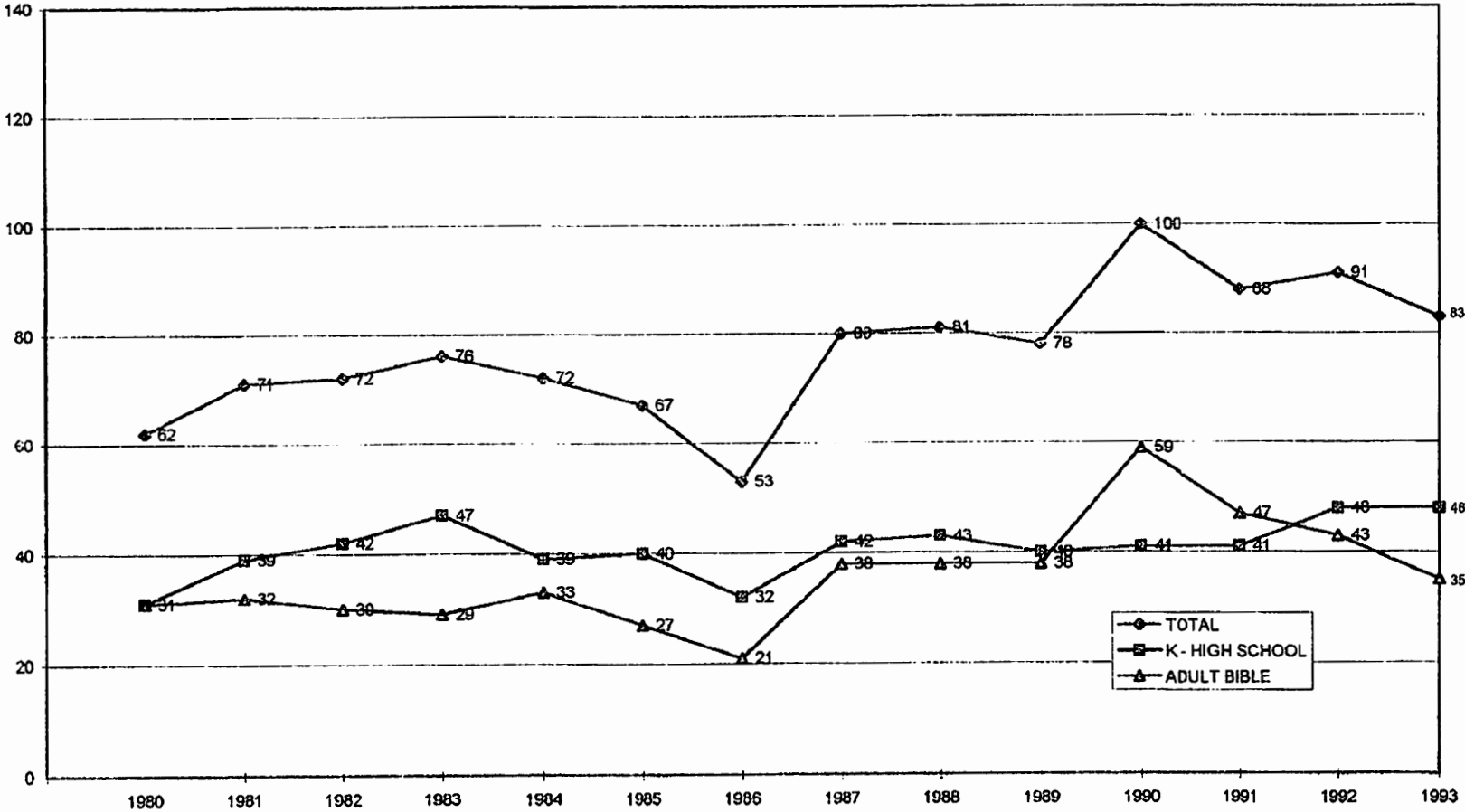
In 1993, the program of Christian education offered by First Lutheran Church was similar to that offered by most other middle sized Missouri Synod congregations around the country. On Sunday mornings we offered a Sunday School program for children, 3 years old through the 12th grade, and one class for adults. On Wednesday afternoons, between September and the end of April, we offered a midweek school program for children in grades 5 through 8. The purpose of this program was to prepare our children for confirmation. Each Summer we offered a one week Vacation Bible School program for children. For adults we offered a weekly Bible Study on Tuesday Mornings, as well as at least one evening class a week. At least twice a year, in the Spring and in the Fall, this evening course was a twelve week Adult Confirmation Course.

The first set of educational statistics which we examined had to do with average attendance at weekly Sunday School programs for children and adults. Chart # 2, on page 113, pictures for us trends in Sunday School attendance for children and adults, between 1980 and 1993.

As this chart makes clear, total Sunday School attendance is up compared with levels 13 years ago. In 1990 there was an upward spike in attendance, due at least in part to the fact that as a new pastor the first class I taught on Sundays was a class on the book of Revelation. The dip in attendance in 1993 is attributable to the fact that I was serving a vacancy and that therefore the adult class was taught by a layman. In general attendance among the children has stagnated between forty and fifty a Sunday.

CHART # 2

FIRST LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 1980 - 1993

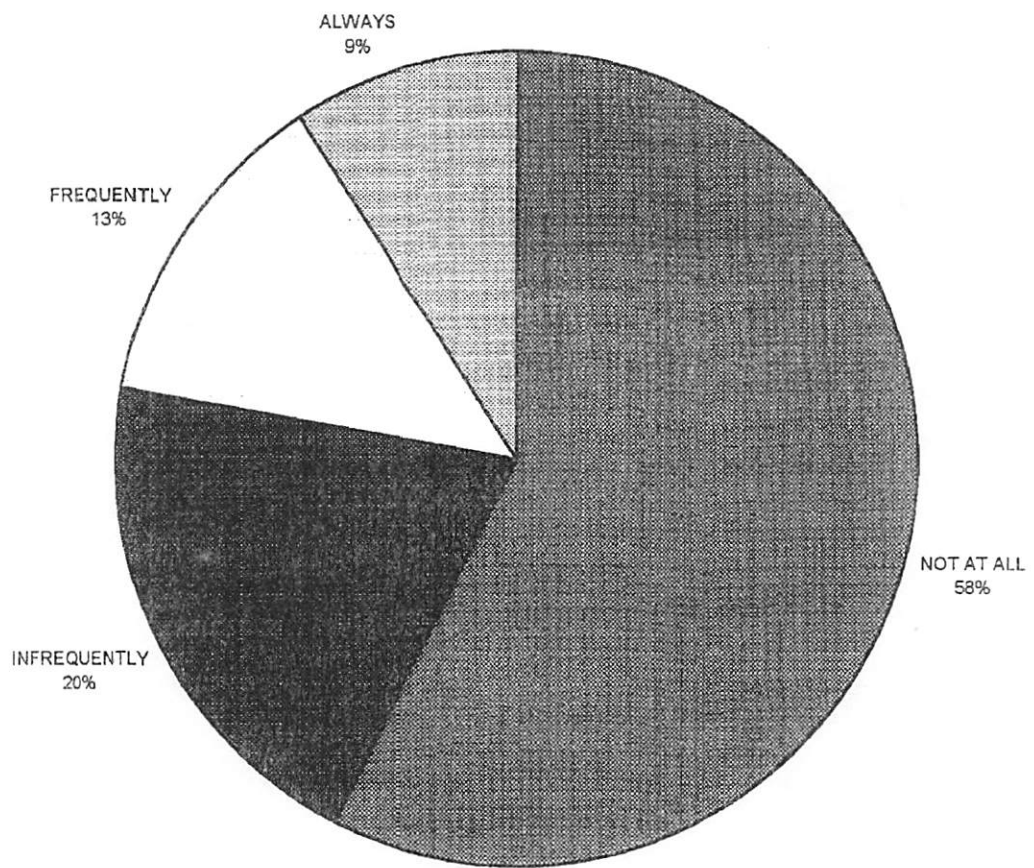


Because of this stagnation in Sunday school attendance, we determined that we needed to explore this issue more closely. Therefore, we decided to examine what percentage of First Lutheran's total membership attended Sunday School and how frequently. We looked only at the year 1993. What we learned was that over 57% of the membership of the congregation did not attend Sunday School at all. 20% of the members attended infrequently (less than 14 times in 1993). Approximately 13% attended Sunday School frequently (15 to 33 times) and only 9% attended almost every Sunday. This is pictured in chart # 3 on page 115. If you expand this beyond Sunday School and examine what percentage of adult members are involved in any kind of Bible Study, the percentage of those not involved at all rises to 61%. Only 39% of First Lutheran's adult members attended at least one session of adult Bible study during 1993.

Once again, the statistics pictured by these charts raised a number of questions for the Futures Committee. Why had Sunday School attendance among children and youth stagnated at just below 50 a Sunday? Was the availability of space for Sunday School classes and the small size of our classrooms limiting the growth of our Sunday School? Why was attendance at our adult classes so low? Was the growth of our adult education program being held back by the fact that all our adult classes were being taught by the Pastor? Did we need to provide a greater variety of types and sizes of classes in order to attract more adults? Did we need to begin offering classes for adults taught by lay people, in addition to the classes taught by the pastor? Did space limitations hinder the congregation from offering more than one adult class per Sunday? Did we need to add more ministry staff in order to be able to expand our adult education program?

CHART # 3

FREQUENCY OF SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE - 1993



As we examined the makeup of First Lutheran in 1993 according to sex and age, we discovered, first of all, that 54% of the congregation was female. This is depicted in chart # 4 on the next page. This, naturally led us to the question, "Why are there more females than males?" The answer seemed to be found primarily by examining the makeup of the congregation according to both age and sex. This is pictured in chart # 5 on page 118. The inverted pyramid pictured in this chart clearly shows, I believe, that First Lutheran is an aging congregation. In 1993 the average age of a member of First Lutheran was 38. There appears to be two or three primary reasons for the fact that First Lutheran is made up of a majority of female members. First, the fact that females, in the age group 65 and older, represent 9 % of the total membership, while the males in this age group represent only 6% of the total, indicates that we have quite a few female widows in the congregation. In fact, the records showed that first Lutheran had twentyfive widows in this age groups as compared with only 1 widower. A second age group which reflects a similar discrepancy is the 35 to 44 year old group. The females in this group make up 10% of the total membership while the males makeup 8 % of the total. This most likely reflects two things. First, that we have large number of single females (some divorced) and secondly, that we have a number of families where the wife is a member but not the husband.

How does all this affect the manner in which we seek to be stewards of the Gospel? For one thing, we may need to focus some of our ministry efforts on issues that are important to women, particularly those who are single, divorced or widowed. Secondly, could the fact that we have fewer men than women be an indication that we are

CHART # 4
1993 MEMBERSHIP

First Lutheran Church

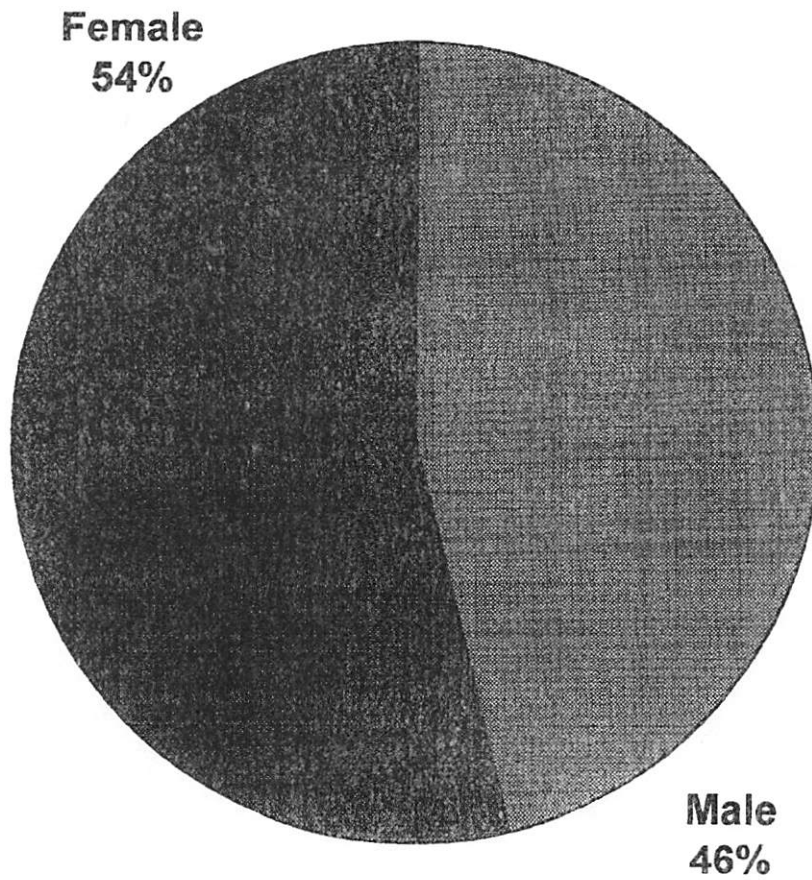
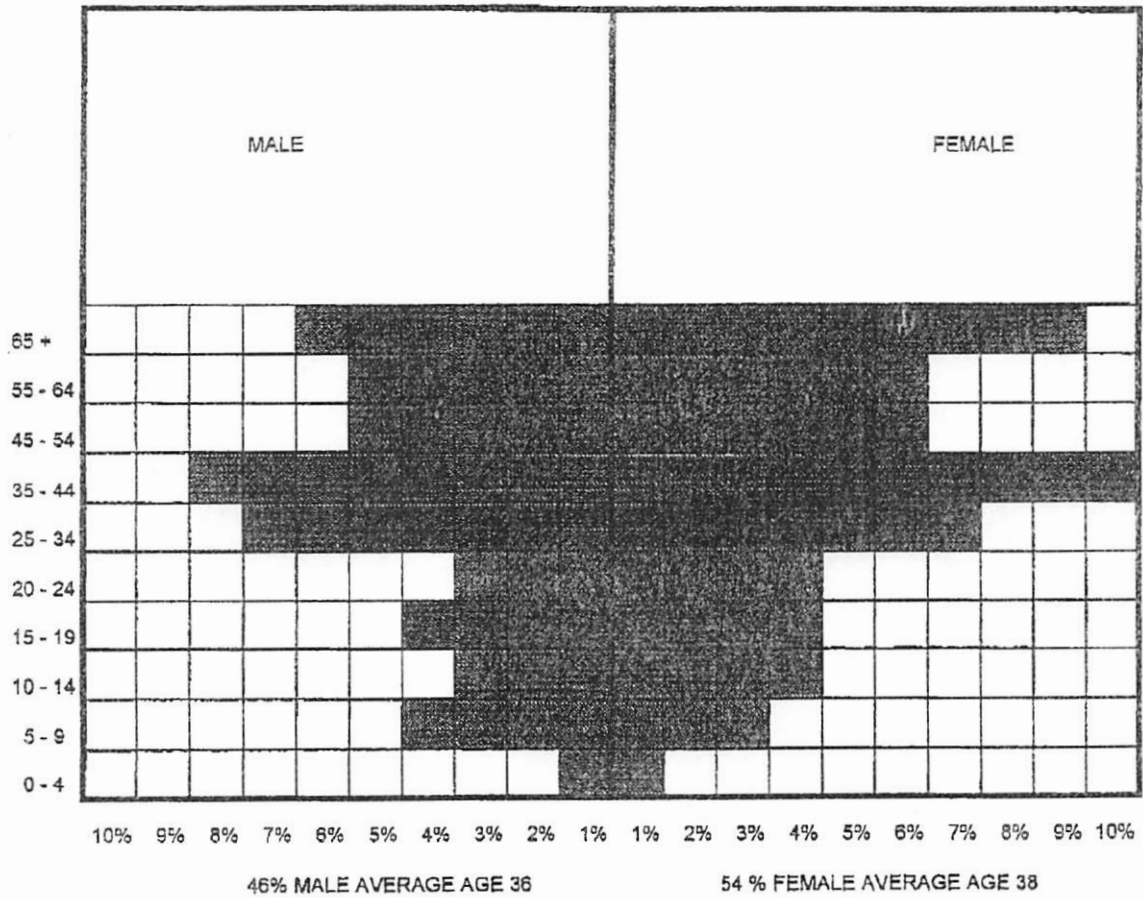


CHART # 5
% POPULATION BY AGES
MALE / FEMALE



not addressing issues that are of importance to men? In the third place, what can we do to attract young adults, couples and families into our congregation?

This last question is an important one for our congregation to address since other information we collected in our study of the congregation reinforced the fact that the young adults of First Lutheran have a lower level of commitment to and ownership in the mission and ministry of this congregation. For instance, we found that in each of the three age groups 36 to 50, 51 to 65, and over 65, the members in each of those age groups were giving 30% or better of the total financial contributions to the congregations ministry. The group of members between 26 and 35 gave only 10% of total contributions. We also found that 90% of the leaders of the congregation belonged to the groups 36 years of age and over. While this may all reflect the fact that those 26 to 35 have fewer resources from which to give, these statistics may also indicate that this age group feels little or no ownership in the ministry of the congregation. What can we as a congregation do to strengthen our stewardship of the Gospel within this age group?

The next four charts reflect the manner in which First Lutheran grew and/or declined in membership between 1983 and 1993. Chart # 6, on page 120, reflects the increase and decrease in membership due to either birth or death. Because the congregation does not keep statistical records of births, this number reflects the number of infant baptisms performed in those years.

Chart # 7, on page 121, provides a picture of the number of members gained or lost due to transfers from or to another Lutheran congregation.

The information pictured on chart # 8, page 122, reflects how many members the

CHART # 6

NATURAL INCREASES / DECREASES 1983 - 1993

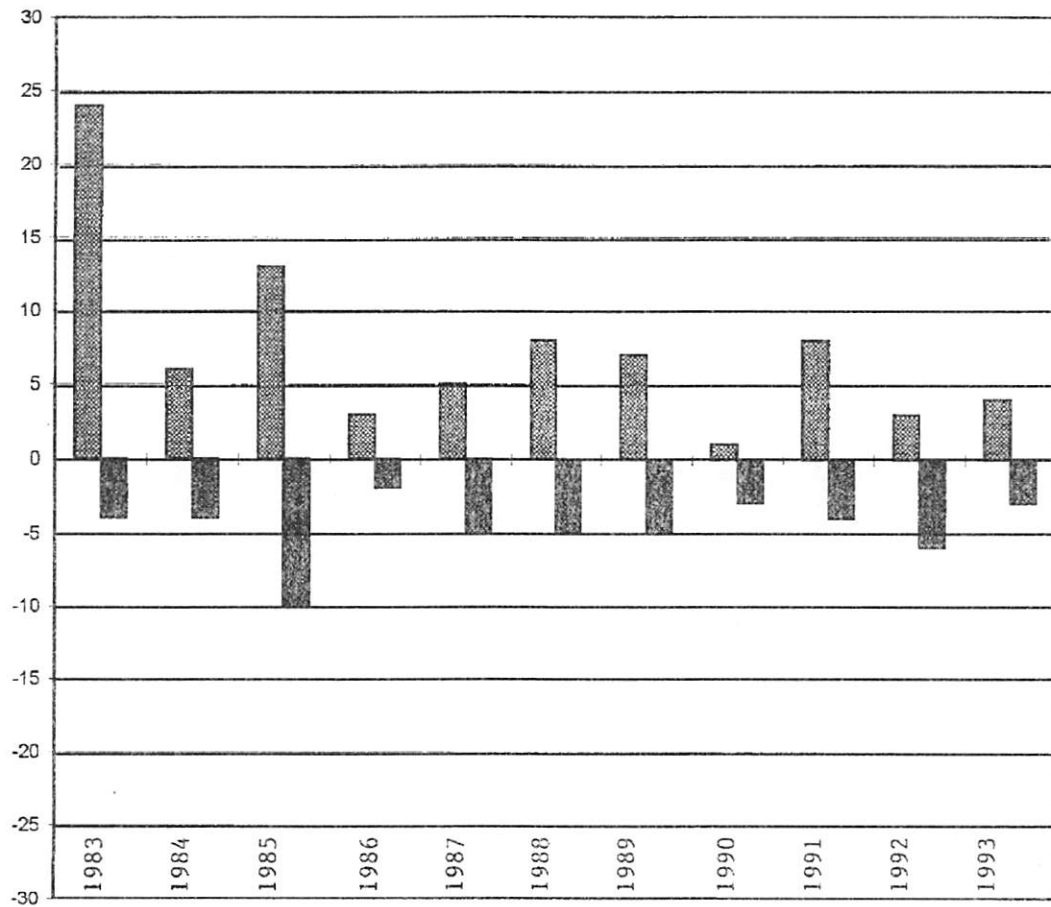


CHART # 7

TRANSFER INCREASES / DECREASES 1983 - 1993

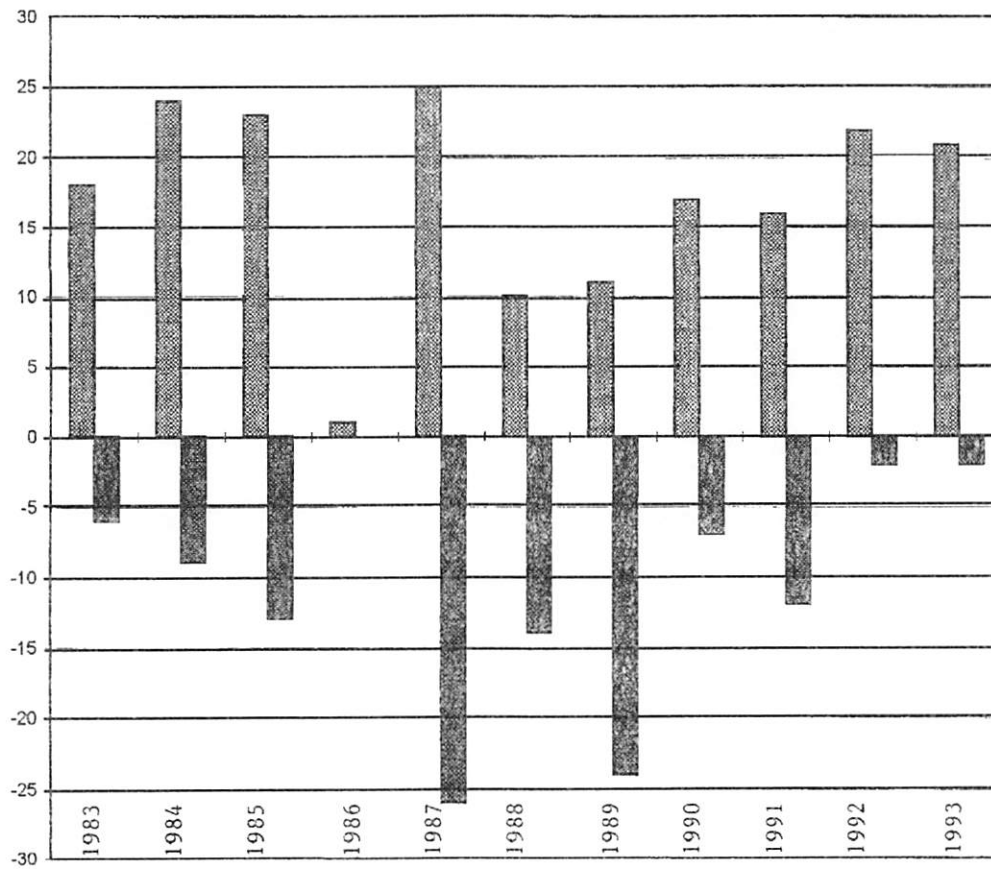
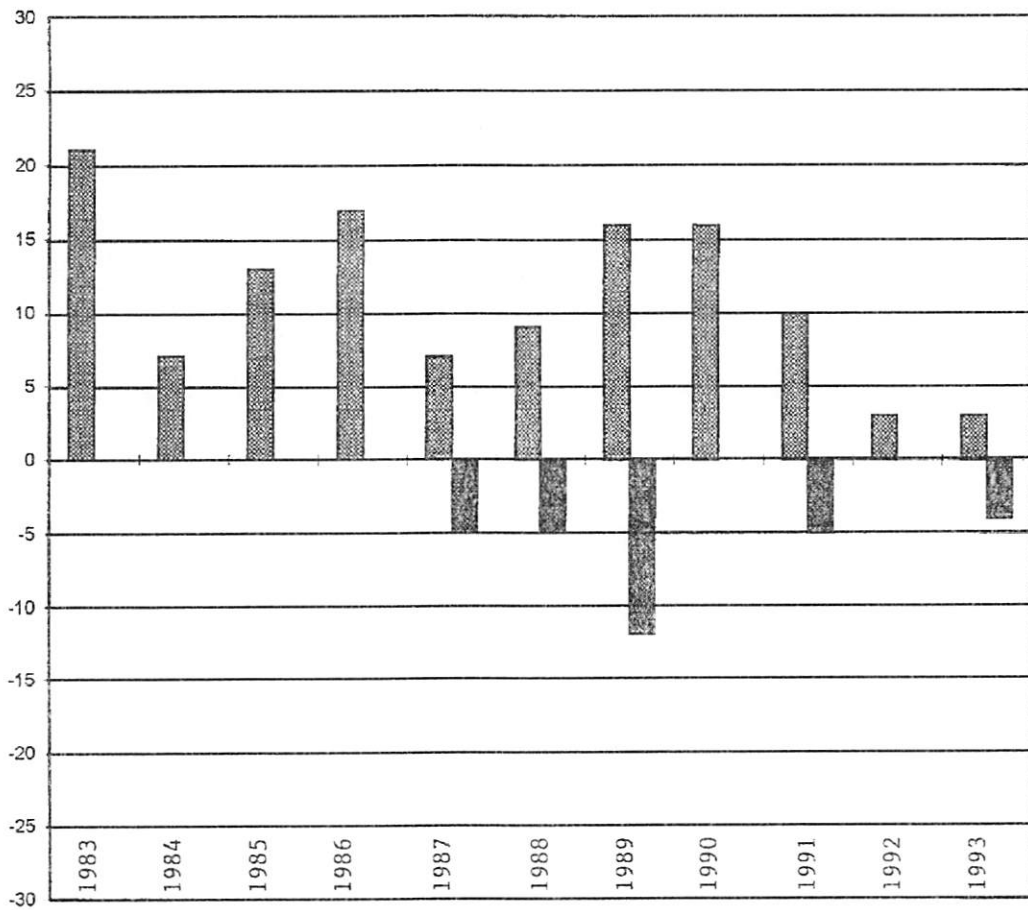


CHART # 8 OUTREACH INCREASES / DECREASES 1983 - 1993

Non - Lutheran Members Gained / Members Released



congregation gained by means other than infant baptism or transfer. This would include adult baptisms, adult confirmations, and professions of faith. The numbers pictured below the 0 bar reflect those members released from membership in the congregation.

Chart # 9, page 124, is a composite of all the information pictured in charts 6, 7 and 8. This chart attempts to give us a picture of the total growth trends in congregational membership between 1983 and 1993.

The primary things we learn from this information is that while First Lutheran has done a good job of bringing in other Lutherans, the congregation's outreach to non-Lutherans has been relatively weak. The strongest period of growth from the outside seems to have been between 1983 and 1987. However, one needs to remember that this growth in membership was not accompanied by similar growth in average worship attendance. This would seem to indicate that First Lutheran was not doing a consistently effective job of assimilating those new members into the life and ministry of the congregation.

As we examined the ministry at First Lutheran from a statistical point of view, the final area which we examined was the congregation's finances. In examining the congregation's financial stewardship, we compared congregational contributions with expenses between 1987 and 1993.

What we discovered, as pictured in Chart # 10, on page 125, was a glaring weakness in the stewardship of giving. In only one year, between 1987 and 1993, did the contributions made by members of the congregation meet and exceed the congregation's expenses. That happened in 1991 when contributions for the year totaled \$ 130,286,

CHART # 9 MEMBERSHIP INCREASES / DECREASES 1983 - 1993

COMPOSITE

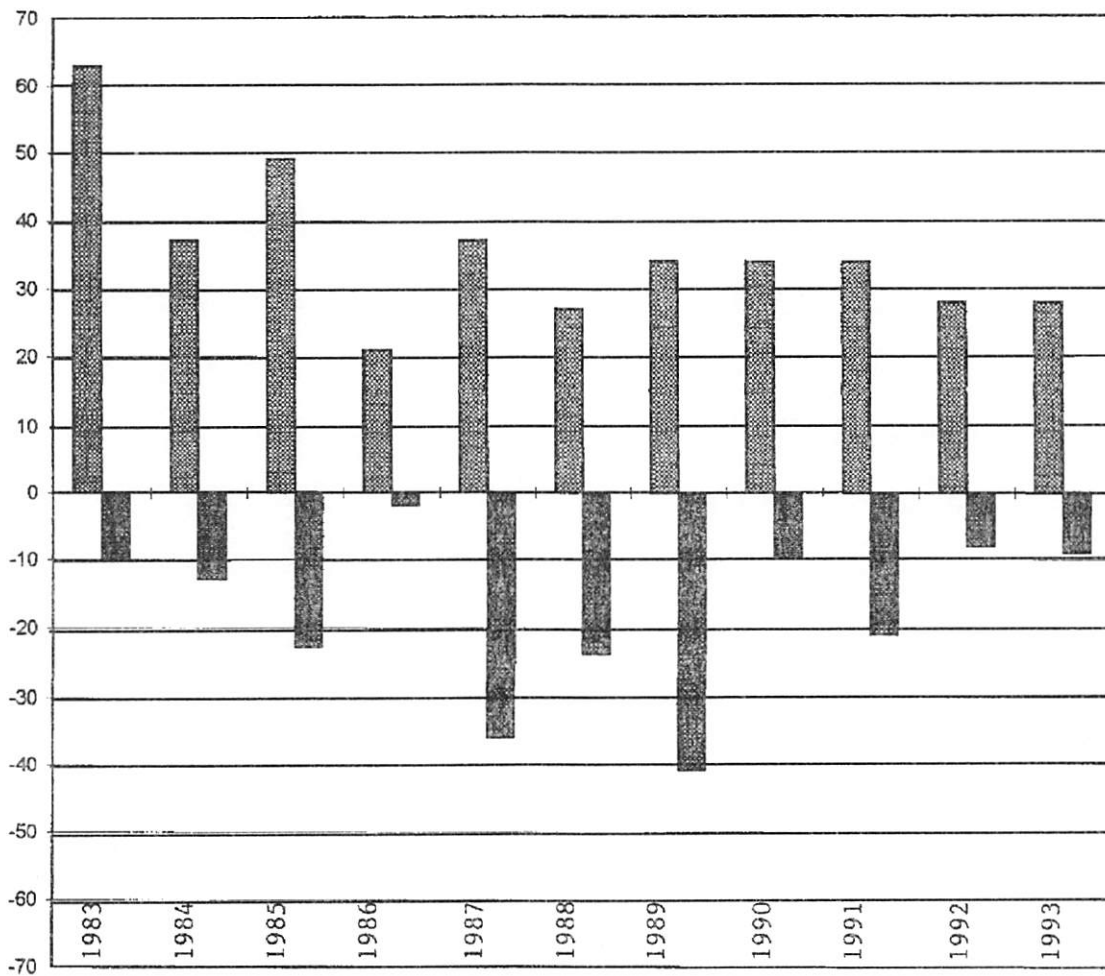
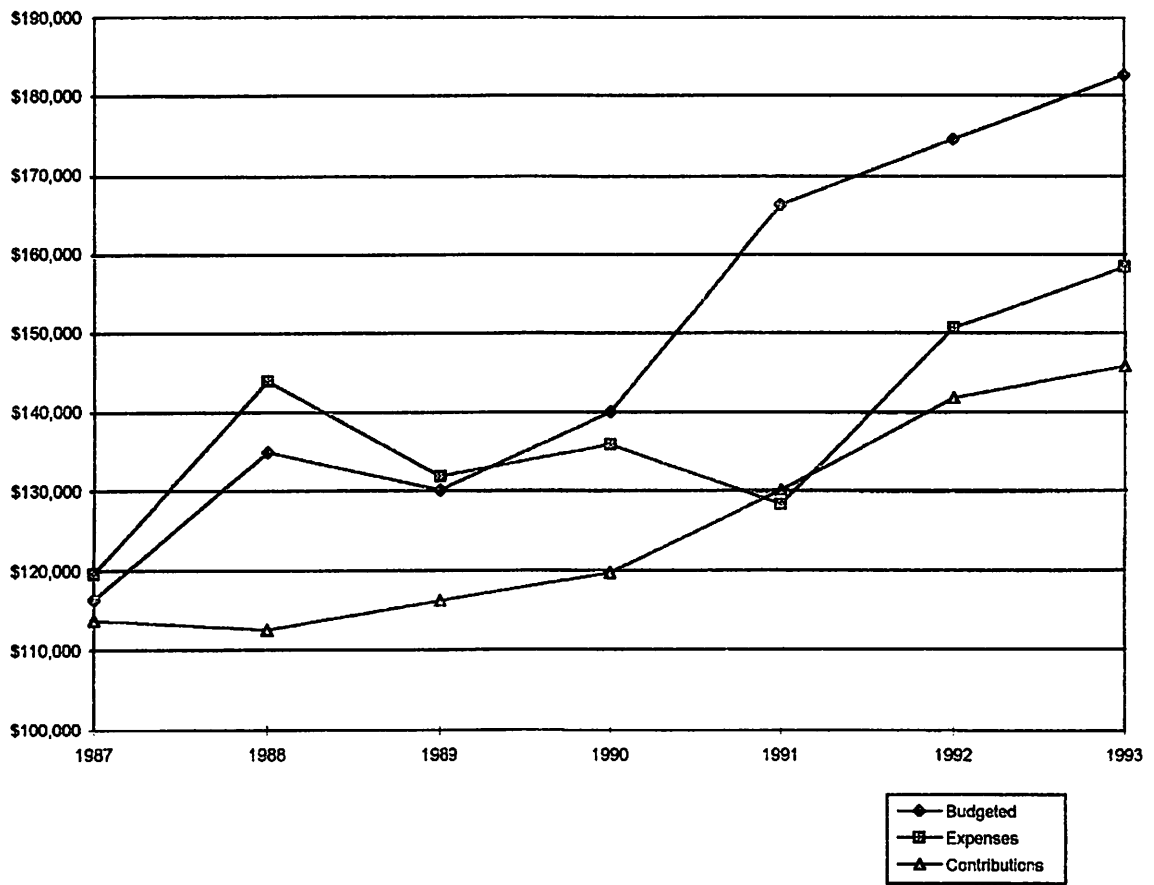


CHART # 10 FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCES 1987 - 1993

Finances



whereas expenses were \$ 128, 576. During the period prior to 1991 two large bequests from the estates of two deceased members were the only thing that kept the congregation in the black financially. Although these bequests enabled the congregation to undertake some badly needed capital improvements to the parking lot and the church roof, they seem to have had a dampening effect on the financial stewardship of the congregation's members. Secure that the congregation had "money in the bank," members were not sufficiently challenged to keep up with and increase their own financial gifts to the church. Obviously, if the congregation was to grow in its stewardship of the Gospel, the issue of financial stewardship would need to be addressed.

Further evidence that members were not being challenged to grow in the stewardship of giving was the fact that in 1993 First Lutheran ranked in the lower 25% of all Texas District congregations in the area of per confirmed member giving. While the average giving per confirmed member in the Texas District was \$ 600, the 1993 average at First Lutheran was \$ 390. In congregation's that are making a serious attempt to grow in mission and ministry the average giving per confirmed member was \$ 1100. What's more, although the rule of thumb is that 80% of the giving in a congregation comes from 20% of the members, at First Lutheran 70% of the giving was coming from only 10% of the confirmed members. Quite obviously, First Lutheran would have to confront this issue.

As extensively as we studied First Lutheran from a statistical point of view, the human element was still missing from our search for an answer to the question, "Who are we?" Therefore our next step was to do a broad based survey of the members of the

congregation. In February, 1994 twenty-five members of the congregation were recruited and trained by me to conduct this survey. Each recruit was asked to seek out and survey four other individuals or couples from the congregations membership. As a part of their training, they were first asked to survey one another. During the course of the survey a total of 125 individuals or couples were interviewed. We purposely set out to survey confirmed members of all ages and types - male and female, single and married, active and inactive. As a part of this survey members were asked to respond to the following six questions:

- (1) When you brag² about the congregation what do you brag about?
- (2) When you are concerned about the congregation what are you concerned about?
- (3) If you wished for one thing to happen in the congregation what would you wish for?
- (4) If you could change one thing in the congregation what would you change?
- (5) What would you like this congregation to be like in three years? (attendance at worship, programs, buildings, staff, etc.)
- (6) What else is there you want to tell me about the congregation?

The full record of the congregation's responses are to be found in Appendix A.

In the congregation's responses to the first question, members primarily pointed to four elements of the congregation's ministry about which they felt very positive. First of

²In this congregational survey we desired to ask the members to evaluate the congregation from both a positive and negative perspective. We knew from the outset that there may be those who saw no reason to brag about the ministry of the congregation. Indeed, as indicated in Appendix A, there were some who responded with the answer "nothing." We asked this question recognizing that such an answer was possible.

all, the members who were surveyed saw First Lutheran as a very loving family, repeatedly using the words "Friendly" and "caring" when describing the congregation. Secondly, the members felt very positive about my ministry among them as their pastor. 35 of the members surveyed mentioned "the pastor" as one thing they brag about when bragging about First Lutheran. The third element of the congregation's ministry about which members felt proud was our Lutheran theology. Many members made mention of the fact that they were proud that First Lutheran "teaches the pure word of God" and that "the Gospel is the central emphasis of our congregation." These responses would seem to indicate that a number of the members already had a clear understanding that the stewardship of the Gospel was our central task as a Christian congregation. Finally, a number of members mentioned our Lutheran style of worship as an element of our congregation's life about which they liked to brag. They felt very positive that we at First Lutheran were able to offer "variety in our worship and yet maintain our Lutheran heritage."

In response to question # 2, a number of members expressed concern about the large number on the congregation's membership list who were inactive. A second significant area of concern, expressed by those surveyed, had to do with the area of financial stewardship. Many stated that they were concerned about the congregation's "financial deficit and lack of giving." Others expressed concern about having an "active youth program for young people under 25." A final area of primary concern had to do with the perception that there was some dissension among the members of the congregation and that too small a group was making the decisions for the entire

congregation.

When asked what one thing they wished to happen in the congregation, the members surveyed wished for the overall growth of the congregation. This was primarily expressed by a wish for improvements in the present buildings and the addition of a new multi-purpose facility, and for a more concerted effort to reach out to the Texarkana community. One member wished that we would be able to "evangelize in the community and bring unchurched souls in by the droves." Those surveyed also wished for growth in the area of financial stewardship and for more activities for the youth of the congregation.

In regard to the fifth question, when asked what they would like the congregation to be like in three years, the majority of respondents wished for growth of some kind. They looked for a "bigger congregation," "double in size," with "more attendance." In particular members wished for growth in the following areas - worship attendance, buildings, church staff and ministry to youth. One member wished for the addition of a "second worship service, with attendance growing to 250 to 300 a Sunday." Another dreamed of worship attendance of "350 and at least double in Bible Study." With reference to the congregation's physical facilities, those who were surveyed spoke of wishing that we could add "a family center," "a multi-purpose building," "a gym" and "more Sunday School space." Many spoke of their hope that we would add "a second professional staff person." Members suggested everything from a DCE, to a retired pastor to even a second full time pastor as possible additions to our ministry staff.

As one looks at the survey as a whole, what becomes clear is that the

congregation's vision for the future is a desire for the congregation to grow. Members expressed a desire to see this growth primarily in three areas - worship attendance, staffing and buildings. If you take the total survey, there were more responses having to do with these three items than with any other subjects that were brought up.

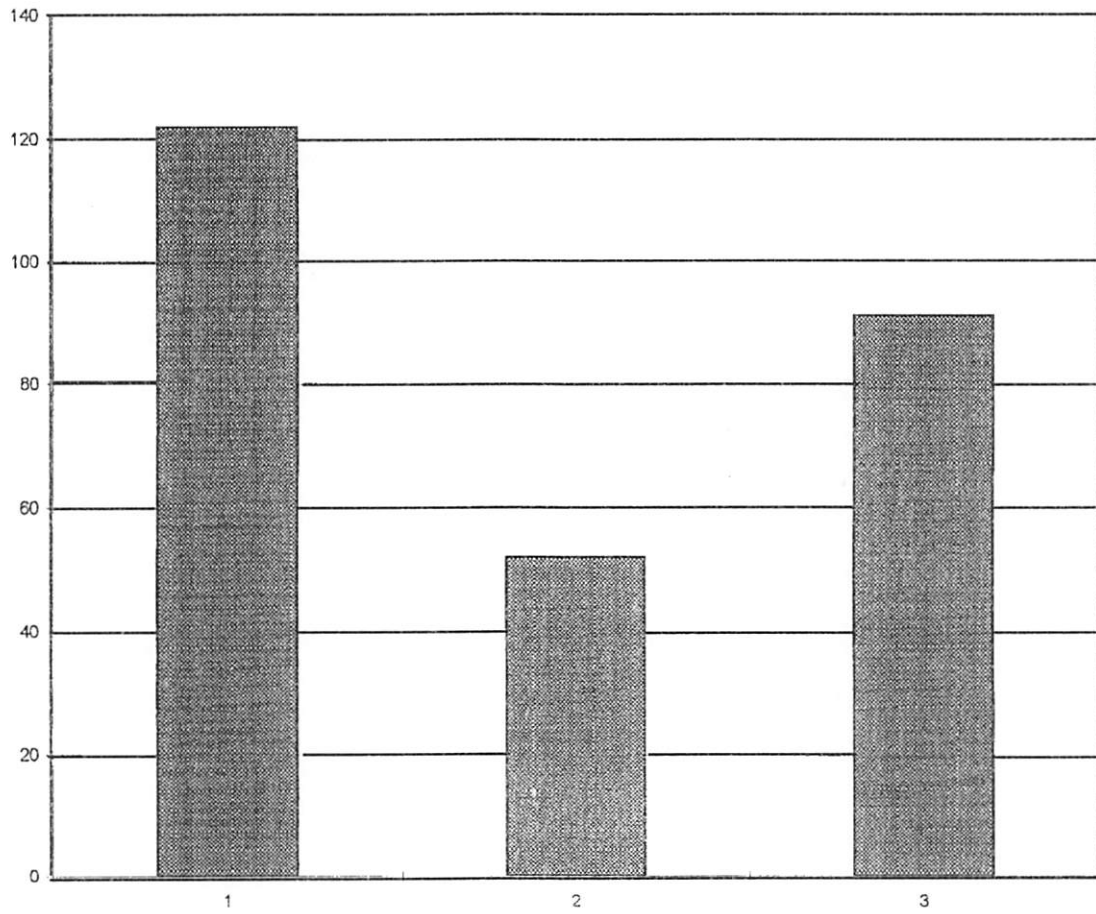
As pictured in chart # 11, page 131, a total of 122 comments were made which related to the subject of increasing worship attendance and overall involvement by members in the services and activities of the congregation. They understand that worship attendance is the one area of the congregation's life where numerical growth will most quickly become obvious. However, they also seemed to understand that such growth would only become possible by increasing our professional staff (there were a total of 52 comments made that had to do with the issue of staffing) as well as by improving and adding to our present facilities (a total of 91 comments were made about the congregation's needs related to facilities).

The rule of thumb is that in order for a congregation to grow beyond the size of 150 to 200 in attendance every Sunday, that congregation will need to add staffing so as to be able to offer the programs and spiritual care required by the increasing size of the congregation. Otherwise the limitations of how much time and care one man can give to the members of the congregation will also place limits on how much a congregation is able to grow. One man can only spread himself so far and still do a good job of pastoring.

The facilities can also place limits on a congregation's ability to grow. At First Lutheran, as we have already noted, the physical facilities in 1994 placed a number of

CHART # 11 THREE AREAS FOR FUTURE GROWTH AT FIRST LUTHERAN

of Comments Recorded



1	Increasing Worship Attendance and Membership Involvement	122
2	Increasing Staff	52
3	Improving and Adding to Facilites	91

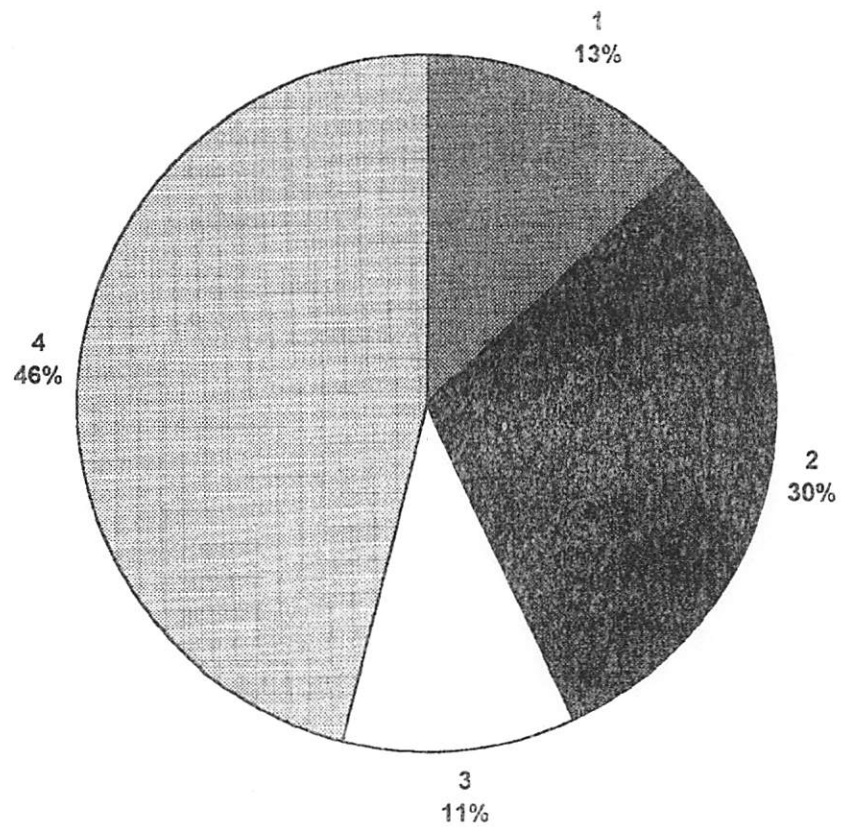
constraints on the congregation's ability to grow. With only one worship service there was not enough room for additional worshippers. In addition, the physical layout of the buildings was not conducive to growth. For instance the narthex was too small to allow for fellowship as people entered or left church. There was not an easy flow from the worship area to the Sunday School area. The bathrooms were completely inadequate for the present size of the membership. The nursery was not convenient to the worship area. The facilities themselves were not in good repair and did not make a good first impression on visitors. The Fellowship Hall was far too small for the size of the present congregation. The congregation had no room left for increasing the size and types of their fellowship and educational programs. In all these ways the congregation's facilities and staff, as they existed in 1994, placed serious limits on the congregation's prospects for future growth.

I would like to note at this point, that the growth the members of First Lutheran indicated they were looking for was not entirely numerical in nature. Indeed, the comments made in response to the survey reflected a desire among members of First Lutheran to see three different kinds of growth take place in the congregation. As pictured in chart # 12, page 133, the members of the congregation desired to see the congregation grow up spiritually in relationship to the Lord, grow together in fellowship with one another and grow out to reach others with the Gospel. They wished to see First Lutheran grow as a faithful steward of the Gospel in every area of ministry.

Those comments which had to do with "growing up in the Lord" (124 comments) spoke of the importance of increased opportunities for the reception of word and

CHART # 12 THREE TYPES OF GROWTH DESIRED BY MEMBERS OF FIRST LUTHERAN

Total of 966 Survey Responses



- 1 126 were comments related to "Growing Up in the Lord"
- 2 290 were comments related to "Growing Together in Fellowship"
- 3 106 were comments related to "Growing Out to Reach Others"
- 4 444 were comments related to numerous Other Areas

sacrament ministry. Many wished for "more opportunities for Bible Study." There was concern that we had so many people listed as members who never attend at all. There were comments about the need for "a larger educational facility." Many made comments about increasing the number of worship services and the number of times when the Lord's Supper would be offered. One man recognized that we need to "add classes for young singles and young married couples to our Sunday School program."

By far, the kind of growth spoken about most was First Lutheran's need to "grow together" in fellowship with one another. Over 294 comments expressed a concern about this area of congregational growth. Many were concerned about division and dissension in the congregation. Some worried that there were cliques in the congregation and that "too small a group was guiding all the activities." In order for the congregation to grow in this manner members felt that there would need to be better communication within the congregation, and that we would need to plan more opportunities for members to get together and get to know one another. Once again, the problems with our present facilities were seen as a major obstacle preventing the congregation from "growing together" in Christ. Many comments urged the leaders to do more to reach out to inactive members and to seek to get a wider spectrum of the congregation involved in leading, planning and participating in activities.

There was also a strong desire expressed in the survey to see the congregation "grow outward" as well. 103 comments longed for our congregation to become more focused on reaching out to others with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A number of members placed a heavy emphasis on our need to be a friendly congregation, especially toward

visitors. One person spoke of the hope that "all people in the congregation would go out into the community and feel more at ease in spreading God's word." Another wished that "we would be able to evangelize the community and bring unchurched souls in by droves."

In summary, the future envisioned by those who responded to the survey was a future of growth. They looked to see the congregation increase in worship attendance, repair and add to its facilities, increase the size of the congregation's professional staff and do more to minister to the youth of the congregation. Members pointed to a number of positive factors that would push the congregation towards being able to realize this vision. For one thing, they saw the congregation as being a friendly, caring family. Those who took the survey overwhelmingly endorsed the ministry of their pastor and saw this as one of the congregation's key strengths. They expressed confidence in our Lutheran theology and were generally satisfied with the congregation's worship program.

Those who took the survey also recognized a number of negative factors that could potentially block the way to further growth. Among these were the large number of inactive members listed on the congregation's membership list. Poor financial stewardship was another negative that would stand in the congregation's way. We needed to overcome the perception among some that there were cliques running everything and thus a general lack of cooperation among the members. For this reason, if the congregation was to realize this vision for growth, changes would have to be made in the way decisions were made, so that more of the members felt a part of that process. The congregation would have to work to undertake some kind of "first-fruits" stewardship

program to challenge members to grow in the stewardship of giving. Without the necessary increase in giving, the other obstacles to growth, inadequate facilities and staffing, could not be overcome. Related to the area of financial stewardship the leadership of the congregation would have to make a concerted effort to challenge members to become more involved in the total ministry of the congregation. Members would need to be given the opportunity to grow in the stewardship of their time and talents.

In the area of worship, a second weekly service (either on Sundays or during the week) would need to be added. In 1993 the congregation had only one weekly service, and the sanctuary was 70 to 80 percent full every Sunday. This made future growth in worship attendance impossible without an increase in the number of services or an increase in the size of the sanctuary.

The next step in the self-study process was to answer the question, "Where are we?" With reference to the planning process outlined in chapter three, this is the point at which we paused to study the community and the cultural context within which First Lutheran sought to offer Gospel ministry. For various reasons this proved to be the weak link in our self-study process. We did not do as extensive a study of the Texarkana community as we should have. For one thing, we simply did not know how to undertake such a study. When we later realized that we had not done a good job answering this question, that realization was part of the process by which we (the congregation's leaders and I) began to recognize how inwardly focused we were at First Lutheran. This lack of an outward focus in all areas of ministry, we came to recognize, was one of the key

factors that kept First Lutheran from growing!

We did, however, learn a few things about the community and culture in which God had called us to minister. One of the most obvious our ministry context was the fact that the community in which we served was really two communities, divided by the Texas/Arkansas state line. The total combined population of the two Texarkanas was 50,184, with an additional rural population of 31,484. This had all sorts of implications relative to the different laws and tax codes which governed different members of the congregation. This also raised the issue of how many School districts were represented in our area. We have members with children attending 14 different school districts. This presented us with some difficulties in the area of ministry to children and youth, since most of our children see each other only on Sunday.

Texarkana is a 70 to 80 % churched community. The dominant denominations in our area are Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ and Assembly of God. This tends to be a community of very conservative evangelical Christians. Within this community Lutherans are a distinct minority. There are only two Lutheran congregations in Texarkana - First Lutheran and a small congregation of about 50 members that belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The next nearest Lutheran congregation is in Atlanta, Texas, some 30 miles to the south. That congregation has about 25 members and is also a member of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. For this reason First Lutheran is a regional congregation that draws members from a forty to fifty mile radius in every direction. Because Lutherans are such a minority in this community we have a problem with community identity. Most people here have no idea what a Lutheran is or

what Lutheran's believe and teach. Many think of Lutherans as a sect of the Roman Catholic Church.

In seeking to understand the wider cultural context within which God had called us to minister, what I did at this point was to review the works of those who study and write about cultural trends in our society and how those trends impact the ministry of religious organizations. As I did this, I paid particular attention to trends that seemed to be relevant to what I had learned about the Texarkana community and the members of First Lutheran.

One trend, noted by many of the authors I read, was that there is, within our American culture, a move towards the increasing privatization of religion. This has a number of implications. For one thing, people today want religion to help them to get through the day. They want their church to help them discover solutions to the pragmatic, personal problems of every day life. For such people, simply showing them the way to heaven is not enough. Their question is, "How does the faith help them to live here and now?" As we seek to be stewards of the Gospel at First Lutheran, this will have an impact on the kinds of courses we offer to people. As we teach the Scripture, we will need to offer courses that help people apply the truth of God's Word to their every day struggles.

Another implication is that many do not want their religion to inform them politically. They would prefer that religion have no voice in our public conversation. As a pastor I have experienced this trend after preaching sermons during which I touched on the subject of abortion. While many appreciated the remarks, there were also many who

strenuously objected to the fact that I raised this "political" issue in a sermon. One might conclude (rightly, I think) that there are trends in both directions. On one side there are increasing numbers of individuals who think that churches should be silent on social and political issues. Yet there are also growing numbers of individuals who believe that the church should now be more vocal than ever before on issues of morality that our society is presently debating. Individuals from both points of view are to be found within the same community and within the same congregation. The question for the church must be this - "With reference to these controversial issues what is our role? How do we become more faithful stewards of the gospel with reference to these issues?"

Another important trend, related to this first one, is the fact that more and more people see truth as a relative matter. People are less inclined today to believe in something called absolute truth.³ Research conducted in 1992 "shows that half of the adult public believe that everything in life is negotiable."⁴ This is one of the characteristics that distinguishes the "baby boomer" generation (born between 1948 and 1963) from the "baby buster" generation (born between 1964 and 1981). "Baby boomers" tend to believe in propositional truth, while "baby busters" see truth as relational. "Busters don't believe in absolute truth. To them everything is relative and

³George Barna, The Barna Report 1992-1993: America Renews Its Search for God (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), 34.

⁴Ibid., 36.

everything could be true."⁵ For the Buster the only absolute is a person's story. If what you share is your personal story or experience then that story must be true, at least for you. No one has the right to question your story.

This has important implications for our stewardship of the Gospel to those who belong to the "baby buster" generation. What I learned about this generation indicated to me that doing a good job of telling the story of Christ and the stories of His life may be one of the best ways to reach them. If our people are to be able to reach baby busters, we may need to teach the people of First Lutheran how to give their own personal testimonies. We may need to train the members of our congregation to tell their own story of their life as a Christian!⁶ We need to recognize that people will no longer automatically accept and believe everything we tell them. They will pick and choose what they want to believe. "In general, America's religious faith in 2000 will be a combination of existing faiths... . They will mix and match the best of each faith to which they are exposed and emerge with a synthetic faith."⁷ For a Church, such as ours, which confesses a firm belief in God's absolute truth, this means that the task of confessing the true faith is now both more difficult and more important than ever before.

A third trend in our culture is closely related to the fact that, as a society, we are

⁵Dieter Zender, "The Gospel for Generation X: Making Room in the Church for 'Busters'," Leadership XVI:23 (Spring, 1995), 38.

⁶Ibid., 36.

⁷George Barna, The Frog in the Kettle: What Christians Need to Know About Life in the 21st Century (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990), 140.

becoming increasingly reliant on technology. One of the results of this has been that people work more and more with machines, but less and less in face to face contact with each. People converse via E - Mail. In some cases they work out of their homes, never journeying to a work place, never having to interact physically with their co-workers. This has led to an increasing sense of loneliness and isolation in our society. George Barna describes this trend as follows:

Most people do not want to admit it, but they are lonely. Over the past 15 years, America has witnessed an outburst of technological breakthroughs that have changed the way we live and work. One lasting consequence has been that we as a nation have begun to lose our ability to communicate effectively with each other. That, in turn, has led to a diminution of our ability to forge meaningful relationships with other people. . . . Having been enticed into reliance upon technology and new developments in lifestyle created by such advances, Americans are just now beginning to confront the "connection gap" that is a consequence of reliance upon machines and techniques, at the expense of establishing bonds with other people.⁸

What this means for a congregation which seeks to be a faithful steward of the Gospel is that an increasing amount of time and energy needs to be focused on the task of helping people to build strong Christian relationships. The church needs to offer the fellowship Christians have with one another in the Gospel as a much needed antidote to the isolation so prevalent in the rest of society.

One more trend in our culture, which is particularly relevant to the issue of a congregation's stewardship of the Gospel, is the increasing importance of time-management. Robert L. Randall, in his book *What People Expect From a Church*, writes, "Perhaps the most significant change will be the new currency we will utilize to

⁸George Barna, Seven Trends Facing the Church in 1990 and Beyond (National and International Religion Report, 1990), 5-6.

determine what is of value to us... . By 2000 we will have shifted to using time as our dominant indicator of value."⁹ People increasingly feel that their lives are out of control. For this reason, if they feel they control their use of time, they will then feel that they have control over life. The church must therefore address the whole issue of the stewardship of time, otherwise known as time management. In addition, the church needs to model good time management for people by being careful not to waste their time!

Having answered the questions, "Who are we?", and "Where are we?", our next step was to answer the question "Why are we here?" In other words, what is the purpose for our existence as a congregation? We sought the answer to this question through a study of God's Word. After all, as I noted in chapter three, only in the Word does God lay out for us the mission He has entrusted to His church here on earth.

The Futures Committee decided to conduct a six session Bible Study on the six Sundays following Easter in 1994. I, as the Pastor, would write and lead these Bible Studies. The Futures Committee would encourage members to attend via one on one contacts, special mailings, as well as through announcements in the weekly Sunday bulletin and the monthly parish newsletter. Attendance at these studies fluctuated anywhere between 50 and 75 adults a Sunday.

My purpose in these studies (which are reprinted in Appendix B) was to lead the congregation in a study of what the Lord in His Word says to us about our mission as a

⁹Robert L. Randall, What People Expect From Church: Why Meeting the Needs of People is More Important Than Church Meetings, ed. Lyle E. Schaller (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 33.

Christian congregation. I sought to lead the congregation in a discussion of how what God said in the Scriptures about the mission of the church applied to all that we had learned in our self-study about our specific ministry context here at First Lutheran. I used the statistics and graphs, which I included earlier in this chapter, to share with the congregation the results of the survey and community study. I invited the members to compare what the self-study revealed about our congregation with what God's word revealed to us about what we should be doing in His service. I tried to challenge the members to ask themselves, "How are we doing as stewards of the Gospel at First Lutheran?" "What are we doing well?" "Where can we yet grow and improve?"

In the first Bible study session my goal was to help those present to understand that the business of the church is to "make disciples." Since, in the survey, many of the members had expressed a desire to see the congregation grow, I spoke of this process of making disciples in terms of the three kinds of growth which take place in the church - growing up in our relationship with the Lord, growing together in Christian Fellowship, and growing out to reach others with the Gospel. My hope was that I would help those present to understand that the growth God brings about in a congregation is not always numerical.

In the second Bible Study session I approached the whole subject of growth from the perspective of the doctrine of the church. My goal was to help the members understand that the nature of the church is to grow in the three ways mentioned above. At this point I began to lead them in a discussion of how this growth takes place, by introducing them to the "marks of the church", the Gospel and the sacraments.

That led quite easily into the third session. Here my purpose was to drive home the fact that the growth that takes place in the church is all God's work through the Gospel and the sacraments. Within this context, I laid out for them how our God graciously gives us a part in that work by entrusting the message of the Gospel to us, His Church. Thus He has made us stewards of His greatest treasure. One of my chief concerns at this point was to help members understand that God is the agent of growth in a congregation. Although we can learn from and utilize sociological principles in our ministry, the Gospel and the Sacraments are always the means through which God grants growth to His church. We must never forget this lest we as a congregation begin to place our faith in something other than our God and His promises!

The self-study process revealed that many in the congregation were concerned about issues such as dissension and cliques among the members, as well as the perception that too small a group was making decisions for the congregation. The issues raised were all related to the unity of the congregation and the relationship of the members to one another. Since the unity of the congregation or lack of such unity would be of central importance to the congregation's ability to carry out the mission God had given to First Lutheran, I sought to address these issues in sessions four and five. My goal in both of these sessions was to motivate the members of First Lutheran to seek more earnestly to build and strengthen the ties of faith that bind them to one another, so that the church might grow together in fellowship with one another in Christ.

In session four I led them in a study of what the Scriptures teach about unity in the church. Then I shared with them many of the concerns that members had raised relative

to the unity of the congregation. The majority of the class period was spent discussing these issues. Then in session five I led them in a discussion of how, through the Gospel, God overcomes the obstacles that divide us from one another and thus enables us to grow together in fellowship with one another in the Body of Christ. In order for First Lutheran to grow, our first step would have to be to use the means of grace to heal and strengthen our fellowship with one another. Then we would need to challenge one another to respond to God's grace in Christ by each of us doing our part as a member of the body of Christ and a steward of the Gospel.

In the sixth and final session, I attempted to draw together all that we had learned in the previous five sessions. My purpose was to help the members discover how God's vision for His church should guide and shape the future mission of First Lutheran Church. I reminded them of the three primary things they wished for during the survey - growth in attendance, repair and addition to our facilities, increased staffing and an increased emphasis on youth ministry. Finally, I led them in a discussion of the different ways in which we might now grow up in God's grace. We talked about increasing the number of worship services, as well as the number and type of Bible Classes offered for adults on Sundays and through the week. In the area of growing together in fellowship we discussed how to live together in forgiveness, what we might do to make the decision making process more inclusive of the total membership, what we could do to better assimilate new members into the congregation and the steps we could take in order to provide more fellowship opportunities so that members could get to know one another better. Finally, we discussed what steps First Lutheran might take in order to grow

outward to reach others with the Gospel. Many ideas were proposed, including a more intentional ministry to visitors and the various activities that we could plan that might be attractive to those outside our church. Another suggestion was to make our buildings available for use by groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, or the American Cancer Society, giving people a non-threatening excuse to come in to our buildings. One particular concern, raised during the discussion, had to do with how we could help the community to have a better idea of who Lutherans are and what Lutherans believe.

At this point the Futures had completed the process of listening to the congregation, the community, the culture and God's Word, and was ready to begin the second step in the development phase of the planning process. As indicated in chapter three, the next step is to determine the goal. In order to do this the Futures Committee divided into two sub-committees.

The first sub-committee was assigned the task of writing a mission statement for First Lutheran. In chapter three we defined a mission statement as "a clear and concise affirmation (25 words or less) of the unique reason for the existence and efforts of the organization."¹⁰ With the mission statement the congregation seeks to answer the following question on the basis of God's Word: For what purpose has God placed this congregation in this community at this time?

The sub-committee sought to write a concise mission statement that reflected a number of different concerns. The sub-committee recognized that in the survey a number

¹⁰Les Stroh, "One Step at a Time" (September, 1988), 2, photocopied.

of members described First Lutheran as a loving congregation, while other expressed concern that the congregation was not loving, and therefore, wanted to write a mission statement which placed heavy emphasis on this aspect of the congregation's life together. They recognized that unity or lack of unity among the members would be an all important factor in the future success of whatever plan was eventually proposed to the congregation.

Secondly, the sub-committee wanted to write a statement that was focused on "making disciples" as the central mission of the congregation. The committee also recognizing that First Lutheran was far too inwardly focused, and for that reason sought to write a statement that clearly defined the purpose of the congregation as reaching out to share God's love with those outside of the congregation. The sub-committee took all these factors into consideration as it wrote and proposed the following as a mission statement for First Lutheran Church:

We are loving and caring members of God's family. As Christ's ambassadors, we will disciple and educate through the Gospel, reaching out to all people.

The second sub-committee was then assigned the task of writing a vision statement for the congregation. In chapter three I defined the vision statement as "a description of a preferred, future condition of individuals or groups that contributes to the achievement of the mission statement."¹¹ The vision statement is a written statement of the goals towards which a congregation will work in order to accomplish the mission to which God has called the congregation. The difference between a mission statement and a vision statement is that "while the mission statement is philosophic in nature, the vision

¹¹Stroh, 2.

statement is strategic in character."¹²

When writing and presenting a vision statement to the congregation, those involved need to remember that the power and motivation for accomplishing that vision is provided by God through the Gospel, not the law. The definition of Christian stewardship used in chapter one stated that "Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, as a response to God's love in Christ. . . ."¹³ Christian stewardship can only be such a "free and joyous activity" when it is motivated and enabled by God through the Gospel.

In writing a vision statement the sub-committee took into consideration both the proposed mission statement and all that had been learned about the congregation through the self-study process. The members of First Lutheran had clearly expressed the desire to become a congregation growing up in God's grace, growing together in fellowship and growing outward to reach others with the Gospel of Christ. Yet to accomplish that goal, the congregation would need to be challenged in the area of stewardship, would need to work towards greater unity, and would need to change from a congregation focused inwardly into one focused on reaching out to others. The sub-committee sought to write a vision statement that incorporated all those elements. Thus, the sub-committee wrote and proposed the following vision statement for First Lutheran Church:

¹²George Barna, The Power of Vision (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1992), 38.

¹³As quoted by Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann in an interest center on stewardship at the Great Commission convocation of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in October, 1993.

Our vision for First Lutheran Church is to be a growing church that challenges and enables all members to discover, develop and use their time, talents and treasures to share God's care and love, reaching out to their family, friends and acquaintances.

The congregation would later amend this vision statement by replacing the last words "and acquaintances" with a comma after the word "friends" followed by the words "community and world." The thought was that the original statement focused us only on reaching out to those we knew, while the mission of the church is much wider than that. The congregation would eventually adopt the amended vision statement.

At this point the Futures Committee was ready to enter the next step in the development phase, what I called in chapter three "choosing your objectives." The Futures Committee sought to include a wider cross section of the congregation in the process of choosing objectives. In May and June of 1994, the Futures Committee shared the proposed mission and vision statements with the various standing committees, boards and organizations of the congregation. Each group was asked to consider the question, "How will your group contribute toward the accomplishment of the goals described in the vision statement?" From the lists submitted by these groups and on the basis of what was learned from the congregation during the self-study process, the Futures Committee wrote a number of proposed objectives.

The objectives that were written were divided into three areas - staffing, buildings, and programs. In the area of staffing the objectives proposed by the futures committee were as follows:

- (1) By the end of March, 1995, the members of First Lutheran Church will hire a part-time Director of Music Ministry. This person will assist Pastor Braun in worship planning, coordinating special music, coordinating the schedules

of the choirs, developing a children's choir, and a children's bell choir, coordinating the organists schedule, serving as half time organist for the congregation, directing the adult bell choir and accompanying the adult choir. The completion of this objective shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.

- (2) By the end of March, 1996, the members of First Lutheran Church will seek to hire a retired pastor as a part-time pastoral assistant to Pastor Braun. This pastor's primary responsibilities will be in the areas of evangelism, visitation and ministry to older adults. Prior to hiring, the church will have a balance of \$20,000 in a fund called "staffing for 2000," enough money to fund this position for the first year. This objective shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders.
- (3) As the need arises the members of First Lutheran will consider the need for additional janitorial help. This objective shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

You will notice that the final objective included no designated time by which the congregation was to have accomplished this task. At the time of developing this plan we were uncertain as to whether or not additional janitorial help would be needed. We were also uncertain about when such help might be needed.

In the area of building the committee proposed the following objectives:

- (1) By the end of 1994, the members of First Lutheran will have established a fund entitled "Building for 2000" for the purposes of funding all future building improvements and additions. In addition, the members will transfer all funds currently kept in the "capital improvements fund" to this new fund. Finally, the members of First Lutheran will establish a "Building for 2000" committee to work with the Board of Trustees in recommending needed building improvements and additions. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the church council.
- (2) By the end of March, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will retain the services of a professional architect to review how well the needs of the congregation are being met by our present facilities. By way of example the architect will consider such issues as handicap accessibility, replacing the present heating and air-conditioning system, modifying the church roof to eliminate leaks, expanding present offices, improving sanctuary lighting,

expanding the size of present Sunday School classrooms, and lining the drainage ditch that runs through the church property. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Board of Trustees and the Building for 2000 Committee.

- (3) By the end of March, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will utilize the services of the professional architect, retained in objective two, to design and provide cost estimates for redesigning the choir loft, extending the narthex, replacing the circular stairway with standard stairs, and remodeling the bathrooms in the narthex. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Board of Trustees and the Building for 2000 committee.
- (4) By the end of March, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will request that the architect provide the congregation with a design and cost estimates for a Multi-Purpose Building that will include classrooms, a kitchen, storage and a gymnasium. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Board of Trustees and the Building for 2000 Committee.
- (5) By the end of June, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will receive a master plan of all recommended improvements and additions and will establish a priority list for these projects. Responsibility for this objective shall be assigned to the Board of Trustees and Building for 2000.

The final category of objectives dealt with the area of ministry programming, activities and services. In this area the Futures Committee proposed the following objectives:

- (1) By the end of Dec., 1994, the members of First Lutheran will establish an ad hoc Infant Care Committee to consider providing an infant care facility located in our vicarage. This program would be designed to provide day care for infants age 6 weeks through 18 months. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Church Council.
- (2) By the end of March, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will add a second Sunday service and increase lay participation in all services. The congregation will also begin considering the addition of a third weekly worship service on a day other than Sunday. The Worship Committee will be assigned responsibility for this objective.
- (3) By the end of June, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will establish a "Calling and Caring Ministry Team" to work with the pastor in caring for

members who are showing signs of pre-inactivity or early inactivity. The Elders will continue to work their elder care zones and to assist the pastor with members who have been inactive for a long time. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Board of Elders.

- (4) By the end of June, 1995, the members of First Lutheran will consider a plan for challenging the members of First Lutheran to grow as stewards of their time, talents and treasures. This plan shall include a survey of time and talents, and shall seek to address the issue of the stewardship of our treasures. The Stewardship Committee will be assigned responsibility for this objective.
- (5) By the end of Dec. 1995, the members of First Lutheran will be provided with name tags for all members, available in the narthex, to be worn during worship services or activities so that all members might become better acquainted with one another. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Assimilation Committee.
- (6) By the end of Dec. 1995, the members of First Lutheran will begin to offer new members a four week assimilation course. The purpose of this course will be to help new members become acquainted with the organizations and activities they may become a part of as members of this congregation. The Assimilation Committee will be made responsible for the completion of this objective.
- (7) By the end of Dec. 1995, the members of First Lutheran will create a sponsorship program for new members. In this program existing members will sponsor new members during their first year of membership and assist them in becoming better acquainted with the members and activities of First Lutheran Church. Responsibility for this objective will be assigned to the Assimilation Committee.
- (8) By the end of Dec. 1995, the members of First Lutheran will begin to expand the opportunities and choices of Bible Classes available to adults. This expanded program will include home Bible studies and expanded Bible class offerings on Sunday mornings. The congregation will also seek to involve more volunteers in programs such as VBS. The Board of Education will be responsible for completion of this objective.
- (9) By the end of September, 1996, the members of First Lutheran will develop and begin to implement a program of outreach designed to reach the unchurched in the Texarkana Community. The Evangelism Committee will be responsible for the completion of this objective.

- (10) Each year the congregation will seek to expand the program of ministry to our youth in the fifth grade through the end of High School. This objective shall be made the responsibility of the Youth Committee.
- (12) By the end of May in each year the congregation shall review the progress being made towards the fulfillment of the various strategies laid out in this plan for the future ministry of First Lutheran Church. The Church Council will be charged with responsibility for completing this objective.
- (13) By the end of Dec., 1995, the members of First Lutheran shall have developed a plan for keeping all members of First Lutheran adequately informed in a timely manner concerning important issues and decisions facing the congregation's voters assembly. Responsibility for this objective shall be assigned to the Church Council.
- (14) Starting immediately, the members of First Lutheran will seek to use their time, talents and treasures to share God's care and love in order to reach out to their friends, families, community and world. All members of the congregation shall be made responsible for this objective.

The Futures Committee, having written these objectives, had completed the work of developing a long range plan for the future ministry of First Lutheran Church. That plan was now ready to be presented to the members of the congregation for their consideration and approval. In other words, we were now ready to begin the implementation phase of the planning process.

Implementing the Plan at First Lutheran

As I stated in chapter three, the first step in the implementation phase is to seek congregational ownership of the plan. In this step the objectives of the Futures Committee were quite simple: (1) to **communicate** the plan to the congregation, (2) to **educate** the congregation concerning the plan, and (3) to invite the congregation to **make a commitment** to the plan.

The Futures Committee developed a single action plan for accomplishing these closely related objectives. First of all, in order to communicate the proposed plan to the congregation, the Futures Committee, in the month of August, 1994, developed a pamphlet on the plan called "A Vision of Growth for First Lutheran Church." The proposed mission statement, vision statement and written objectives were all included in this pamphlet¹⁴. This pamphlet was then mailed to all members of the congregation by September 1, 1994 for their prayer and consideration.

The next step was to give the members and leaders of First Lutheran Church numerous opportunities to respond to, discuss, ask questions about and make suggestions concerning the proposed plan. In order to do this, I along with different members of the Futures Committee, during the month of September, 1994, attended the meetings of all the committees, boards, organizations and groups within the congregation. We brought copies of the pamphlet with us to those meetings, gave a presentation of the proposed plan and then opened the floor for discussion and questions. Finally, on Sunday, October 9, 1994 the Sunday morning Adult Bible Class was devoted to a discussion of the proposed plan. The announcement of this Bible Class Discussion session was made in the weekly worship bulletin, the monthly newsletter and via a letter sent to all the members of the congregation. In all these meetings many questions were asked and suggestions made concerning the plan.

During the week following Sunday, October 9, 1994, the Futures Committee met

¹⁴Because all the material found in those pamphlets has already been included as a part of this chapter, I have chosen not to include a copy of that pamphlet with this paper.

to consider the response they had received so far and to make any appropriate changes in the proposed plan. Then, on Sunday, October 16th, 1994, the plan was brought to the quarterly voters meeting of the congregation for discussion and possible approval. We sought this vote as a way for the congregation as a whole to make a commitment to the accomplishment of the proposed plan. During the meeting a great deal of discussion took place. As part of that discussion, the voters were assured that approval of the plan in general did not mean that every specific step in the plan had thereby been approved. The chairperson of the Futures Committee, assured the voters that as each objective in the plan unfolded the various boards and committees of the congregation would come back to the voters for approval or funding. Once again, congregational ownership of this plan was seen as extremely important. The voters needed to know that this was their plan, and that they would have the final approval at each major step along the way.

At that meeting the following resolution, supporting the proposed plan, was considered by the voters. The resolution read as follows:

Whereas, the Futures Committee was formed by the Voter's Assembly of First Lutheran Church to develop a three to five year plan for the future ministry of First Lutheran Church in Texarkana, Texas; and

Whereas, the Futures Committee has led First Lutheran through a process of self-study; and

Whereas, that self-study included a study of the statistical trends evident in the history of First Lutheran Church, a survey of 125 members of First Lutheran, a study of our local community (its make up and population trends) and a study of what God reveals in His Word about our mission as His people; and

Whereas, the result of that self-study by the Futures Committee, consulting with the congregation, with the elected leaders and appointed committees of the congregation is the three to five year plan outlined in the pamphlet called "A Vision of Growth for

First Lutheran Church;" therefore be it

Resolved, that the members of First Lutheran Church of Texarkana, Texas, accept this document, "A Vision of Growth for First Lutheran Church," as the final report of the Futures Committee; and be it further

Resolved, that First Lutheran Church of Texarkana, Texas, declares that the mission and vision statements, proposed in the document, "A Vision of Growth for First Lutheran Church," are the official mission and vision statements for First Lutheran Church in Texarkana, Texas; and be it further

Resolved, that the strategies outlined in "A Vision of Growth for First Lutheran Church" be adopted for consideration and assigned to the various boards, committees and councils designated in that document for the purpose of study, investigation and development so that they may then be brought back for discussion and possible action the Voter's Assembly of First Lutheran Church, Texarkana, Texas, on or before each target date, and be it finally

Resolved, the all who have helped to develop this long range plan be thanked for all their hard work.

By secret ballot, the voters present at the meeting on October 16, 1994, overwhelming approved this resolution.

As I now describe the rest of the implementation phase, I do not intend to describe for you how an action plan was developed and implemented for each objective laid out in the plan the voters of First Lutheran approved in October, 1994. Instead I will choose one of those objectives, the objective assigned to the Stewardship Committee, and describe the process that was followed in seeking to accomplish that objective.

As stated earlier, the following objective was made the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee:

By the end of June, 1995 the members of First Lutheran will consider a plan for challenging the members of First Lutheran to grow as stewards of their time, talents and treasures. This plan shall include a survey of time and talents, and shall seek to address the issue of the stewardship of our treasures.

First Lutheran's Stewardship Committee began working on this objective in the Spring, of 1995.

In May, 1995, the Committee decided that before they could develop an action plan for accomplishing this objective, they wanted to do further study of congregational attitudes concerning the whole subject of Christian Stewardship. Therefore the committee asked me to conduct this study and report my findings by the August, 1995 meeting of the committee.

I decided to conduct this study on a much smaller scale than that used when the congregation was surveyed in 1994. Instead of surveying the entire congregation, I asked a representative sampling of the congregation's membership to join me in one of two focus groups. Each group consisted of five or six members of the congregation. The purpose of these focus groups was to discover what concerns these members, as a representative sample of the congregation's total membership, had concerning the issue of Christian Stewardship at First Lutheran Church. For this purpose I developed the following five questions which guided our discussion at these meetings:

- (1) Many people feel uneasy about the whole subject of stewardship. What are some reasons for that uneasiness?
- (2) Imagine that you are at home and one of your kids asks, "What is stewardship?" How would you answer that question in kid's terms?
- (3) How do you feel when the subject of stewardship comes up at church? What are some specific reasons for those feelings?
- (4) The recent self-study made clear the fact that stewardship is an area of concern to our congregation. What specific concerns about stewardship do you see for our congregation?
- (5) What are some ways to address these concerns?¹⁵

¹⁵The responses to these questions may be found in Appendix C.

In response to the first question the members listed a number of different reasons for the uneasiness that people feel. Some feel uneasy because when they hear the word "stewardship" they automatically associate that with the church asking for more money. The group felt that most people do not have a clear understanding of all that is included in the subject of Christian Stewardship. Because most people consider their finances to be a private matter, they tend to become defensive when the subject of stewardship is raised. Guilt, the group said, is another reason for this uneasiness. One person remarked that "Many people don't want to be reminded that they aren't doing what they should be doing." Part of the uneasiness grows out of a reluctance to make a commitment of ourselves to the work of the congregation. We get uneasy when the subject of stewardship comes up because we automatically assume, "They want me to do something. They want me to give up more of my time."

When asked how they would explain stewardship to a child, they all felt that they would try to use examples from the child's own life, examples the child could easily understand. For instance, you might use 100 pennies and divide them into groups of ten each in order to teach a child what a tithe is. One member suggested talking to the child about ways in which he could practice stewardship (ie. - by cleaning up his room or giving an offering at Sunday School). "Teach a child," one said, "that stewardship is giving everything to God."

In response to the third question, concerning how they felt when the subject of stewardship comes up, many of those present in both groups once again mentioned the word guilt. One person, very concerned about the congregation's level of financial

giving, felt that the subject needs to be brought up quarterly or perhaps even monthly. People, this person thought, need to be taught about tithing. People need a regular reminder about their responsibilities as stewards. Another in the group said that he feels uneasy when the subject comes up because he's worried that some will be offended because they automatically equate stewardship with money.

The fourth and fifth questions were related to each other. When asked, the participants expressed a number of concerns about stewardship at First Lutheran. They were concerned that our per-capita giving was one of the lowest in the Texas District of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Others were concerned about the large number of inactive members who belong to our congregation. They were worried that people don't feel cared for. They aren't missed by anyone when they miss a couple of Sundays. One member brought up a concern that not all of our members share the same vision for the future ministry of the congregation. All who were present at these meetings expressed the concern that our small facilities greatly limit our stewardship life in the area of Christian fellowship. For instance, people won't stay for fellowship dinners because the fellowship hall is too crowded.

How should these concerns be addressed? First, the two groups said, we need to learn to trust God and move forward. One member said, "The congregation that isn't in debt is a congregation that isn't doing anything." Another member said that we need to present our stewardship needs as a challenge and opportunity, not a problem. Indeed a number of suggestions were made - starting some kind of caring ministry to assist the pastor and elders, expanding both our facilities and staff, and using small focus groups

like these to help members gain a consensus before voting on major congregational decisions.

As I evaluated the answers that were given to these questions, I noticed that most of the respondents understood the subject Christian stewardship from a legalistic point of view. I believe that this is the primary reason why people responded to the first question by saying that they felt "uneasy" or "guilty" when the subject of stewardship is raised. When they hear the word stewardship they hear only the condemning voice of the law, not the forgiving, and enabling voice of the Gospel. One person, in response to question two, reflected this legalistic understanding of stewardship when he said that we should "teach a child that stewardship is giving everything to God." The truth is Christian stewardship is the recognition that everything belongs to God. The solutions proposed were all basically legalistic. One person urged that members be taught about tithing. Another thought that people need a regular reminder of their responsibilities. Obviously these people were advocating a law motivated stewardship, rather than one which would be "a free and joyous activity of the child of God. . . as a response to God's love in Christ. . . ." Gospel motivated stewardship does not "require" that people give a tithe to the Lord's work. Instead Paul reminds us that through the Gospel God has set us free to give freely from the heart:

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.¹⁶

¹⁶2 Corinthians 9:7-8.

Quite obviously, my Bible classes and sermons would need to strongly emphasize the Gospel motivation for Christian stewardship.

In the Fall of 1995, as the Stewardship Committee studied the results of these two focus groups, they decided that the congregation (a) needed to be guided to a more complete understanding of what Gospel motivated Christian stewardship is, and (b) needed to be given the opportunity to make a "free and joyous response" to that Gospel through an increased commitment of their time, talent, and treasure to the Lord. On this basis, the committee decided to divide the objective assigned to them into the following three parts:

- (1) To help the members of First Lutheran to gain a fuller understanding of what Gospel motivated Christian stewardship is.
- (2) To offer the members of First Lutheran to respond to the Gospel by making a public pledge to increase how much of their time, talent and treasure they gave to the work of the Lord at First Lutheran Church.
- (3) To conduct a time and talent survey of the members of First Lutheran church.

The Committee decided to work on the first two objectives first and take on the time and talent survey at a later date. They choose to develop a stewardship campaign that would work towards the accomplishment of both of the first two objectives.

Basically the committee's plan was twofold. They would request that the Rev. Ray Schkade (recently retired from the office of the Texas District) come to First Lutheran to conduct a stewardship emphasis which he calls "Faith in Action." He comes to a congregation for one weekend. On Saturday evening He leads the leaders of the congregation in a study of the subject of Christian stewardship. Through out the evening

He emphasizes that God motivates and enables us to be Christian Stewards through the Gospel. At the end of the evening, He invites the leaders to respond to the Gospel by making a commitment to increase their weekly gifts to the congregation. On Sunday morning He teaches the Adult Bible Class and preaches at the worship services. In his sermon, he uses the commitments made by the leaders of the congregation as an illustration of how God works through the Gospel to motivate and enable the "free and joyous activity" of Christian stewardship. On the basis of the Gospel Pastor Schkade encourages the members to make a similar response to God's love in Christ. Then, following the sermon, members are given the opportunity to fill out a pledge sheet, come forward and drop that sheet in a box near the altar.

Secondly, the Committee asked me to lead the congregation in a study of the subject of Christian stewardship. I was to do this in the three or four weeks leading up to Pastor Schkade's "Faith in Action" weekend. In my sermons and Bible studies I was to give heavy emphasis to the Gospel motivation for Christian stewardship.

The Stewardship Committee's action plan was really quite simple. By the end of October, 1995, I was to have finalized arrangements for Pastor Schkade to conduct his "Faith in Action" weekend at First Lutheran on Feb. 10 - 11, 1996. By December 3, 1995, the chairman of the Stewardship Committee, Mr. Jack Parry, was to secure approval of this stewardship campaign from the voters of First Lutheran. By December 3, 1995, Mr. Parry was to secure voter approval of a budget of \$ 3000 to cover the costs of this campaign. By the end of Dec., 1995, Mr. Brent Bultemeier was to have reserved the banquet hall and catering facilities at Texarkana College for a congregational dinner to be

held there following the worship service on Sunday, Feb. 11, 1996. On January 1, 1996, Mr. Parry was to begin putting information concerning this special weekend in the monthly parish newsletter and in the weekly Sunday bulletin. On Sunday, Jan. 14, 1996, I was to begin a four part sermon series on the subject of Christian stewardship. Mr. Parry was to write and send a letter to all members of the congregation, during the week of January 15th, inviting them to attend the worship service and banquet on Sunday, Feb. 11, 1996. Then, on Sunday, Jan. 21, 1996, I was to begin leading the Sunday morning Adult Bible Class through a three part Bible study on Christian Stewardship. By Jan. 26, 1996 Mr. Parry was to send a letter to all congregational leaders inviting them to the meeting with Pastor Schkade on Saturday night, Feb. 10, 1996. By Sunday, Feb. 4, 1996, three committee members - Mrs. Endsley, Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Harmon - were to have made all necessary arrangements for food, materials, decorations and entertainment at the meeting on Saturday, Feb. 10th, and the dinner on Sunday, Feb. 11th. That week committee members were to make follow up phone calls to leaders of the congregation reminding them of the Saturday evening meeting with Pastor Schkade.

The action plan worked well. For my four sermons I did a series on the theme "A Christian Steward is..." I used the three part outline of chapter one of this project as the outline for my three week Bible Class on the subject of Christian stewardship.¹⁷ The meeting with Pastor Schkade on Saturday Evening, Feb. 10, 1996, was attended by about 50 congregational leaders. All told members of First Lutheran pledged to increase their

¹⁷These sermons and Bible Studies are found in Appendix D and Appendix E.

giving to the Lord's work by between \$40,000 and \$ 50,000 a year.

Evaluating Our Progress

At this point we have come full circle to the end of the planning process. As noted in chapter three, the purpose of this phase is to evaluate how well the plan is or is not working and on the basis of this evaluation make recommendations as to how the congregation should proceed from this point on. At First Lutheran the Church Council and I have been responsible for this task. Each year, at the January Quarterly voter's meeting, I give a report to the congregation concerning how well we are accomplishing our objectives and realizing our vision for the future.

I intend to use this section of chapter four to evaluate what effect, if any, the planning process has had on the ministry of First Lutheran Church as this congregation seeks to be a more faithful steward of the Gospel. How well has the congregation done in seeking to accomplish the objectives set forth in the plan adopted by the congregation in 1994? Has the accomplishment of those objectives contributed towards the realization of the goals for the future set forth in the vision statement? I will take these two questions one at a time. Then at the end of this chapter I will draw some conclusions about the role which careful planning plays as a congregation seeks to be a faithful steward of the Gospel.

How well has the congregation accomplished the objectives outlined in the plan which was approved in October, 1994? In the area of staffing, in February, 1995, the congregation hired Gwen Huffman to serve as our part-time Director of Music Ministry.

She now directs the Adult Choir, the Adult Bell Choir, the Sonshine Bell Choir for 5th - 8th graders, plays organ half time, schedules the organists, assists the pastors with worship planning by selecting special music, and so on.

As you will recall the second staffing objective called for the congregation to hire a part-time retired pastor as my assistant. However, after careful consideration of all staffing options, the Board of Elders decided in February, 1996 to recommend that we instead issue a call to the seminary for a graduate to serve as our associate Pastor. The congregation approved this proposal and on June 16, 1996 Pastor Rick Cody was installed as our Associate Pastor. His primary responsibilities are in the areas of youth ministry, evangelism and assimilation. He also assists me in all areas of pastoral care.

The results in the building category have been more mixed. The Building for 2000 Committee was formed, the services of architect were procured and "Building for 2000" fund was established in January and February of 1995. This committee has accomplished a number of the tasks assigned to it. The bathrooms in the Sunday School area were enlarged and remodeled. The roof has been worked on and many of the leaks have been fixed. Three temporary classrooms were built in the Spring of 1996 and are now in use by the Sunday School and adult education programs. A full scale plan for fixing up our present facilities and for adding a multi-purpose building was brought to the congregation in the Fall of 1995. However, lack of clear vision as to what kind of new building we need, as well as the lack of a plan for raising the funds necessary to pay for that new building have prevented this part of the plan from moving forward.

In the programs category the results have been varied. As we have already seen,

the Stewardship Committee has had great success in working towards the accomplishment of the objective for which it is responsible. Now the committee is working on completing the time and talent survey of the all the members of the congregation.

In the area of worship, the congregation voted in December of 1994 to add a second Sunday worship service. At the time there was significant concern expressed that the addition of a second service would cause a division among the membership. Out of respect for these concerns and because the self-study had revealed a need to build unity among the members, the congregation decided that on at least four Sundays during each year there would be only one worship service. On these Sundays the early service would be cancelled and all members would be encouraged to attend the 10:30 service. We have tried to plan these Sundays so that they would fall on a special festival or on a Sunday when the congregation could plan a special church dinner for all interested members. With those four exceptions the congregation voted to approve the addition of a second service. Thus on the first Sunday in February, 1995 First Lutheran added a second Sunday service at 8AM to the regular Sunday worship schedule.

During 1995 another objective, related to the area of worship was added to the congregation's long range plan. In the Summer of that year the congregation established and appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of purchasing a new organ. This committee began meeting in the Fall of 1995. After a great deal of study and research, the congregation voted in April, 1996, to purchase a new Rodgers organ. That organ was installed in June, 1996, at a cost of about

\$ 45,000. The vast majority of the funds needed to pay for that organ, around \$30,000, were donated by members of the congregation in 1996 and the cost of the organ was paid in full in January, 1997.

Another great success has been in the area of adult education. Our progress in this area has been directly related to the building of three temporary class room buildings and the calling of an associate pastor. On previous occasions, when we had tried to add a second Adult Bible class on Sunday mornings we always seemed to run into two main obstacles: (1) a reluctance among the members to attend a Bible Class taught by a lay person and (2) a lack of a good room in which to hold that second adult class. But then, starting in the Fall of 1996, with the addition of Pastor Cody and the availability of the third new classroom building, those two obstacles were removed. Indeed, we were even able to offer a couple of classes taught by a lay person. One step in the action plan developed by the Board of Education which helped to open this door was the conducting of a congregational survey which asked the members of First Lutheran what kinds of classes they would like to attend.

One area of concern that was raised during the self-study process had to do with caring for all the inactive members at First Lutheran. As you will recall, one objective called for the establishment of a Caring Ministry Team to assist the Pastors and the Elders in this area of ministry. Progress has been slow in this area. There have been two training courses offered (one in 1995 and another in 1996) to assist members in learning how to care for inactive members. However, the Board of Elders and I have failed to take the next step. We have not yet laid out an action plan for organizing and sustaining a

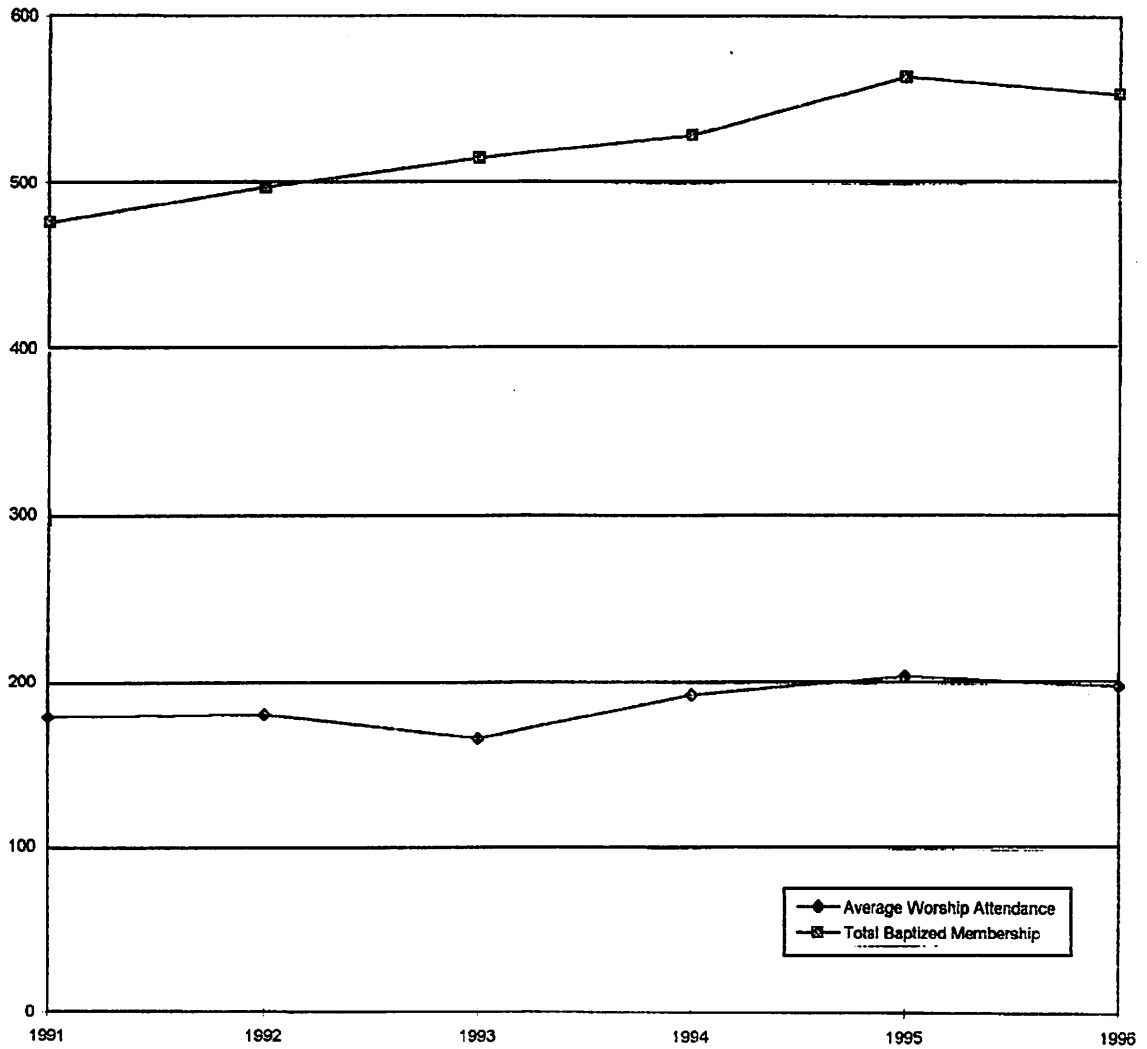
purposeful effort to reach out to and care for the inactive members of First Lutheran Church.

One objective that has unofficially been dropped from the congregation's plans is the establishment of an ad-hoc committee to study the possibility of starting an infant care facility as part of the congregation's outreach to the community. "Growing out to reach others" continues to be an area of weakness for this congregation. No action has yet to be taken by the Evangelism Committee in determining what kind of specialized ministry we will use to reach out to the unchurched in the Texarkana community. Many ideas have been proposed. The congregation has even been led through a demographic study of population trends in the Texarkana community. However the congregation has so far been unable or unwilling to make a commitment in this area.

That brings me to the second question I wanted to consider in this evaluation phase. Has the accomplishment of these objectives contributed towards the realization of the goals which were set forth in the vision statement?

Once again the statistical trends are revealing. Take Chart # 13, page 169, for instance. Since the congregation began the self-study process in 1994 the downward trend in worship attendance has been reversed. Indeed, worship attendance is up by 30 to 40 individuals a Sunday. The second Sunday Service has grown from an average attendance of 30 a Sunday in 1995 to 48 a Sunday in 1996. What's more the rise in worship attendance has fairly well corresponded with the growth over this same time period in the total baptized membership of the Congregation. This suggests that perhaps the congregation is doing a better job of assimilating new members. Chart # 16 will also give

CHART # 13 TOTAL MEMBERSHIP / WORSHIP ATTENDANCE



an indication that the addition of the second service may have been partially responsible for the rise in financial contributions by the members. One result of adding a second service, which you will not discover in the statistics, is the fact as we have had some inactive members become active again. They have chosen to re-enter the congregation by attending the smaller 8AM worship service. They seem to feel that they can begin attending worship again at this service without calling a great deal of attention to themselves.

I have included Chart # 14, page 171, to illustrate the effect that having a greater variety of Adult classes available for members to choose from has had on total enrollment by adults in our Sunday School program. Adult enrollment is up by almost 50 since 1993. In 1996, when we were able to start offering variety regularly and consistently, enrollment rose by a total of 22 adult members.

Chart # 15, page 172, indicates that there has also been a dramatic rise in the number of members gained on an annual basis. In the past three years we have gained 30 to 40 members a year , compared with 28 a year in 1992 and 1993. What this chart does not reflect is the fact that whole families of children and sometimes also the adults have been baptized in the past two years. Even though there was a net decrease in 1996, we have been gaining more members lately from the unchurched part of our community. The reason for the net decrease in 1996 is twofold. For one thing a number of families were transferred out of the Texarkana area. Secondly, we contacted a number of inactive members in 1996 who asked to be released from membership at First Lutheran.

The most revealing statistics are to be found on Chart # 16, on page 173. Total

CHART # 14 SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT 1992 - 1996

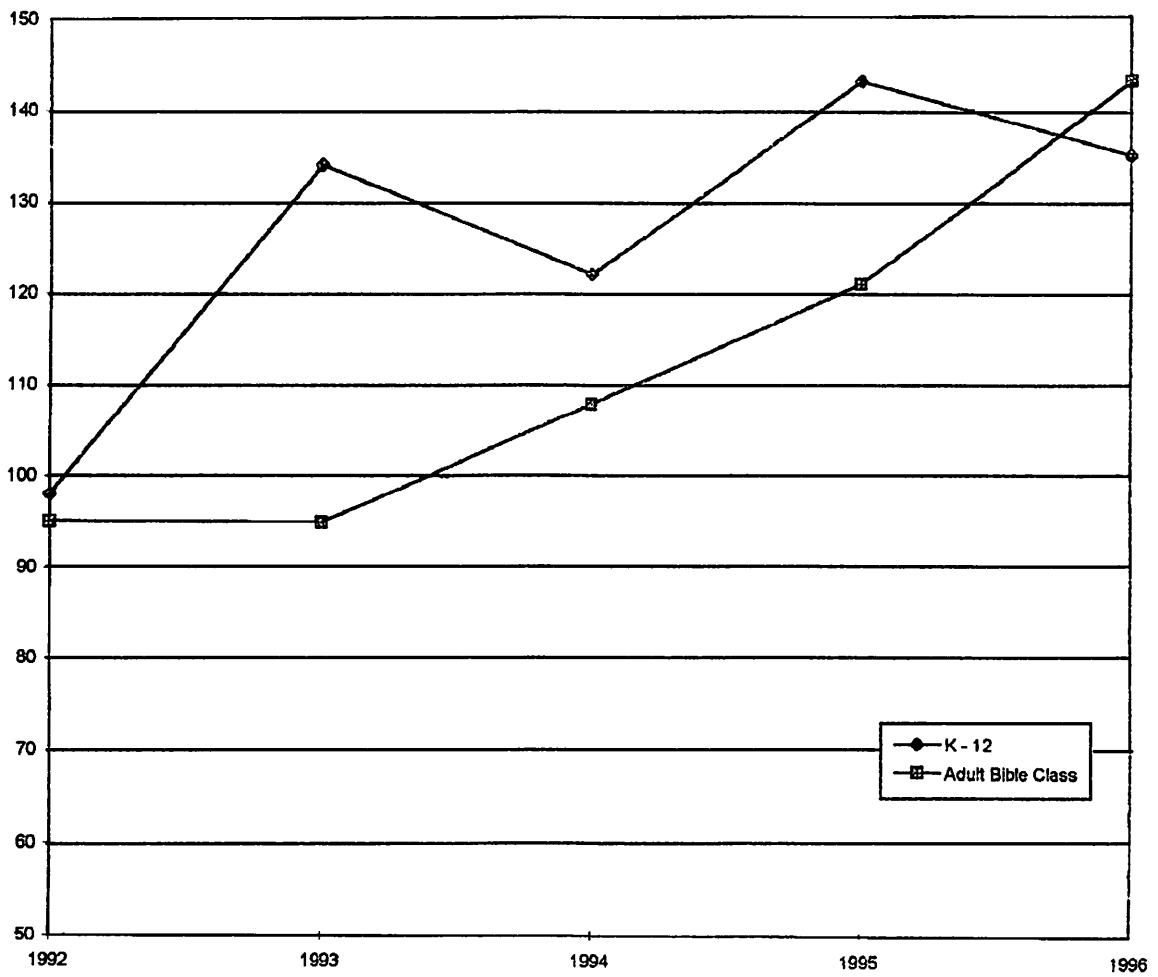


CHART # 15
NET MEMBERSHIP INCREASE / DECREASE
1992 - 1996

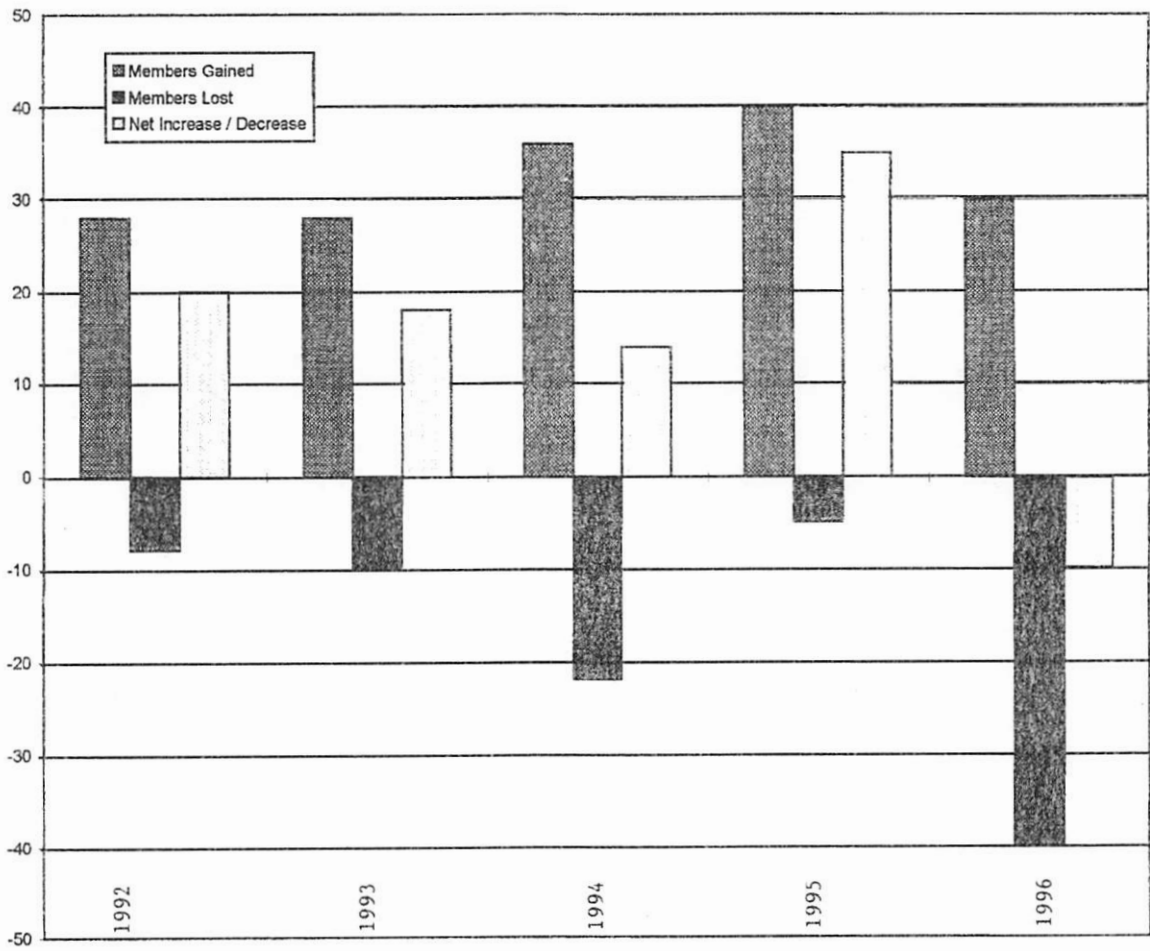
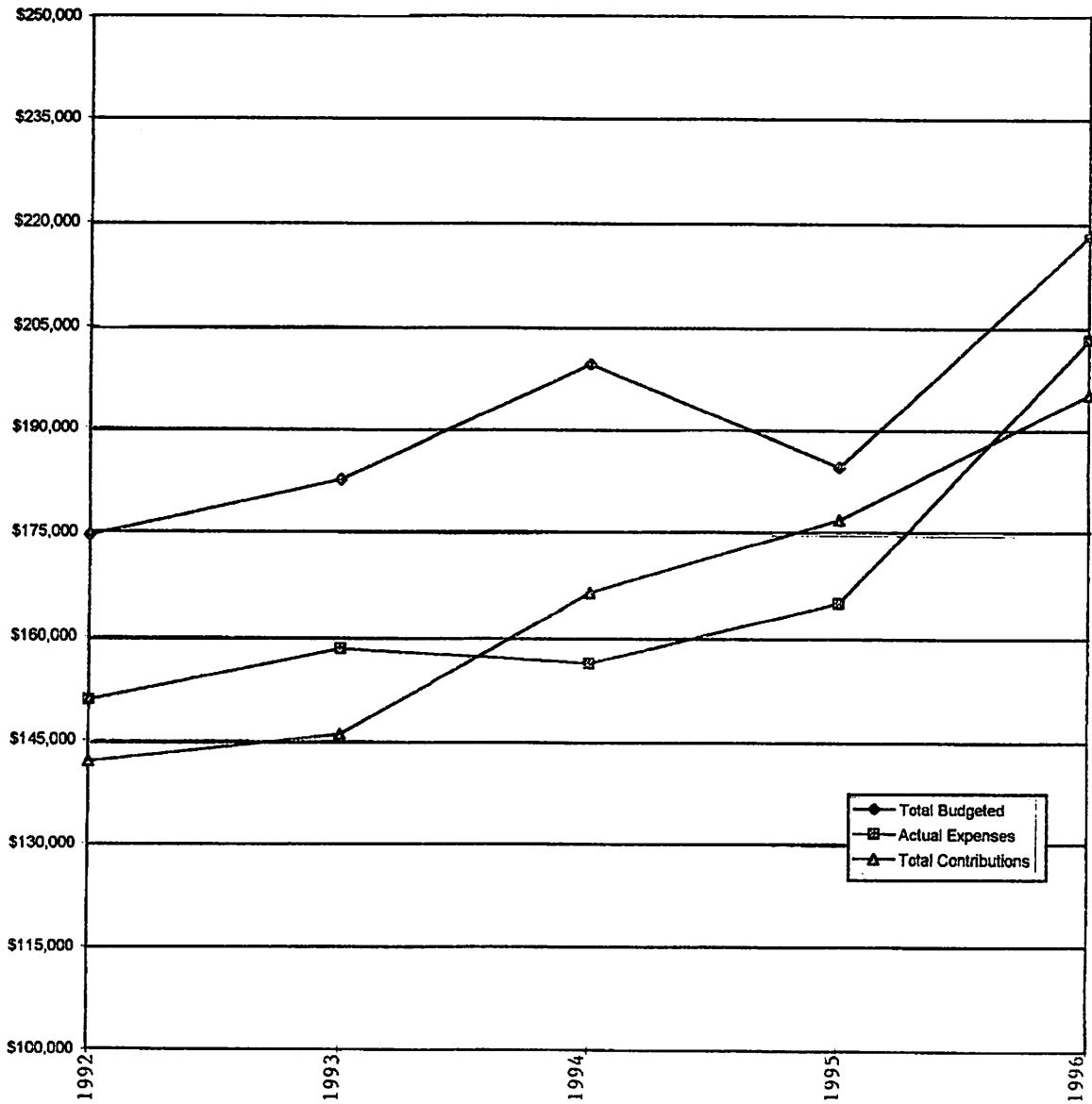


CHART # 16
FINANCES AT FIRST LUTHERAN
1992 - 1996



contributions by members to the general operating budget of the congregation are up by a total of \$ 50,000 a year since 1993. In 1996 contributions to the general budget were up by a total of \$ 17,000. What this chart does not reveal is the fact that in 1996 an additional \$ 35,000 was donated by members of First Lutheran to special designated funds like the organ fund. Did the increase in giving pledged by members during the "Faith in Action" campaign translate into a real increase in giving? The answer is most definitely yes.

As one examines all the data, one can definitely draw the conclusion that First Lutheran is steadily moving towards the goal of becoming a " growing church." As projected in the vision statement, the members of First Lutheran are being challenged to grow in stewardship of their time, talent and treasure and in outreach to their family, friends, community and world.

Some Conclusions

In 1 Corinthians 4:2, while writing about the stewardship of the Gospel which has been entrusted to us by God, Paul writes, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."¹⁸ My primary conclusion in this Major Applied Project is that for the congregation which desires to be a more faithful steward of the Gospel, the use of the planning process is both appropriate and essential.

Careful planning is at the heart of what it means to be a steward. The word

¹⁸1 Corinthians 4:2, NIV.

"steward" means to be a manager of property which has been entrusted to your care by the owner. Such faithful management of what belongs to another quite naturally involves careful planning. In other words, planning is one of the primary tasks of stewardship.

I believe that our experience at First Lutheran serves to reinforce this conclusion. Of course, some of the goals we have achieved in the last three years may have happened with or without the use of the planning process. However, I believe that the majority of objectives would not even have been attempted had we not engaged in this planning process.

The importance of careful planning became obvious once again during the implementation phase. The primary reason the stewardship committee was so successful with the "Faith in Action" campaign was the fact that they first developed an action plan for working toward their objectives. In the case of the Building for 2000 Committee we have seen that the lack of such an action plan for fund raising has been one of the principle obstacles which has prevented the congregation from moving forward with the building of a new multi-purpose facility.

The planning process helps a congregation in the stewardship of the Gospel in a number of ways. First of all, careful planning helps to focus the activities of the congregation towards the fulfillment of the mission God has entrusted to His people. As I stated in the first chapter, Christian stewardship is much more than deciding how we should use our time, talents and treasures. Christian stewardship encompasses the whole

mission of the church of making "disciples of all nations."¹⁹ Every activity of the congregation is related in some way to that central mission. Thus every activity of the congregation is an act of stewardship. The process of studying what God's Word says about the mission of the church, as well as that of writing mission and vision statements served to bring that mission back to the center of all that we do as a congregation. Careful planning helps a congregation to have a clear understanding of how to answer the questions, "Why are we here?" and "What are our responsibilities as stewards?"

Secondly, careful planning brings a sense of coordination to a congregation's various activities. If you have no plan, what often happens is that the various groups and committees in a congregation each carry out their own individual responsibilities without any consideration of or relationship to what the other groups are doing. Carefully developing a plan for the ministry of the whole congregation helps to change that. When a congregation has one overall goal to work towards this provides a sense of direction to all the activities of the various groups and committees within the congregation. As each group within the congregation plans and carries out their individual responsibilities they are able to do so in coordination with what the other groups are doing. A plan for the whole congregation enables each group and committee to work towards a common goal.

In the third place, use of the planning process enables the congregation to be stewards of the Gospel in a way that is appropriate to the congregation's ministry context. The plan for First Lutheran was developed only after we had carefully listened to the

¹⁹Matthew 28:19, NIV.

needs and concerns of the members of First Lutheran, examined the community around us, and studied what God's Word had to say about the mission He has given to us. We developed our plan on the basis of all that we learned during that listening process.

Through this project, as a result of both successes and failures, I have learned a great deal about how to do good planning. You will notice that the largest section of this chapter is devoted to the development phase of the planning process. The temptation is to grow impatient with the development phase, rush through that phase and go right to the implementation phase. That is one of the worst mistakes you can make. Patient listening and careful development of the plan will save a lot of time and trouble during the implementation phase. If you are careful in the development phase, the plan you develop and the objectives you write will give a clear direction as to what needs to be done in the implementation phase to accomplish those objectives and reach those goals. We also found that all that we did to include members in the development phase contributed a great deal towards the feeling among the members that this was their plan, not just the plan of the Futures Committee.

One of the reasons that the planning process enables the congregation to accomplish more than would otherwise be accomplished is the fact that careful planning involves accountability. Indeed, accountability is key to a plan's success. Simply having objectives is not enough. Those groups that are assigned responsibility for a particular objective must be held accountable. They must be asked to report regularly on the progress they are making as they work towards the accomplishment of that objective. Part of the reason that the ad-hoc committee on the formation of an infant care facility

was never organized, was the simple fact that no one held the church council accountable for completing this objective.

Another key to successful planning is flexibility. Once a plan is written and approved that does not mean that the plan cannot change. Everyone must understand that a plan is an outline or strategy. The specific steps in that outline are not written in stone. As a congregation carries out a plan, they often come to the conclusion that certain steps in the plan, which looked appropriate when the plan was written, in reality won't work. The Board of Elders came to this conclusion as they worked on staffing. The original plan called for the congregation to call a retired pastor to assist me on a part-time basis. As the Board of Elders did more careful study of this issue they came to the conclusion that calling a retired pastor would not meet the present ministry needs of the congregation. Therefore they recommended that the congregation call an associate pastor. The understanding that a plan is flexible and can be changed enabled the congregation to move in this new direction.

Another important key to planning in the parish is the relationship between the pastor and the members of the congregation. For planning to be successful the pastor and the members must understand their relationship as a partnership. This is what I attempted to describe in chapter two. Both the pastor and the members of the congregation must be involved in this process. As I noted, God has entrusted the stewardship of the Gospel to both the office of the pastor and to the priesthood of believers. The Pastor, as the holder of the public office of the ministry, has a very important leadership role to play in the planning process. His primary role is to lead the congregation to understand what God's

Word says about the mission God has given to them and how that mission applies to their specific ministry context. Yet the involvement of the members of the congregation is also essential. Nothing will happen without their input, hard work, commitment and support.

Finally, most important of all to the planning process is the blessing of God Himself. Paul wrote the following in 1 Corinthians:

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe - as the Lord assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.²⁰

Simply having a carefully laid out plan will not guarantee that a congregation will grow. Plans do fail. Some of our plans have failed. All that a plan does is serve to guide and focus the congregation's efforts to preach the word and administer the sacraments. In other words a plan helps a congregation to be a more faithful steward of the Gospel. However, the Gospel always remains the means through which God motivates and enables a congregation to be a faithful steward of the Gospel. Therefore, as a congregation carries out a plan, that congregation always puts faith in God, not the plan, to provide whatever growth He wills to give. Our God, after all, is the chief steward.

²⁰1 Corinthians 3:5-6, NIV.

APPENDIX A

1994 SURVEY RESPONSES

Question # 1**When you brag about the congregation what do you brag about?**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Response</u>
activities	50	Activities for the young and old
Adult Ed	13	What I learn about my faith. What we believe.; What we learn from the Bible
Adult Ed	45	Bible study - manner
Adult Ed	50	Bible studies
Adult Ed	50	We teach our religion - not infiltrated. Teaching is stable Tradition. Same teaching as when I first started going
Adult Ed	50	Bible Class
Adult Ed	65	The Bible study classes
Adult Ed	70	Our wonderful Bible Studies
Adult Ed	73	Bible study classes enjoyable
attendance	31	That our attendance is large and regular
building	14	The beautiful big church building
building	16	The pretty church
building	30	Location of the church, shape of the church
building	36	Like the design of the building
building	40	location of church
building	50	Building location
building	50	The beautiful sanctuary
building	60	Our beautiful church
building	65	Beautiful physical structure
building	75	Church
caring	30	Wonderful caring people
caring	30	Caring attitude of congregation
caring	40	When we had our baby everyone was so nice to us. Everyone was very excited and concerned about us
caring	40	Friendly church, caring, warm
caring	50	How they rally to families in times of sorrow or difficulty.
closeness	18	Close know group
closeness	50	Closeness of people and caring
commitment	50	Lot of people who are committed to the church
community	15	Serving the community
cooperation	40	Working together to help others
fair	30	Fair booth success
fair	30	Friendly, respectable way the church members treat

		the carnival workers
fair	36	The fair is a good witness
fair	40	Good food serves at the Four States Fair.
fair	45	Fair- good work - one outreach at fair
fair	50	The success of the Fair booth able to purchase the new sign for the church
faithful	60	Faithful people have time members try to better ourselves all the time grow spiritually
family	20	The close family atmosphere
family	27	Seems to be close knit family
family	60	Unity and family atmosphere that exists
finance OK	60	Congregation is on decent foundations financially
friendly	20	friendly know everything- happy to see you there make you feel like you did the right thing by coming
friendly	20	Good greeting system- people are friendly
friendly	25	Friendliness of our people
friendly	30	Friendly
friendly	30	Friendliness
friendly	35	Friendly welcome to visitors
friendly	35	Warm friendly family church
friendly	40	Very friendly and easy for new members to come in and feel a part of Church family
friendly	40	Uniqueness and friendly
friendly	40	Friendliness and support system especially in crisis situation
friendly	40	Friendliness
friendly	40	Don't really = well established friendly people
friendly	40	The friendliness of the people However it does not always come across. About how much we love each other concerns for each other
friendly	40	Appreciate the church being liberal enough for people to appreciate. WE have friendly people (a lot of 'southern' hospitality
friendly	40	Friendliness, closeness
friendly	42	How friendly the people are and the caring the people are
friendly	44	Friendly, loving, caring
friendly	44	Friendly
friendly	45	The closeness and fellowship of the people friendship, caring sharing
friendly	45	Friendly people
friendly	50	Everyone friendly care about other members a lot
friendly	50	very friendly congregation

friendly	50	Friendly caring
friendly	50	Friendliness
friendly	50	Friendly, dedicated members
friendly	50	Friendliness openness acceptance of the people. Choir and multi generation make up
friendly	50	Friendly atmosphere, feel welcome, devout, predictable
friendly	52	The friendly people and how caring the people are. Great I feel after leaving Sunday School and Church
friendly	55	Friendly and nice
friendly	55	Concern for one another. friendliness
friendly	60	Friendly
friendly	60	A friendly congregation
friendly	60	People work together well and are friendly, greet visitors
friendly	60	Good fellowship
friendly	60	Members are friendly
friendly	65	Friendliness
friendly	65	Close congregation
friendly	70	Friendly people
friendly	70	People are real friendly- helpful to sick and needy. Felt that when I lost my husband
friendly	73	Friendliness of pastor and congregation
friendly	80	Friendliness
friendly	82	Friendliness
involvement	73	The way everyone is willing to work together
leadership	20	The strong leadership within the congregation
leadership	60	Good leadership (SS look to leaders for future)
members	50	How solid the people are. stability of members
none	40	I don't brag about congregation
none	70	No answer
one church	40	We're special because only one 'Lutheran' congregation in this part of the country
openness	30	open-mindedness
openness	45	This congregation is more accepting of new ideas- less traditional not of one mind set
pastor	13	About our Pastor and his teaching. He knows how to explain the Bible so that we understand
pastor	16	Pastor
pastor	17	Great pastor
pastor	17	About the pastor and sermons
pastor	25	The pastor how well he interacts with all members of

		congregation. treats everyone as unique and treats them special
pastor	30	Pastor
pastor	30	Pastor
pastor	31	Our outstanding pastor
pastor	39	Pastor makes Bible study fun to attend
pastor	40	Pastor
pastor	45	Good sermons
pastor	50	Always tells people about our pastor. Hope he stays and makes Texarkana his home
pastor	50	Teaching ability of our pastor
pastor	50	Minister is a caring person-great teacher
pastor	50	Pastor
pastor	55	The pastor
pastor	55	Our pastor
pastor	60	Excellent pastor
pastor	60	Sermons
pastor	60	Preacher
pastor	60	The pastor
pastor	62	Our pastor
pastor	65	The pastor
pastor	65	Pastor caring
pastor	68	Bible Studies
pastor	68	Good sermons
pastor	70	Pastor has good sermons, enjoy the sermons; helps me through the week
pastor	70	good sermons
pastor	70	Our minister. He is the greatest that we have ever had. He is so caring
pastor	80	Preacher preaches gospel
pastor	80	How close I feel to minister, feel like I can talk to him
Pastor	82	The gospel is preached
people	30	Nice people, rich heritage
people	40	The people
people	55	How nice the people are
people	55	Our people
programs	32	Spares and Pares, youth activities Different things that all going on like the super bowl party and special activities
programs	36	Difference age group activities
size	14	That this church is bigger than most Lutheran Churches I have been to
size	30	Small church

size	65	The larger congregation
spirituality	60	Spirituality
SS	30	Sunday school
stewardship	50	Financial situation, sometime feel If I had a lot of money it would be given without earmarking wish this were true in our church
theology	30	Scripture as basis of teaching, preaching
theology	31	How much I enjoy the Lutheran Faith as a whole (in sea of Baptist seems like a constantly 'explain' to others about Lutheran
theology	35	Doctrine of the Church is Grace. Salvation by grace vs salvation by works
theology	35	Lutheran Church is by salvation by grace as opposed to a hell-fire and brimstone religion that makes you afraid. peace not fear
theology	38	The traditions and the symbolism
theology	40	We are special because we are Lutheran, everyone else seems to be a Baptist in this area
theology	40	Lutheran Religion
theology	40	Accurate doctrine, of LCMS, based on scripture-based on grace through faith in Jesus Christ
theology	40	Believe in the Bible total Bible true Word
theology	40	Our doctrine begin right from the Word
theology	50	Our Synod our stand on the total accuracy of scripture
theology	50	Feeling of confidence in our foundation of doctrine and direction
theology	50	Strong doctrine based on God's Word is reason for being a Lutheran Church
theology	50	Lutheran consistency
theology	50	Teaches the true Word of God
theology	55	Word of God is taught and preached right from the scriptures
theology	60	We don't get side tracked by secular items
theology	60	Gospel is central emphasis of our congregation
theology	60	The services are beautiful, our interpretation of the Bible is right. This church is right for me. Love church
theology	60	Teach the gospel
theology	60	Practice beliefs
theology	70	Customs of the church
theology	75	Proud of our religion
theology	80	taught what we believe in before we join the church

theology abortion	50	Our position on abortion
welcome	50	Outsiders feel welcome/members fell welcome when they visit
worship	11	My best friend-her singing mainly the music of the congregation
worship	20	Traditional worship is positive to me. enjoy communion
worship	24	Get a lot out of services and its people I know I enjoy the services without feeling pressured for money
worship	30	Reverent worship services
worship	50	About our form of worship participation without being put on the spot
worship	50	I like old order of service but have adjusted
worship	55	A special services
worship	60	Music good organist
worship	60	The liturgy of our religion. Was born Lutheran not happy in some instances with church but will stay Lutheran
worship	65	Variety in services and maintain heritage
worship	80	Communion
worship	82	Singing
worship bell choir	15	The Bell choir
worship choir	15	The choir
worship music	39	Beautiful organ music
worship music	68	Good music and singing
worship organist	40	Two organist
worship reverence	60	The atmosphere of the church. the reverence
youth	15	Youth teaching in Bible study
youth	15	Active youth group
youth	20	Have more youth activities than used to have
youth	30	Youth group
youth	30	The youth-kids seem to enjoy the activities they belong to
youth	30	Youth
youth	35	Two youth groups for various age levels
youth	40	Youth program are focused on activities
youth	45	Youth activities
youth	60	bunch of active youth
youth	62	Our young people, how they take part in helping in any way they can i.e. Easter breakfast. Act in church. Compared to other our OK
youth	68	youth program

Question # 2**When you are concerned about the church what are you concerned about?**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Response</u>
aging	30	Age of the people in the church we are an aging congregation without new people joining the church
aging	35	He feels it is a geriatric congregation
aging	55	Elderly- if we really have a genuine concern as a church
apathy	35	Lack of excitement/support for activities/worship
apathy	40	Not doing much, not going anywhere-stuck in a rut
attendance	31	Adult Bible Class attendance seems so low
attendance	35	Attendance going down especially young people. People drifting away from the church. Becoming a geriatric church
attendance	40	So little attendance at Bible Studies
attendance	60	Worship attendance, contributions, and Bible class attendance
attendance	65	Attendance isn't better
attendance	70	Need better attendance from the inactive members
attendance	82	Future attendance
budget	30	Money
budget	31	Financial obligations (meetings budget)
budget	35	Financial stability of church
budget	40	Financial situation
budget	50	Finance
budget	50	Meeting the budget shortfalls
budget	55	Programs we can't afford we over spend
budget	60	Spending more than we are taking in. How long can this continue?
budget	60	lost grounds last several years financially
budget	60	Finances
budget	60	Worry about budget
budget	60	Just how are we going to pay for things
budget	60	May have to give up some thing to meet our budget
budget	75	Finances over stepping ourselves maybe don't realize it
budget	82	Finances
building	44	The building and surroundings are dilapidated, unkempt, run down. embarrasses me
building	50	Our facilities also restrict us as far as any great amount of growth

building	50	Need for a larger facility-inadequate kitchen, fellowship hall, narthex too small. Need place for youth activities
building	60	Need more room and bath rooms
building	60	The congregation as a whole is not very friendly. The building does not lend itself to being friendly. narthex to small
building vicarage	60	Fix up vicarage for counsel rooms, youth center, or sell it. not need rental property
change	30	Hard to accept change
cliques	35	Same small core group involved over and over
cliques	40	Too small of group guiding all activities
cliques	50	Formation of cliques, internal strife
cliques	60	Membership being fragmented
commitment	40	What do we want on congregation to do in the future-location, commitment time talents, treasures
commitment	50	Members don't have church as top priority, too many other life demands. Church not have deep commitment
communication	30	Lack of communication
competition	50	Competition with other churches
culture	30	Hard for people of community to relate to the northern culture
culture	30	The church is going to 'die: because type is 'Yankee' church vs 'southern ' church
decisions	60	Why such elaborate 75th if we can't afford it borrowing from organ fund.
decisions	60	Don't spend money wisely. like hiring sorry roofers-still leaks-need to hire reputable workers
decline	30	New members - babies and up are scarce
decline	40	Us dwindling the numbers do low in the 80's. Worried church would close.
decline	40	Filtering out
decline	40	Loosing membership aging of congregation
decline	42	Decline of membership in the future
dissension	25	Dissention of the church - but has corrected itself
dissension	30	Can't work together as a team- Groups working against each other: disharmony
dissension	30	Conflict involving factions within the church
dissension	55	Some dissension between some members
dissension	60	discord among us
dissension	70	If there is any unrest among the members-their not agreeing on things. Try to get together

elderly	45	Programs for senior citizens i.e. morning games with lunch together
elderly	50	senior need programs for elderly
families	40	Numerous breakup of families, and how we nurture and help them stay together during these difficult times
family problems	39	How individual families in the church are dealing with family problems. Do they have family devotions. Problem at home with family
friendly	70	Need to be more friendly; put ourselves out more to speak to people
future	16	About the churches future
future	60	Welfare of future church
growth	40	That we may not have growth in all the areas that we should
growth	40	Growth number growth
growth	50	Attracting and retaining young adults
inactive	14	I worry about the people who quit coming to church
inactive	30	Loosing membership
inactive	35	While there are many activities some never come
inactive	40	Some families not being happy or fed properly
inactive	40	Concern about the inactivity people in our church
inactive	40	The inactive members, why aren't they in church participating
inactive	40	Some come in and then drift off
inactive	50	People who start coming a lot drop out, how do we reach out or try to keep them here (try to find out what happened)
inactive	50	The members who have not attended for a long time
inactive	52	I worry about losing the young people in our church
inactive	55	About the decrease in membership and active members
inactive	60	Number of inactive members to get back with out offense attitude. If not do it my way then I won't do it or participate
inactive	65	More people aren't interested in worship of church
inactive	70	I worry about the drop outs from the congregation
inactive	70	Inactive members that aren't coming to church regularly
inactive	73	Loosing members why? Not increasing membership, so many elderly
inactive	80	Too may people leaving congregation

internal	40	About people getting wrapped up in little things - things that don't really matter-Sometime a little out of focus
internal	40	Getting too wrapped up in itself
internal	45	Too concerned with in-reach activities
internal	45	Self observed-we worry about our own problems not trusting in Christ
internal	70	I worry about our problems and pray for solutions
involvement	30	The fact that just a few people are the ones doing all the work
involvement	31	That people in my age group 25-35 will not be as involved as older members are
involvement	50	Involvement or lack of it by membership
knowing members	31	Not knowing some members after both of us have attended for so long
mission	35	Treat church more as social club rather than place to teach and spread the gospel
mobility	60	Mobility of membership
no growth	30	Lutherans in the area not coming to Lutheran church because 1 no activities for kids, 2 no one speaks to you when you do come
no youth	50	Lack of young married Youth in congregation without the young married/youth there is no future growth
none	40	I don't really worry
none	50	Don't worry about this congregation
none	55	I have no worries when you trust in God
none	60	Don't really worry I can't need to worry about myself
none	65	Really don't worry about much. great congregation you ought to go to other congregations
not friendly	55	About not being overly friendly
not grow	24	Church isn't growing sees nothing evolving out of it and no one knows anyone
not know	30	Doesn't really worry about it - new in church- not familiar with church issues
offense	27	Things being said to offend others. hard feelings develop
OK	70	Congregation is fine
openness	40	Not always open to change and new people
outreach	15	We are not as expressive about our faith as we should be
outreach	20	Outreach reaching out to the unchurched getting to those people and attracting them

outsider	31	Do they feel like we do at times? Sort of like an outsider at a hometown board meeting
pastor	30	I worry that pastor is going to have a nervous breakdown worrying about everything
pastor	50	Not having a dedicated, sincere minister- but we have one now
pastor	50	Not having a minister who would visit the sick, not referring to present minister-he lives what he preaches
pastor	50	Finding another pastor like present pastor
pastor	65	That the pastor may accept a call to another church
pastor	65	We have attended smaller churches that rarely kept a minister more than two years
preschool	30	Preschool shut
shut-in	17	Worry about people who are sick or hurt
sinful	30	It's a sin to worry
spirituality	40	Lack of interest in prayer
spirituality	50	Think we could all improve spiritually
spirituality	60	Spiritual needs, need more members in Bible class
splitting	40	Splitting up where would I go
staff	32	What are we going to do about DCE. Need to have full time youth ministry. Need someone knowledgeable in back group right here in church
staff	60	DCE need more guidance and direction if we can afford them
staff	60	We need a DCE but why are we hiring one if we can't afford it
staff	60	Problem will have to face us DCE many coming back aggressive
stewardship	30	money
stewardship	30	Money
stewardship	40	I worry that we think too much about money
stewardship	40	Financial giving levels of our church
stewardship	44	People don't give so can not fix buildings
stewardship	50	Lack of financial giving vs what it looks like they actually have
stewardship	50	Financial deficit and lack of giving
stewardship	50	Money to pay expenses
stewardship	50	Concern stewardship in general of the people for church to grow means we must return to God a portion- first fruits
stewardship	60	Some people have said they won't give more because they aren't informed about gifts

stewardship	60	maybe not challenged enough
stewardship	60	We need money for DCE and a letter was sent to raise money for Pastor Helberg which seems weird when needed here
stewardship	60	We're spending more money than we have over projected budget- budget not realistic for how much congregation is able to give
stewardship	62	The one that are shut-in They shared and visited more about of finances and not enough money
stewardship	65	Don't meet budget
stewardship	65	Meeting our financial obligations - mission budget and giving timely raises to staff, especially pastor
stewardship	68	Stewardship - time, talent and treasure Do we have enough money coming in for all the projects planned?
theology	40	We tend to forget that we are all sinners and that we all make mistakes and that we should be forgiving
too big	20	Getting too big
uncompromising	45	Minority of people who are uncompromising for a common solution for all. The only solution is the one they agree with. not others
unfriendly	36	People not being friendly. Snub others not in their group. visitors ignored
welcoming	68	Do we really welcome all new members as we should?
young	50	Young families that have no place in church
young adults	25	Lack of involvement by young adults. absence of young adults how is church going to grow
young adults	44	Lose the young adults if we don't minister to their needs
young excluded	35	Young families lack of activity for family unit inclusion \rather than exclusion of children
youth	11	Not organized activities for youth- i.e. valentines for seniors, people in charge didn't even show up
youth	13	Worry about the youth places for the year. Worry about the people being confirmed this year
youth	14	not enough youth focus
youth	17	About the youth group
youth	18	Not enough youth-low count in the 30's age group
youth	20	better youth program-more youth participate even elementary age. more activities so my girls will have things to do when they group

youth	30	Active youth program for people under 25. If not have young people the church will die
youth	38	The future the youth staying with the church
youth	40	About our youth. Lack of growth facility no place for the youth to gather
youth	40	Future the kids because they are the future-opportunities recreational and church relationship
youth	40	Worry about youth getting enough of spiritual background to sustain them after they graduate from high school
youth	50	Youth - young kids singles ministry
youth	50	The shortage of young people
youth	50	Keeping the youth interested in coming to this church
youth	55	Youth-keeping them in the church (young singles and married couples)
youth friction	20	Friction among the high school youth

Question # 3

If you wished for one thing to happen in the congregation, what would you wish for?

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Response</u>
accomplish goals	70	That we would accomplish all the goals on our agenda
activities	40	Change more activities seems like we do same things over and over
Adult Ed	40	More opportunities for bible study for people who work- Maybe some Home Bible study groups
attendance	40	More attendance
attendance	60	Attendance and offering to improve
attendance	60	Would like to see it filled up not just on Easter and Christmas
attendance	60	Where are all the people who are on our rolls. Where are they Sunday after Sunday, year after year. Don't understand
attitude	45	Attitude to change
building	13	Have more room
building	14	A new fellowship hall would be built
building	18	build a gym
building	30	Facilities to do things for kids activities, guest speaker
building	30	Buy empty building across the street
building	30	A community center on the church grounds basket ball court, activity for youth, fellowship hall, multipurpose building
building	30	Expand physical facility-boy basketball team
building	35	Need a financial/building challenge. we have not build/remodeled in a long time
building	38	Buy property across the street and build a youth building for basketball, ping pong, games, learning
building	40	Multipurpose building
building	40	Some type of physical facility for multi-purpose building
building	40	I wish we would get a nice gym for activities
building	40	Opportunity for out youth multi-purpose building
building	44	Clean the building until it was spic and span
building	50	Building for fellowship hall, kitchen, reception, Bible studies, SS rooms All purpose building
building	50	Would like to see a larger fellowship hall

building	55	Multi-purpose building for congregation
building	60	A need for additional space, classrooms, meeting rooms, separate heat and air much more economical. Where will money come from?
building	60	Would like to see the church expand its physical plant
building	60	Additional space in way possible separate building-multi-purpose gym, gathers, education. open access at various times
building	65	Someone to win the lottery so that new social hall could be built - new organ
building	70	I wish for a larger fellowship area for use by all
building	70	I wish that we could have a larger educational facility for the youth activities
building vicarage	70	I wish that the vicarage would be sold and the money used for building at the church
change	30	More acceptance of change
change	40	Change is uplifting
children	40	Wish we had more children in the Sunday School classes
cliques	31	For all of the cliques to be disbanded and a total overall 'family' atmosphere be formed
cliques	45	People would break up their groups and include others
cliques	60	No gossip or criticism of one another
cliques	73	Church is made up of groups within the church would like to see the groups open up. Be invited to homes
closed minded	50	The lack of change over many years due to attitude. 'We have never done that before' wish to be open to change allow new ideas
communication	30	Better communication
community	25	More out going to the community
continue work	32	We shouldn't stop everything waiting for the survey to be completed
cooperation	80	Wish could cooperate with Christ Lutheran Church
decisions	60	Less meetings
dissension	40	More greeting along less turmoil
dissension	50	See church completely unified. the church is divided we need to have division removed would like to be of one mind and heart
elderly	68	We have a good youth program, but I wish there was also something for the elderly, other than card playing

equipment	70	Talk louder so everyone could hear
formality	70	Less formality
growth	13	Wish for larger congregation
growth	17	More visitors would come to enroll-growth
growth	20	get bigger more people
growth	20	Growth and expansion
growth	25	Would double in size and we would have to expand the facilities
growth	30	That we would be able to grow in the community
growth	30	Twenty babies in the nursery every Sunday
growth	38	Growth more community involvement
growth	40	Grow by leaps and bounds.
growth	40	To reach more people. Find out why we can't seem to get beyond approximately 180 then stops. great commission no maximum number
growth	42	For the congregation to grow stronger
growth	50	Growth in members Growth in relationships by studying God's word content for the whole family of God
growth	50	Continue growth attracting young people
growth	50	Continue to grow
growth	55	Grow larger
growth	55	That it would grow more.
growth	60	Growth and unity
growth	60	Wish that we could grow in numbers
growth	60	Increase membership
inactive	62	For it to grow-have outreach program to reach members that are not active and get them active
inactive	70	All the members who have dropped out or gone astray will come back. I am praying that they will
inner peace	40	Each person in our congregation would find inner peace and happiness for themselves
involvement	30	Get more people involved in all church activities
involvement	50	More people would be involved in the decisions, running and activities of the church
involvement	60	Wish people would take more interest in all the church's activities
knowing	40	People be closer here are a lot of people I don't know, can't put names and faces together
men	55	Have a society for men as you do for ladies
mission	35	Spiritual revival (put God first in lives and treat church that way)

none	65	Have not been attending long enough to recognize anything that needs changing
OK	60	I'm satisfied. Nothing I would really change
old-time religion	50	A little more of 'that old time religion'
openness	40	People to be more open for new ideas
outreach	30	Pre-school for getting new members
outreach	45	That people in the congregation would look to evangelize among non-traditional (typical) Lutherans
outreach	52	All people in the congregation would go out into the community and feel more at ease in spreading God's Word
outreach	65	More growth and outreach to the unchurched
outreach	65	Be able to evangelize in the community and bring unchurched souls in by the droves
participation	50	Want everyone to participate & give materially basic beyond this:
pastor	13	That pastor never leaves
pastor	30	Pastor to remain as our pastor
pastor	60	Want pastor to stay a long time
preschool	50	A Lutheran Christian Day School start with preschool and day care center use Vicarage for preschool and day care
programs	50	Provide programs for young families and seniors
project	35	Some kind of congregation project that had people so excited that they could not wait for next phase of it to happen
renewal	40	A renewal for people to come closer to God, a renewal of our faith
school	31	People in this area looking for alternative to public school
school	31	Would love to eventually see a Lutheran School of some sort
school	50	Parochial School bringing in youth
school	50	Parochial school
school	50	A parochial school
single women	35	More single women in church, would like to meet good Christian woman from 26-32 years of age
spirituality	40	A spiritual revival people would wake up to the Holy Spirit
spirituality	50	Increase spirituality lead to more involvement
staff	15	Would like to see the pastor more involved with the youth-More balance of pastor and DCE-DCE not just with youth

staff	16	To have previous DCE back as DCE
staff	17	Get a retired pastor to help pastor out more
staff	55	Full time staff person to help with youth and pastors visiting duties
staff	55	Permanent DCE that could work with both adults and children of all ages
stewardship	30	Money given by the congregation would support the expanded programs necessary to grow the church - money
stewardship	44	The congregation would give more money a big gift donation, win lottery
stewardship	75	Wish we were more solvent so we could support our programs better
stewardship	80	Want contributions to be sufficient to take care of needs
theology	50	maintain Lutheran traditions
theology	60	Keep beliefs and ideals the same as they are at present
theology	25	Loosing members to other churches because of our belief on communion
unity	20	Number of members remain constant see unity
unity	36	Everybody to get along, no fighting, no snubbing, no brown nosing, no two face
unity	45	Unity all be willing to pursue the same goal
unity	60	Peaceful with one another. accept people as they are. very important and understand their idiosyncrasy, They understand yours.
vicarage	45	Sell the vicarage and use money to add to existing building
volunteer criticized	82	Less criticism to those who do so much volunteer work for the church and then are criticized
Wed night	50	We might give a lift something to relate to practical applications of daily life
worship	39	Maybe different type of worship service, involving contemporary Christian music
worship	40	To offer contemporary services - 2 times a month as well as traditional
worship	50	Services during week
worship choirs	14	I wish that we'd start a children's choir and a young people's choir
youth	11	More dedicated people volunteers and staff for youth activities older kids decide types of activities

youth	20	Would be more of a diversity of age, more youth activities; other churches have better youth activities with 20's crowd working it
youth	27	More youth programs
youth	35	Expanded programs for people middle age and down so it would attract people of that age bracket
youth	39	More active youth program
youth	40	encourage young people
youth	40	Something to keep the youth interested
youth	55	Have more things for our youth
youth	70	More participation of the youth in the church
youth	70	Better program for youth

Question # 4

If you could change one thing in the congregation, what would you change?

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Response</u>
acolyte	13	Would like to be able to smile when performing acolyte duties. Feel very honored and happy to be selected to serve as an acolyte
acolyte	40	Acolytes chewing gum
Adult Ed	20	ladies class with issues relating to ladies not particularly taught by pastor
Adult Ed	50	Increase Bible class attendance
attitude	16	The attitude of some of the people
building	27	Would like to see more activity i.e. an activity center, recreation center
building	30	more room facility
building	30	Use resources of members to fix or consult on major problems of building, i.e. repairs, lower overhead
building	40	We need a multi purpose building
building	40	Building had too much design without enough utility
building	40	Physical layout of church , bathroom, more attractive, SS roms enlarge fellowship hall
building	44	get the building cleaner
building	45	Church needs to be cleaned and repainted
building	45	The building needs to be more functional with more room for youth activities and fellowship
building	50	Another rest room
building	60	Make more room and get more bathrooms
building vicarage	50	Out of rent business - vicarage to non members not purpose of church use it for church or sell it
building vicarage	70	I would like to see the vicarage sold and the funds used for education and fellowship buildings
change	35	To change membership relations from financial/ thing relationship to a more personal relationship/support in day to day life activity
change	40	getting people to want to change try new things
cliques	17	change so everyone would know everyone, and talk to each other
commitment	40	People would be more committed to the Lord and would put him first in their lives
communication	40	Not sure-more communication on what is going on. like finance we don't hear about it until we are in the hole

communication	60	Newsletter maybe to long but we need to get info to congregation members better information
confirmation	13	Earlier confirmation
constitution	35	Change constitution of church-it needs to be reworked to reflect the way we govern ourselves
cooperation	24	Would like to see congregation do more things together
decisions	15	Wish people would listen to each other. Then go and pray about whatever, then get together to make decisions - God's will not own
decisions	40	Congregation needs to be less fearful of change try some things even if potential for failure
decisions	50	Voters should have final say in everyday business of church-spiritual matters in hands of elders
dinner	45	Their perspective of what a good dinner is
directory	70	Church directory be up to date with members who are active
dissension	40	The way everyone is always bickering about money
dissension	40	No bickering- everyone could get along and our church could be and remain wealthy (in love & money to fit everyone's needs)
elderly	55	Senior citizens entertainment programs, cards, bingo
elderly	60	Remember the older members of the church (a ministry for the elderly)
elders	50	New elders need adequate instruction in their duties
elders	50	Change the way the elders assume their responsibility to see teachings of the church are taught
equality	36	To treat everyone equal regardless of money or looks
equipment	70	More volume to hear sermons, etc.
fair	30	Less time at the fair. Less emphasis on the fair. It only makes everyone mad at each other
fellowship	25	Increase the number of fellowship events, dinner, guest speakers, sponsored by different groups
friendly	60	Make people friendlier
friendly	62	People need to be friendlier and more caring of others
growth	25	There have been lot of changes already but make it larger
growth	40	That we would prepare to grow with the city- programs and facilities
growth	50	Enough growth that an early Sunday Service would be started

inactive	30	Method of staying in touch to help people stay in church-network for staying in touch-contact when notice they not in church
inactive	32	Get inactive members back into the church and active and get them into Bible class so they can learn God's Word
involvement	32	More people involved in Bible classes
involvement	40	Seemingly lack of interest that our congregation shows in getting involvement
involvement	50	More involvement of membership which will be reflected in attitude, financial support and Great Commission commitment
involvement	50	Somehow more affective more impact by all members in activities and meetings
involvement	60	Improve assimilation of new members
involvement	68	Have more people participate, by having a person serve on only one board or committee and for a certain length of time
lack forgiveness	40	Has to do with our lack of forgiveness
leadership	45	Greater participation by members in leadership roles of the church. Too few people willing to take leadership positions
married couples	31	Would really enjoy more young married couples
membership	60	more realistic membership roll number
men	30	more single men available
no change	38	Some old ideas
no change	50	Don't think things need to be changed- direction /format presently used is good
no change	80	Wouldn't change anything
none	35	Nothing
none	42	Nothing
none	60	Nothing to criticize
none	60	Can't think of any
none	65	Have not been attending long enough to recognize anything that needs changing
none	70	Nothing
OK	40	No complaints happy with the church
OK	55	Happy as it is
outreach	30	Need a pre-school for outreach
same	65	We are happy with the pastor and congregation I like status quo
school	50	Would like to see a Lutheran school possibly in old 'honda' car dealership

social gap	55	Eliminate the gap between the blue collar and white collar members
staff	11	Need trained staff to handle activities
staff	17	Not to renew the intern program
staff	30	Use money for salary for DCE
staff	60	not to have a DCE
staff	60	Eliminate DCE program and replace it with part time pastoral help
staff support	50	Be more supportive of Pastoral office
stewardship	50	People put God first. When programs are approved by voters, they would give money to support them
stewardship	60	Our thinking in general about our meeting of our financial obligations to God. It takes money to provide programs
teachers	30	Get student SS teachers from our youth group
theology	55	Closed communion
unchanging	30	German stubbornness-swear the details 'We have never done it this way before'
visitation	73	Would like to see program set up to see people in hospital and shut-ins
visitors	20	Information readily available to visitors
visitors	30	The church to be more friendly to new comers and have more programs for youth/families. Need follow up on visitors/new comers
women	50	Ladies Bible class-develop women friendships
worship	14	more church services, 2 Sunday Morning services
worship	20	need to quit singing every verse of every song and so many at communion
worship	20	2 services early morning and late morning- Wed services
worship	20	mid-week service other than religious seasons
worship	20	Play music faster, pulpit stationary and too big
worship	24	Change music
worship	30	More piano music for church services
worship	30	Change Christmas Eve to different time or night to make it easier for family gatherings
worship	35	Once or twice a month go back to the red hymnal
worship	38	The music
worship	44	Youth sitting in the back and being an obstruction and being distracting to my worship
worship	44	Like the red hymnal better-it had so much dignity to it Like having high mass I liked it
worship	44	The children's service

worship	50	Go back to the old hymnal
worship	50	Occasional services on Sunday night
worship	52	Celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday
worship	60	hymnal wants old hymnal back
worship	65	Use the hymns in the old hymnal very often Use liturgy from old hymnal. many beautiful hymns we no longer sing
worship	65	Change to two services in summer
worship	75	Maybe change our communion delivery
worship choir	55	Choir to sing every Sunday if we pay for a director-I love the choir to sing
worship Christmas	40	Christmas Eve service - have kids prior to Christmas Eve
worship	50	Would like to see communion more
worship hymns	70	I liked the little 'Gospel-paper-back hymnals' liked the old hymns in them
worship noise	82	The noise- we need more serenity and reverence ,less chasing to the rest rooms
worship organ	60	New organ
young members	50	encouraging young members
youth	14	more youth oriented services
youth	18	more involved in youth group and youth have more control of their meetings
youth	20	Need more emphasis on youth
youth	39	More participation in the youth groups, from parents and children. Having fun things for the kids to do
youth	40	More emphasis toward youth-Outlets for our youth-youth program to encourage friends from other churches. Open gym
youth	40	more activities for young people sports
youth	55	Adding to our SS program for young singles and young married
youth	70	Young people should be sitting further front with their families or all sit together with their friends
youth friction	20	The friction among the high school youth

Question # 5

**What would you like this congregation to be like in three years?
(attendance at worship, programs, buildings, staff, etc.)**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Responses</u>
activities	42	More group activity during the year and not just at special times of the year
apathy	40	Just the same unless survey makes the people realize that they're stuck in a rut
attitude	50	People are starting to turn back to their religion
attendance	14	More people will be attending
attendance	18	Attendance up a little
attendance	25	Attendance will be greater
attendance	30	Better attendance at church and at communion
attendance	30	Attendance about the same as now
attendance	31	Hopefully attendance will increase along with programs offered
attendance	32	Attendance at 350 and at least double in Bible study
attendance	35	Staff will be same size with same programs attended by same people that are currently involved
attendance	40	Worship attendance
attendance	40	Attendance smaller
attendance	40	Would like to see attendance go up at least 50% of our members attend
attendance	40	Attendance will be same probably
attendance	44	Same attendance
attendance	45	Attendance will be somewhat larger but not significantly larger
attendance	60	Attendance up need two services
attendance	60	Worship will increase
attendance	70	Attendance increase
attendance	70	Pray and hope attendance will be better
budget	75	We need to postpone building until finances are in order
budget	80	Finances
building	11	Building will need good cleaning
building	13	Try to improve church appearance
building	14	A new fellowship hall will be built
building	15	Family center, with more activities
building	18	Improvements made but not additional buildings
building	20	Building will be the same
building	25	Plans for additional SS rooms, multipurpose facility
building	30	Buildings same

building	30	Gym or multi-purpose facility
building	30	Buildings same as now
building	30	New building in this location - activity meetings rooms, etc.
building	35	Larger congregation with need to expand physical plant of our church, but won't be able because of finance
building	35	In middle of some major project building
building	36	Build a larger fellowship hall
building	40	We will either be completed or near completion in building additional facilities
building	40	Multi purpose building
building	40	A family center but do not feel as though this will happen- to help our youth be and stay interested
building	40	Nice to have gym or activity center for everyone never have too much room
building	40	See a multipurpose building built
building	45	We need to change- need more space
building	45	No building projects
building	50	Starting on our new multipurpose building
building	50	Recreation and meeting area additional income from nursery
building	50	Building program in planning stages or underway
building	50	Buildings/structure no change
building	55	Multi-purpose building built This would cause expansion in our youth
building	55	Would love to see a multipurpose building built, as a member asked to be built before her passing on
building	60	A new building enlarge our facilities
building	60	Multi-purpose building program
building	60	new buildings
building	65	Be embarked on a building program
building	65	Hope we can enlarge the physical structure of the church. especially back of church and parish hall.
building	70	Bell in place
building	73	It all involves money. would like to see maintenance on what we have already
building	80	needs to be cleaned up better and repairs need to be taken care of promptly
building	80	offices need to be cleaned up
building vicarage	80	either fix up vicarage as a meeting place for youth or any body or sell it

change	40	Afraid it will be about like it is now. don't see any large number of changes
change	50	More of the changes will hinge on what survey indicates and decisions used to make this change. Hopefully increase
commitment	20	More commitment for activities church help sponsor teams-spares and pairs more activities
community	15	Would hope they can get more into the community and interact with adults more
decisions	20	Won't be taken as seriously
decline	30	Crop of babies coming up is pretty scarce
decrease	30	If no change will be a diminished in attendance, due to different work schedules and stress of family. more influence on children
decrease	75	Up keep spending like we are the congregation decrease instead of increase
elderly	65	Like to see a seniors ministry
equipment	36	Church van
equipment	39	Church bus for youth so they can get to activities
family	50	Would like to see more programs on the family
growth	14	The membership will be much bigger
growth	15	Double in size
growth	17	Hope the attendance stays up and gain more
growth	17	Larger membership because little children will be added- several expecting ladies
growth	20	more people
growth	20	Similar but bigger
growth	20	Bigger congregation
growth	25	Sunday school will have grown, worship grow slightly
growth	30	Attendance more
growth	35	Larger, more financially stable, expansion of facilities, and expanded ministry, full time DCE or Vicar. fellowship hall
growth	39	To grow more involvement
growth	40	larger membership
growth	40	If truly select action strategies, opportunity for growth is here in Missouri Synod. Need more overt growth-visitors
growth	40	We will have more new members to transfer to FLC
growth	40	There will be well over 200 in congregation
growth	40	Attendance hope it will raise but concerned it will not
growth	50	Hope the church will grow and prosper-I think it will grow.

growth	50	More children
growth	50	Second worship service 250-300 per Sunday
growth	50	Attendance up
growth	50	Worship attendance growing
growth	50	I feel there will be a slow, steady growth
growth	50	Some growth
growth	50	10% larger communicate members
growth	55	Attendance will grow and need more space as it grows
growth	55	Hoping it will grow
growth	55	Probably won't grow to much
growth	55	Growth if many of our dreams can be accomplished
growth	60	Bigger more participation by more people
growth	60	We'll have continued growth
growth	60	Worship attendance up
growth	60	Would hope that we grow. If past ha anything to do with it, we will. He is a good man. the people are really missing out not coming
growth	60	The congregation will grow
growth	60	Increase in all categories
growth	60	Attendance at worship increasing
growth	65	Hope that the congregation would grow. That more space can be found for education and fellowship
growth	70	Bigger and better
growth	70	25 more members
growth	80	Thinks it will be larger
growth	82	Hopefully growth in all aspects
involvement	50	More people involved in our programs money to do it all
involvement	68	Hopefully better in all things mentioned in the above
leadership	60	Present leadership with plan and future committee will make a significant impact on participation and activities
leadership	60	depends on what we do. leadership should have place and why ;where they present a program
no change	27	Not much change envisioned
no change	30	No change no young people fewer people but if open to change then room for youth
no change	30	It will not change much. We'll gain a few and loose a few
no change	35	Thinks it will be the same and pretty much like it was in the past
no change	38	It will remain the same without some major changes

no change	45	Basically the same as now
no change	55	No change
no change	60	I don't expect any changes. Not predicting
no change	60	Won't change drastically need a turning point extend facilities and staff
no change	60	Possibly a little growth not much change
no change	65	Based on past performance, not much change
not grow	24	If it continues as it is it will dwindle. People are not willing to make sacrifice change and if not it will not grow
openness	36	Would like to be able to speak your mind to a person without hurt feelings.
openness	40	Be more open to all social levels
outreach	20	Outreach to youth
pastor	31	Pastor has too much to do already
pastor	44	Probably have a new pastor
pastor	50	Pastor that stays a long time- hard to grow when change every 3 to 5 years
pastor	70	If we keep pastor we will grow
planning	50	What develops from interviews and studies and completing it
preschool	30	Continue seeds that have been sown- preschool day care
programs	18	Programs about the same
programs	30	Programs more
programs	60	new programs
programs	60	Continuation of present programs
same	16	The same as now
same	30	Same as it is now. Maybe some new faces but several of the old ones gone yet basically the same
same	40	Same programs, same buildings, same staff(unless financial giving changes & our spirituality grows we won't be different)
same	40	It will be about the same as it is now
same	40	Probably much the same although some think we need more staff
same	40	About the same
same	40	If we can't make some changes it will stay like it is
same	44	Lot more of the older members will die- a lot like now
same	45	If we continue like we are now the same
same	50	Will be the same in all of these
school	39	Lutheran school
staff	14	A DCE will be added

staff	15	Would like to see a youth staff that could express the youth's views
staff	17	Someone to help pastor out and ease his load
staff	18	Staff permanent DCE
staff	25	Have more programs and staff
staff	25	Assistant pastor focus on elderly - current pastor focus on youth
staff	30	Permanent additional full time employee i.e. assistant pastor or DCE this person must be approachable
staff	30	Staff expanded to include DCE
staff	30	Some kind of permanent staff person
staff	30	change in staff
staff	31	Think we need a full time staff person for Christian Education
staff	32	Full time DCE on the staff
staff	35	A second professional staff person
staff	39	Permanent youth director
staff	40	See a full time DCE
staff	40	No staff
staff	40	Will have a Vicar or DCE
staff	40	Pastor needs more help
staff	40	Don't see much change without growth - staff not increase
staff	40	Don't see changes in Staff maybe another DCE-intern
staff	40	A retired pastor or one more experienced individual on staff
staff	44	Full time DCE
staff	45	Staff same size
staff	50	DCE, Assistance for pastor
staff	50	Assistant to pastor re: retired pastor to help with visit
staff	50	Hope we have DCE, needed for youth
staff	50	Staffing for youth services
staff	50	A vicar to help pastor, relieve him
staff	50	Instead of DCE intern a retired pastor position
staff	50	Second full time professional asst pastor
staff	50	Staff would be the same as now
staff	60	Additional Pastor
staff	60	Expansion of the staff
staff	60	expanded staff
staff	60	Will have a DCE intern one more year, but do not know after that
staff	60	Additional staff to help support Pastoral office
staff	65	Would like to see associate pastor

staff	65	Additional permanent staff member
stewardship	40	May never do anything until we meet our budget
stewardship	70	Worry about the deficit and need more faithful givers
stewardship	70	Giving increase
transient	44	A transient congregation
vicarage	30	Put vicarage to some kind of use
vicarage	50	Vicarage used changed from rental and incorporated for church use or sold.
worship	20	More contemporary worship
worship	32	Two services and Sunday School in the middle
worship	35	2 services
worship bell choir	36	Youth bell choir
worship bell choir	39	Youth bell choir
worship youth	39	Extra youth worship service
young couples	50	A larger number of young couples
youth	11	Hope for more youth programs, i.e. field trips, Texoma
youth	13	Have more activities for kids and youth
youth	17	Strong youth group programs
youth	20	Big youth involvement
youth	40	Strong youth programs- maybe even youth involvement with shut-ins solid involvement
youth	40	Youth program keep them interested other areas we are progressing quite well
youth	40	Expand our youth program
youth	44	More youth programs
youth	50	Substantial youth program DCE intern program gives us special focus point
youth	50	Youth programs expanding
youth	50	Must keep the youth interested for the survival of the church
youth	55	Hope more youth participation
youth	80	Think will probably have more youth activities

Question # 6**What else is there you want to tell me about the congregation?**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Response</u>
action	35	Need to get about doing something rather than just waiting for something to happen. make a commitment to growth and just 'do it' now
Adult Ed	20	Small group Bible study. group meeting once a month or so
Adult Ed	30	Less structured adult Sunday School class, more fellowship, then gradually increase to a more structured class
Adult Ed	45	Bible Study very good
apathy	45	Apathetic but nice
assimilation	60	Better assimilation of new members
attendance	60	Concern that church does not have more people involved in governing and attendance. Some church satisfied with just 50% attendance
attitude	45	Develop positive attitude
budget	60	Need to know percentage of money in various funds
building	20	Need more room cramped space like Christmas Eve-Easter
building	44	Need more bathroom space
building	60	If keep house need to fix it up to be youth house or council house by competent carpenters not piece meal by members
building	65	Some type of recreation facility should be in place
building	68	The church building needs to be maintained better. Leaks fixed, tiles replaced, holes covered, painting and cleaning
building vicarage	50	Keep vicarage
caring	38	It is full of loving people who work hard to make it better
cliques	40	Tends to always use or over use the same small group of people
cliques	60	Still have our cliques
cliques	60	Some are not friendly and don't greet newcomers like they could
commitment	40	Holy Spirit is reaching out to every one, we just need to listen & be committed to doing our part
community	15	Would like to see the congregation go out into the community more. Community to know more about Lutherans.

concerned	80	Thinks members are concerned about our welfare
couples	35	Sees Lutheran church in Texarkana as perfect church for a married couple with children. But needs to recruit new young blood
decisions	27	Take a vote of membership to determine whether we should continue to operate fair booth or not
decisions	60	Congregation as whole needs to be well-informed on operation of church. Best way follow constitution. Pastor not set agenda voters
dedication	50	We are blessed with dedicated people
elderly	60	Would like to see more entertainment for older members of the congregation
exclusiveness	36	Congregation is just certain people.
fellowship	13	Would like fellowship after the service so that congregation could all get to know each other
fellowship	30	I like the idea that the people get together for fellowship and enjoy each other.
fellowship	50	More time for fellowship to become better acquainted with more members
friendly	50	Love everyone
good	55	We have a good church
growth	32	I think we are growing, but not growing fast enough
growth	40	There is real potential for growth in all areas
growth	40	Like to see us grow
growth	50	Possible to meet expectations through evaluation process. Great opportunity to see if we want to grow
growth	80	grow and get rich
heritage	40	I appreciate the heritage that is here - multi generational families
inactive	44	We better start doing something or start losing people
inactive	50	Infrequent attendance of Bible study and the men's group
inclusion	50	An attitude that if you are going to be a part of this congregation you must be a part of certain social events/functions/groups
intermingle	31	Would love to have a Sunday where everyone sat in a different place (on purpose). Think all in a rut speaking to only those close
intermingle	70	I wish that groups would intermingle
involvement	25	There are a lot of people I don't know
involvement	27	Would like to see more involvement at the fair booth
involvement	30	Not enough people are involved. Always the same people doing everything

involvement	35	This individual says no need to become more involved
involvement	35	Don't think we need additional staff, but need more involvement by current congregation. Have a lot of untapped talents
involvement	40	We have many loving/giving people in the congregation. All too often the same people involved in everything
involvement	55	More people involved in boards and committees and willingness to serve
involvement	60	Need more people involved in ministry and programs of the church
involvement	60	A lot of needs to be met. Great task to meet all of the needs
involvement	65	More young people should be involved as office holders in all facets of congregational life
know members	31	Sometimes feel as though don't know most of this congregation and have attended this church most of my life
knowing each	44	Most members don't know anything about each other. We don't know each other professions. Good congregation knows each other
leadership	24	Introduce people and get friendly and don't put all responsibility for growth onto leadership. Leaders organize but not do it.
leadership	30	We have leaders that are not stuck in a hole. Willing to change
leadership	40	more numbers stability in leaders so that youth can feel they can count on it
loving	40	I wouldn't be anywhere else-The Lord directed us. Members brought us in and love for the right reasons
members	60	Has a good base to work from. Make aware of all activities and seek their participation. keep members diverse
nothing	14	Nothing
nothing	17	Nothing
nothing	18	Nothing
nothing	20	Nothing
nothing	30	Nothing
nothing	40	Go back to the old ways
nothing	42	Nothing
nothing	50	Nothing
nothing	50	nothing

nothing	52	Nothing
nothing	55	Nothing
nothing	55	Nothing
nothing	60	Nothing
nothing	73	She feels she has said it all
OK	30	Enjoy church and all the congregation
OK	40	I love it
OK	60	Like congregation as it is now
openness	24	Get progressive and more open minded and Christian and not be selfish or resistive to change.
outreach	40	Every congregation has own personality- need to care or spreading gospel
outreach	50	Not sure how effective attraction items are in growth of church and spreading Gospel. better exposure possibly but people must choose
pastor	31	Pastor a definite asset to our congregation Hope he never leaves
pastor	40	Blessed with wonderful minister-multi-talented & we need to act like we're blessed and thankful
pastor	65	It is a good church good pastor
people	50	Overall pleased with people here easy to be around
people	55	I enjoy all the people I know
problems	40	We have a very strong group of Christian people who love each other and try to show their love but we do get hung on small problems
proud	30	Proud a First Lutheran
resist change	25	There's resistance to change. resistance to new people with new ideas, approaches in doing or accomplishing goals. new withdrawn
separation	65	Young people don't acquaint themselves with older members
separation	65	Congregation should mingle. Left side and right side hardly know each other
staff	30	When DCE intern visited activities of kids that meant the world to me (accessibility)
stewardship	35	Would like to see an increase in contributions from congregation of time, talent and money
stewardship	40	Giving must improve for more things to happen
stewardship	40	God has blessed this church with good members & they have been blessed materially but their response to God hasn't shown that

support	30	Unbelievable how supportive a group of people have been to me through some difficult times in my life. Congregation more than friend
talent	20	Bass guitar that could be used in music
theology	50	Need for deeper Bible teaching in sermon
theology	60	Sincere, friendly, understand mission
theology	82	We cherish our Lutheran heritage
unfriendly	40	A couple of people outside our church have said they thought our church was very unfriendly
unity	50	Impressed by how our church is filled with people from every walk of life and how come together unified in worship of God
unity	60	like the congregation good amount of dedicated people just wish for more unity
unity	70	Pray that all will be loving and working together
visitors	30	Families that bring spouse who is not a member, don't call them a visitor. make feel part of the church family
worship	20	Pastor says words sometimes instead of singing everything
worship	20	I get a better sense of worship experience with relation to other churches I have attended
worship	50	Less enthusiasm for worship in last six months. lack of input into worship service
worship	62	Only have one service a week. would like to have a mid week service or a sunday night service
worship	68	Have music printed with the words of all hymns put in the Sunday bulletin
worship reverence	50	Reverence in the sanctuary-too much noise-taught in SS start with young children-especially near altar
young adults	24	If more people 20-32 would continue to invite and attract others of that age could start building a younger single group
youth	13	Wish we had more youth activities and the youth could return to Texoma and other places
youth	13	Would like the middle school to be permitted to participate in some of the high school activities to get to know each other.
youth	14	I wish there were more youth programs
youth	25	Get more involved with the youth
youth	30	In youth group rotate parents of the youth to help or organize the month's activity for the youth group
youth	40	Help keep our youth involved, education, sports

youth	40	more dedicated youth counselors
youth	50	Would like more emphasis on youth programs
youth	65	Should be increased emphasis placed on reaching the youth of congregation.
youth needed	45	The congregation appears to be weighted toward older people. We must have an influx of young people to have a church of future
youth-strict	16	There are too many meetings too strict on out of town trips

APPENDIX B

**Bible Studies on the
Mission of the Church**

(These Have Been Revised Since They Were Presented to the Congregation)

GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION

Session One

What is the Business of the Church?

The purpose of this session is that the student will understand that "making disciples" is the "business" of the church.

Session Goals - Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the end of this session the student will...

- (1) be able to define the "business" of the church in terms of what Jesus did, why He called the disciples, and of the Great Commission He gave to His church.
- (2) be able to identify three kinds of growth that occur in the church - growing up, growing together, and growing outward.

Introduction

A. Write down your own answer to this question:

"What is the business of the church?"

B. Three examples of why it is important to have a clear definition of what business you are in:

1. **The US Railroads** - They defined their business as the "railroad business. This narrow definition prevented them from being able to adapt to changes in transportation such as the car, and the airplane. How different would things be today if those companies had defined their business as "transportation."
2. **Sears, Roebuck and Co.** - Because they have defined their business as "service to people" they have been able to adapt to changes in our society, moving from a catalogue business to a department store.
3. This is also true in the **Church**. Your definition of what business (mission) you are in, will shape the things which you do as a Church.

I. The Business of Jesus is the Business of the Church

- A. Why did He come? How did He define His mission? Why was He on that cross?

John 3:16

Luke 2:49

Luke 19:2-10 "to seek and to save the lost"

Matthew 20:28 - "to serve," "to give His life as a ransom for many"

John 10:10

John 12:32

Hebrews 2:14-15

- B. For what purpose did Jesus gather disciples?

Mark 1:14-18 - "I will make you fishers of men."

II. The Business of the Church is the Great Commission

- A. Matthew 28:18-20

1. The Mission - "Make Disciples"

- a. This is the only verb here. The other words are participles which describe how disciples are made - **going, baptizing, teaching.**
- b. **Here is a strategy for "making disciples."**
God works through the church to "make disciples" as
 - the Church **goes** into all the world
 - the Church **baptizes** and **teaches** (preaches the Gospel and administers the sacraments)
- c. All that we do in the church is to serve this goal - "to make disciples" of Jesus Christ.
- d. What is a disciple?
 - (1) To be a disciple is to have a personal attachment to Jesus Christ, what we call "faith," which shapes and molds your whole life.

Jesus said, "If any man would be my disciple and come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

- (2) In the church God has put us in the business of "making disciples," that is men and women whose whole lives are shaped and reshaped, inside and outside, until by God's grace, Christ is formed in them. This process is a life long process. The work

of making disciples is only finished when God calls us home to heaven.

Galatians 4:19; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13;
Romans 8:29

- e. The means which God provides to the church and through which He works in order to "make disciples" are the means of grace - the Gospel and the Sacraments.

What is the Gospel?

The Gospel is the good news that in Jesus Christ God has reconciled the world to Himself, not counting men's sins against them.

Whoever would believe this Gospel is delivered thereby from sin, death and everlasting damnation.

2 Cor. 5:19; John 3:16; Romans 8:1; Romans 1:16-17

- 2. Two more things about this passage:
 - a. Jesus has been given all authority.
 - b. He has promised to be with us always!

B. Other Great Commission Passages:

1. Luke 24:25-29

The content of our message - repentance and forgiveness of sins, law and Gospel.

"You shall be my witnesses"

A witness is one who give legal testimony to the truth as he has seen and witnessed that truth.

"clothed with power from on high" - This is power in the sense of capability. The power is the Holy Spirit. Only the gift of the Holy Spirit enables the church to carry out the mission.

2. Acts 1:8

- a. The power Jesus promises is the Holy Spirit
- b. The Scope of our mission
 - Jerusalem = Where we live
 - Judea and Samaria = Perhaps the region around us
 - To the ends of the earth

III. 3 Kinds of Growth that God Causes in the Church as We Seek to "Make Disciples"

A. Growing Up in God's Grace

2 Peter 3:18

Colossians 2:6-7

B. Growing Together in Fellowship

Acts 2:46

Ephesians 4:15-16

C. Growing Outward to Reach Others

Acts 1:8; Acts 2:47

GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION

Session Two

"The Nature of the Church is to Grow"

The purpose of this session is that the student will understand that God intends for His church to grow.

Session Goals - Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the end of this session the student will...

- (1) be able to distinguish between society's definition of the church as an institution and the Biblical definition of the church as the living and growing body of believers in Christ.
- (2) be able to identify the means of grace as the means through which God works in His church to bring about growth in His church.
- (3) be able to describe the three kinds of growth which take place within the church.
- (4) become familiar with the past growth trends of the congregation and with how the congregation hopes to grow in the future.

Introduction

- A. List all the different meanings attached to the word "church."
- B. How is the church as an institution different from the church as a spiritual gathering of believers?

I. What is the Church?

- A. The Greek word is "Ekklesia"
Which means - the ones called out
the ones separated
the gathering
the community or congregation

Look at how Dr. Luther in his explanation to the third article of the Apostle's Creed writes about the "gathering" activity of the Holy Spirit in

relationship to the church.

- B. In the Apostle's Creed we confess faith in "the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints."

Holy - set apart for a special purpose

Christian - of Christ

Church - called out, gathering

communion - gathering, community or fellowship
shares something in common

of saints - "Holy Ones" All who believe

forgiven in Christ you have been set apart. You are God's Holy Ones

In the "Communion of Saints" the thing we have in common is
Jesus Christ.

II The Church is a Living Organism Whose Very Nature is to Grow

- A. Ephesians 2:11-22

The Church is the place where the walls that divide us from God and from each other are knocked down so that we are no longer foreigners, Now we are fellow citizens with God's people, members of God's household.

The Church is God's household, built on the foundation of the Apostles and prophets (the Word), and held together by the cornerstone (Christ)

The cornerstone is the stone that determines the whole shape and structure of the building. The Church is shaped by Christ!

The Church is the temple in which God dwells by His Spirit.

- B. Ephesians 4:11-16

Describe the relationship of the Pastor and the priesthood of believers

Notice - the church "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

- C. John 15:1-8

Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches. Together in Him, we are the church. As we abide in Him, the church grows and bears fruit.

The Father, the vinedresser, works to cause the church to grow and bear fruit. Apart from the vine, growth is impossible. How are we connected

to Him. By faith, as God works in us through word and sacrament.

D. 1 Peter 2:4-10

Living Stones being built together into the Living Stone, Jesus, to become a spiritual house.

We are the spiritual priesthood that serves in that house. No individualism here. As the church we are a priesthood.

Notice the names given to the church in verses 9 & 10

All for this purpose - to proclaim His deeds and so continue the building up of His spiritual house - the church.

III. How Does Growth Happen in the Church?

A. Through the "marks of the church."

1. The Gospel, the Word of Christ.

I Corinthians 1:23-24

Romans 1:16-17

Romans 10:17

2. Holy Baptism - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

3. Holy Communion - 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

These are the marks of the church. These are the means through which the Holy Spirit works to gather the church together and cause growth within the church. Wherever the Gospel is preached and the sacraments administered, there we have God's promise that the church is there and is growing.

B. 3 Kinds of Growth God grants to His church.

1. Growing up in God's Grace.

2. Growing together in fellowship with one another.

3. Growing outward to reach others with the Gospel.

IV How are We Growing at First Lutheran?

Look at graphs showing statistical trends in congregation in areas of Worship, membership, finances, etc.

V How Do We Wish to Grow?

Look at responses given during the congregational survey which indicate how we wish to grow in the future.

GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION

Session Three

"Growth is the Work That God Does In and Through Us"

The Purpose of This Session is that the student will understand how God works in and through the church to bring about the various kinds of growth which He desires for His church.

- Session Goals** Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the end of this session the students will...
- (1) be able to identify the means of grace as the means through which God works to bring about growth in His church.
 - (2) be able to distinguish between the three kinds of growth that God brings about through the means of grace.
 - (3) recognize that if growth is going to happen in the church, that growth will happen as God works through the means of grace. Therefore we must make greater use of the means of grace in the life and ministry of this congregation.

Introduction

Your vision for First Lutheran is a vision for growth

Out of 966 comments made in response to the survey
124 had to do with growing up in God's grace

294 had to do with growing together in fellowship in Christ

102 had to do with growing outward to reach others with the Gospel

I. How Can This Happen?

A. Growth is God's Work

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Matthew 16:16-18 - He builds the church

Ephesians 2:10

Hebrews 3:3-4 God is the builder

2 Samuel 7:12ff

In the explanation to the third article of the Apostle's Creed we confess:

that the Holy Spirit "calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the One true faith."

**B. Growth is God's Work through the Gospel and the Sacraments
Through the Marks of the Church**

Gospel - 1 Corinthians 1:23-24; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 10:17

Baptism - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Holy Communion - 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

C. God Gives Us a Role in His Work.

1. We are Those Sent

Romans 10:14-15; John 20:21-23

2. We are Stewards of the Mysteries of God

1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 2:9-10

3. We each have a role, according to God's design

1 Corinthians 3:5-6; Ephesians 4:16

III. What Does This Mean?

A. Use the analogy of a garden.

You plant the garden where it will receive just the right amount of sunshine. You make sure that the garden gets all the water, weeding and fertilizer it needs to grow and be fruitful.

If Gospel and Sacraments are the means through which God works to give spiritual growth to His people, then we need to make sure the church is getting all that it can of the Gospel and the sacraments. We need to provide for ample sowing of seed and watering of God's garden - the church.

B. Knowing what we can and can't change.

Can't Make people come to church or to Bible Study. Can't change people's hearts and make them want to come.

We can remove any obstacles that stand in their way, and do things to try to attract their interest.

What elements do we have control over?

Styles, timing, variety and numbers of Bible Studies and Worship opportunities, location, sizes of groups, who teaches, and so forth

C. What are growing congregations doing in the area of spiritual growth?

1. Emphasize Growth in God's Word

Relate the Word to people's lives

Pastor(s) and laity teach

Offer a variety

Emphasize small groups

2. Emphasize and intentionally organize Prayer Opportunities

3. Teach the concept of spiritual gifts and talents, intentionally challenging members to discover, develop and use their gifts.

GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION

Session Four "Strengthening the Ties That Bind"

The Purpose of This Session is that the students will understand that as we build and strengthen the ties that bind us together in Christ, that each member is then enabled to do his part, causing the church to grow together in fellowship.

Session Goals are that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and after this session the student will...

- (1) recognize that God has designed the church so that it will grow and build itself up as each part does its work.
- (2) be able to identify the obstacles and dynamics at work among us, which prevent our Church from growing together in Christ.
- (3) become familiar with the ties by which God in Christ has bound us to one another, and how He would have us work, enabled by His Spirit, to strengthen those ties so that each member can do his part and our church can begin to grow together in fellowship in Christ.

I. Growing Together in Fellowship

A. This was what members who responded to the congregational survey listed as their primary concern.

B. This is also one of the major concerns of Scripture

Ephesians 4:3 -Notice two things -

1. We do not create the unity of the church. God creates and gives unity to His Church. The tie that binds us to one another is the gift of His grace. We have unity with each other and with all Christians. This is an article of faith - "We believe in One holy, Christian and Apostolic church..."

Ties that bind us to one another -

Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28

These are all God's work and gift!

2. Our Work is to make every effort to keep, build up and strengthen that unity.

How?

Ephesians 4:15-16 Speaking the truth in love + Each Part does its work = the church grows and builds itself up in love.

1 Corinthians 12:12 - **In the church God gives unity through diversity, not unity through conformity.** We need to be accepting of and treasure how we are different, not resentful or envious of those differences.

II. What are the Obstacles Which Stand in the Way of This Congregation Growing Together in Fellowship?

- A. What is my role as pastor?
- B. Discuss these attitudes:
- "People shouldn't need a personal invitation to get them involved"
 - "If you share an idea you should do the work"
 - "Everything is decided before the voters meeting"
 - "No one would ever vote no in this congregation."
 - "Why can't we get more people to stay for voters meetings?"
- C. What did the survey show? Read from survey some of the comments made about these issues:
1. Cliques
 2. Decisions, Leadership, involvement
 3. Apathy
 4. Do we know each other?
 5. Lack of forgiveness
 6. Why all the inactives?
- D. What can we learn by listening to one another?
1. How are decisions made?
 2. Need to be challenged in Stewardship
 3. Need to define what it means to be a member of First Lutheran.
 4. Spiritual gifts/talents
 5. Be more purposeful about fellowship
 6. Assimilation of new and old members
 7. How do we handle disagreement and conflict in the church?
 8. Other?

GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION

Session Five

"Strengthening the Ties That Bind"

This session is a continuation of session four and so the purpose and goals are the same as they were for that session.

Introduction

A. The tie that binds us to each other in the church? Faith in Jesus Christ.

B. What are the obstacles that keep us from growing together as God intends?

1. Lack of Forgiveness

Afraid to speak up and disagree. Afraid to talk out and be branded
haven't learned to disagree without being disagreeable.

2. Lack of Involvement

Lack of Assimilation

Attitude - shouldn't have to be asked

Voter's meetings - Not enough information, too few making all
the decisions

apathy

Inactives

3. Poor Stewardship of time, talents and treasures

4. Fellowship

Do we know each other? Do we care about each other?

Are we friends after Sunday Morning? Do we notice those who
are missing?

I. Step One - Strengthen Our Fellowship with One Another

John 13:34-35

A. Strengthen those ties using the tools God has given to us.

Acts 2:42-47

devoted to the Apostle's teaching (the Word)

The Fellowship - Worship

Breaking of Bread - Holy Communion

Prayer

Shared everything in common - took care of one another

Met together in homes

B. Make Forgiveness Your Aim!

1. When dealing with Inactive Members

a. Matthew 18:12-14

Our goal is to find and bring back!

b. Galatians 6:1-2

Restore him gently. This is everyone's responsibility

2. When dealing with each other - Matthew 18:15-22

a. Two things

(1) Go privately - just the two of you

(2) The goal is forgiveness - to win your brother

Ephesians 4:15

Matthew 7:3-5

b. Matthew 18:19-20

Forgiveness is the mortar that holds the church together.

Forgiveness is the blood that gives life to the body of Christ.

c. Matthew 18:21-22

Forgiveness for each other is without limit because God's forgiveness of our sins is without limit.

Objective Justification - This is the good news that God has forgiven the sins of the whole world for Jesus' sake.

This objective justification is the basis for our confidence that God has forgiven our sins. This is the basis of our forgiveness of one another. The Gospel motivates and enables us to forgive each other.

3. When disagreeing with each other

How can we learn to disagree without being disagreeable?

a. Philippians 2:1-4

Like minded - Christ like minds - Not insisting on my way but on His way!

Love

One in Spirit and Purpose

Humility - not selfish ambition

Looking to interests of others, not just your own.

b. Acts 15

The Church made decisions based on God's Word.
They gave time for good discussion.
Cared for both sides
Knew that they couldn't please everybody

c. What about decision making here?

II. Help People to Understand What Membership at First Lutheran Means?

A. What do you think being a member of First Lutheran means?

B. Ephesians 4:16 - Each Part is needed

1. Help people to understand, identify and use the talents and gifts God has given to each of them.

1 Corinthians 12

God gives gifts to each of us
For common good
the diversity of the gifts builds up the unity of Christ's body

No part can say, "I'm not needed"

No part can say "I don't need anyone else"

2. How can we work to build such an attitude?

C. The Issue is the Stewardship of our time, talents and treasures

1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:14

The Stewardship Question is not "What is needed?" The Question to ask yourself when determining what you will give is, "What has God given to me?"

1 Peter 4:7-11

**GOD'S VISION FOR HIS MISSION
AT
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Session Six
"Putting Everything Together"**

The Purpose of this session is to help the students to discover how God's vision for His church would guide and shape the future mission of this congregation.

Session Goals At the end of this session, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the student will:

- (1) be able to recognize how the various topics covered in this course all connect with one another to define for us God's vision for the mission of His church.
- (2) be able to apply God's vision for the mission of His church to the present context of this congregation, in such a way that God's vision is what guides and shapes the future mission of this congregation.
- (3) be able to identify the following:
 - (a) the strengths of this congregation which will help God's vision to become a reality in the ministry of First Lutheran Church
 - (b) the obstacles which work to keep God's vision from becoming a reality in the ministry of this congregation.
 - (c) the changes that need to take place in order for god's vision to become a reality in the ministry of First Lutheran Church.

I. What is God's Vision?

A. Defined in terms of both the nature and the mission of the church.

1. The Church is the body of Christ. To grow is part of the nature of a body. Ephesians 4:15-16
2. The mission of the church is "to make disciples." That involves growth. Matthew 28:19-20

God accomplishes this mission through the church, as the church

proclaims the Gospel and administers the sacraments (going "into all the world;" "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit;" "teaching them all that I have commanded you")

This is much more than simply numerical growth. This means growing in all the ways that a church grows.

- B. Therefore we have also defined God's vision in terms of the kinds of growth He brings about in His Church.
 - 1. Growing up in God's Grace - Colossians 2:6-7
 - 2. Growing together in Fellowship with God's Family
 - Acts 2:42-47
 - Colossians 3:15-17
 - 3. Growing out to reach others with the Gospel
 - Acts 1:8; 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- C. These kinds of growth relate directly to the nature and the mission of the church.
 - 1. A body grows up (taller) grows together (coordination) and grows out (goes out into the world, gets married, has babies)
 - Apply to the church
 - 2. Think in terms of the Great Commission of Matthew 28
 - "Make Disciples"
 - Grow Up - Baptize and Teach
 - Grow together - 1 Baptism
 - Grow Out - Jesus says, "Go"

II. What Does God's Vision Have to do With the Mission of First Lutheran Church in Texarkana?

- A. God's Vision is what shapes and guides the mission and vision of First Lutheran Church, in terms of our unique ministry context.
- B. Our mission is the one He gave to the whole church - to make disciples of all nations...
- C. Our vision statement will define what we want to become in the next three to five years in order to faithfully carry out the mission God has given to us.

D. How Does God's Vision look in terms of First Lutheran Church?

The Vision you made clear in the survey is to grow! You want to see attendance and involvement increase, the buildings get fixed up and a new building added, and the staff to be increased. You also want youth to be one of our primary emphases.

E. How do we begin to move towards realizing this vision for the future? Think in terms of the three kinds of growth outlined in this course.

1. How can we grow up in God's grace?

a. Emphasis on Word and Sacrament

Increase number and variety of Bible Studies

Add a second worship service

b. Emphasize and intentionally organize prayer opportunities.

c. Add Educational facilities and Sunday School space

2. How Can we grow together in fellowship with each other?

a. Make forgiveness our aim

- intentionally reach out to inactive members

- Learn to disagree without being disagreeable

b. Be intentional about Fellowship

- plan more such activities

- Build to make more room for fellowship

c. challenge members to take their membership in and commitment to this congregation seriously.

3. How can we grow out to reach others with the Gospel of Christ?

a. This needs to become a real priority

b. Strengthen Identity in Community

c. Provide more opportunities such as home bible studies where people can begin to become a part of our church.

d. Build and staff to grow

e. Start an intentional ministry to visitors

f. Teach a life-style evangelism

APPENDIX C
RESPONSES OF STEWARDSHIP FOCUS GROUPS
SUMMER OF 1995

FOCUS ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

(The answers recorded here are those given by the members of First Lutheran who participated in the focus groups in the Summer of 1995. Their comments are recorded here without evaluation)

Question # 1 - Many people feel uneasy about the whole subject of stewardship. What are some reasons for that uneasiness?

Money is what most people think about. "Here they come wanting more money." This idea has been ingrained in people's minds by numerous stewardship drives.

"Oh! Oh! They want me to give up some time.

Many people feel uneasy because of guilt. "I feel uneasy because I know that I have never given enough." many people don't want to be reminded that they aren't doing what they should.

We feel uneasy because we consider our finances to be private. When you address this you are meddling.

Some automatically think of pledging and that turns on a red light.

Those who haven't served on the stewardship committee haven't had stewardship accurately defined for them. Therefore they misunderstand what it is.

Good stewardship starts with the congregation not being wasteful.

Question # 2 Imagine you are at home and one of your kids asks you, "What is stewardship?" How would you answer that question in kid's terms?

Serving the Lord in whatever you are equipped to do.

Your participation and involvement at church. Giving/contributing to the financial support of the church!

Using wisely all the gifts that God has given you.

Not being afraid to say "yes" when asked to serve.

Doing what the Sunday School teacher asks you to do.

Don't explain it in financial terms. Apply stewardship to their lives.

Giving time/ talent/ treasure to the Lord

Separating 10 pennies from a group of 100 to help them to understand what a tithe is.

A Sunday School teacher is being a steward by teaching you Sunday School

The only way to define a big word is by using examples.

Question # 3 - How do you feel when the subject of stewardship comes up at church? What are some specific reasons for those feelings?

I want it brought up more often. People need to be reminded quarterly or monthly, not just about money but about all of it.

It's not always money. Some are uncomfortable because they don't have the means to give any more.

Many have been conditioned by past stewardship experiences - When things go bad then we hear from the pulpit that its an obligation, more than a gift.

Need reminder of what a wonderful gift we have. Too easy to get caught up in the fast pace of our lives and to forget .

In some situations you feel comfortable about your financial stewardship and forget about other areas. Or you think, "I give time, therefore I don't have to give money."

Guilty - Always too busy to take part like I should.

Comfortable because I'm doing my share.

Worry about causing resentment. Guilt is not a good way to motivate. Worry that people hear "stewardship"and automatically think "money."

Feel that the preacher and the church are meddling in a private matter.

Sometimes feel guilty for stepping away from a job when you shouldn't feel guilty. Sometimes the stepping away is a good stewardship decision.

Question # 4 - In the recent self-study it became clear that stewardship is an area of concern to our congregation. What specific concerns about stewardship do you see for our congregation?

Our church's average per-capita giving is lowest in our circuit.
Lots of members who are inactive. Attendance or lack of it by many.

Sometimes we do not all have the same vision for the future. We aren't all reading from the same page. Not everyone has the same priorities for the congregation One used example that he is more concerned about the seminary scholarship fund than he is about adding new buildings.

These differing focuses can lead to hard feelings and that affects participation in the church.

Do we do a good enough job of incorporating new people into the life of the parish?

The fact that many do not tithe. People need to hear more sermons on stewardship, especially financial stewardship, but not hell, fire and brimstone.

Young couples do not have any activities for them. We need a Bible Study for young married couples. Otherwise we might lose them. Don't forget our singles.

Limited facilities. Church dinners are hot and crowded. you have to wait 30 minutes. Who wants to stay for that?

Lack of a caring ministry. Need a larger group to watch and notice when someone has missed. More caring is needed. People want to know you missed them.

Question # 5 - What are some ways we can address these concerns?

Invite young couples for dinner - have a meeting with them to get the ball rolling.

Build new facilities. Need more staff. What's a new building or new organ without the people?

Fund projects by faith. "The church that is not in debt is not doing anything."

Think about a Preschool or parochial school.

Don't push everything onto the pastor.

Ask new people to be greeters.

Projects where you work together help you to get to know people

Notice when people are missing. Call!

Let people know what needs are out there.

Make more of fellowship times.

Look at "Building for 2000" as a challenge, not a problem. Keep focus positive.

Get more information out to voters on a timely basis so that all can participate in decision making. Small forums, such as these, might be a good way to get everybody focused on going in the same direction.

APPENDIX D

STEWARDSHIP SERMON SERIES

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1996

(These sermons have been revised since they were presented to the congregation.)

STEWARDSHIP SERMON SERIES
"A STEWARD IS"

Sermon # 1
Preached on January 14, 1996

"A Steward is Someone Who is Rich In Every Way"
Text: 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

There are two subjects that most people tend not to enjoy very much. One is paying taxes. Nobody enjoys paying taxes. I'm no different. Yet a couple of years ago somebody helped me to look at taxes from a different perspective. This person said to me, "Pastor, the only way I can get out of paying taxes is if I don't make any money. Therefore, I figure if I have to pay taxes that's good because I must be making money!" I still don't like paying taxes but that did make me feel a little better about it.

Another subject which is like that for many people is the subject of Christian stewardship. Many people, when they come to church and see that the topic of the sermon is going to be Christian stewardship, sort of groan to themselves. Why? There are a number of reasons. For one thing, there are many misunderstandings about stewardship. Over the next couple of weeks I hope to use my sermons to help us to change that, to gain a new proper understanding of stewardship.

Many equate stewardship with being asked to give money, as if that's all it is. We're going to find out that's wrong. Others get defensive because they think the preacher and the church are meddling in something that's very private. That's wrong. Everything you and I have belongs to God. Therefore He has a right to talk to us about what we do with the stuff He gives us! Some of us dread the topic of stewardship

because stewardship involves making a commitment and that scares us. Others dread stewardship because they feel guilty. After all stewardship causes us to examine our priorities. We don't enjoy having someone point out to us that we have often failed to "fear, love and trust in God above all things." (Luther's *Small Catechism*) Some of us may feel guilty because we wish we could give more but we feel we can't. We feel we don't have anything to give! Therefore we resent being asked!

This last misunderstanding is addressed by today's text. The message I would share with you today is this: "a steward is someone who is rich in every way." Now many of you are perhaps thinking, "Well that leaves me out! I'm not rich in any way." But oh yes you are! Listen to the words of our text for today in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Being a steward is like paying taxes. If you didn't have something to offer, God would not ask you to be a steward. Yet He does ask because you do have something to give!

You may not have the money to give that someone else has. But God has given you gifts you can offer. He may have given you a talent for fixing things or singing, or teaching, a talent you can give to His work. You may not be able to buy the best of everything for your kids, but perhaps God has given you a love for camping or fishing you can share with your kids. (Oh yes, giving to and taking care of your kids is as much a part of Christian stewardship as giving to the church!)

The point is God has given us so much and in so many different ways. He has gifted us materially. He has given us talents. He has blessed us spiritually. He has given you and me the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, His own Son. He has made known

to you and me the Gospel, the good news that in Jesus Christ He has forgiven the sins of the whole world! That is the basis for our confident faith that He has forgiven your sins and mine. Indeed that faith is a gift he has given to you and me, as He has poured out His Spirit into our hearts through the means of grace, the Word and the sacraments. Indeed, He has provided us with this church where we can hear His word preached and where we can receive the precious sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion. What Paul wrote of the church in Corinth I can say confidently about us, "I always thank God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge - because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed." (1 Corinthians 1:4-7)

Yet somehow we still resent being asked to give money, whether by the church or by some charity. We growl at the kids or the wife when they demand more of our precious time. We let our neighbors know that we have too many of our own problems to worry or care about theirs. We still struggle with the selfishness that says, "Its mine." We still worry that if we don't look out for ourselves no one else will! What a lonely, faithless outlook on life. I am reminded of the old song, "Its just You and me Against the World." I knew a Pastor who was invited to fill in at a wedding where that song was being song. He immediately changed his sermon. His new theme was "Aren't you glad its not just the two of you against the world? God is With you!"

The same is true for you and me! We are not alone. God is with us! This God who has given us so much, will not leave us desolate! Our God is the same God who

loved us so much that He gave His own Son! He is the One who poured out His life into death for our sins and then rose to life again that we might have life forever. He says, "Lo, I am with you always." (Matthew 28:20) "Never will I leave You; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) He is a God who keeps His promises! He is faithful! That's Paul's point in our text. "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful." (1 Corinthians 1:8-9) Who will watch out over you? He will. "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also along with Him graciously give us all things." (Romans 8:32)

Indeed you are rich in every way in Christ. That's what frees you to be a Christian steward of all the gifts God gives you. You are free in Christ to take the time to be a mother or father to your children, a husband or wife to your spouse. You are free to share your talents and treasure with your church, with the charities and service organizations of your community. You are free to be a friend to your neighbor or co-worker. All those things, not just the offering plate, are part of being a Christian steward. And as one who is rich in every way you have many valuable things to offer in every way!

At Meadow Grove we had a treasurer who had held the office for over 40 years. Many times over the years he himself had rescued the congregation from financial trouble with his own gifts. When He finally retired from the treasurer position the congregation had a banquet in his honor. He explained his generosity this way. "A long time ago I realized that God has been so good to me and given me so much in every way, that I just wanted to use and share what he had given to me to help others." That's the free and

joyous response of the child of God to God's love in Christ. That's Christian stewardship!

That's why God has made you and me rich in every way! Amen!

Sermon # 2
Preached on Sunday, January 21, 1996

"A Christian Steward is God's Fishing Partner"
Text: Matthew 4:19

The first time his father asked him to go fishing with him was one of the most exciting days in his life. He was excited and scared. He was excited because he loved his father and loved doing things with him. He was excited because he knew that his daddy was a very good fisherman. He felt honored and loved that his daddy had asked him to go fishing with him.

Yet the little boy was also scared. He was scared of disappointing his father by not being a good fisherman. "Daddy, I don't have fishing pole!" "Don't worry son," was the father's reply. "I have one for you." "But daddy," the little boy objected again, "I don't have any bait or fishing lures or hooks." "Don't worry son, you can use mine." "Daddy, I don't know how to fish," the little boy continued. "I'll teach you," said his father. "But daddy, what if the fish are too strong for me and I can't reel them in? What if the fish slips out of my hands as I try to take it off the hook? What if the fish bites me?" "Don't worry son," the father replied, "I'm going with you. I'll help you reel the fish in. I'll help you take the fish off the hook." So they went. From that day on, even into adulthood that little boy and his father were partners, fishing partners.

In today's Gospel, our Father in heaven issues much the same invitation to you and me through His Son Jesus. To His disciples and to us Jesus says, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) He invites us to be His fishing partners.

I believe that there are not many of you have ever thought of Christian stewardship in this light. Most of us think that the goal of stewardship is to get people to use their talents, give their time, and their money to the Lord. Yes, all those things are part of Christian stewardship. Yet they are not the goal of Christian stewardship. The goal of stewardship is that we, with our witness, would "catch" men and women for Christ. The goal is to cast the nets of God's love out there in this world and use those nets to bring men and women into the Kingdom of God. The goal of stewardship is to "make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

The exciting thing that happens in our text is that Jesus invites you and me to be a part of this most important work of God. God loves people. Indeed He loves the whole world so much that He gave His only Son, Jesus, so that "whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) God so wants people to be caught out of this world and brought into His family that He gave His only Son in order that He might die on the cross and then be raised to life again three days later. He did that because He "wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3) For this reason, all who will believe in Him are forgiven. All who will believe in Him will live forever. All who believe in Jesus are caught in the nets of God's love and rescued from drowning in the dark seas of sin and death.

Thus this is exciting - to hear Jesus invite you and me to be His fishing partners. "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)

Yet, as with that little boy, the idea of being God's fishing partners both excites us and scares us. We have many of the same fears about witnessing to others which that

little boy had about fishing. Thank God that, as with the father of that little boy, our Father in heaven answers all our questions and calms all our fears.

We worry, "Father, how can I be your witness to others. I'm not equipped for that. I have no fishing pole, no bait, no lures." But He answers, "Don't worry, I have supplied you with the fishing equipment you need. I have given you the message of my love and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. That message is all that you need when fishing for men."

"But Father, I don't know where to start. I don't know where the good fishing holes are." "Don't worry," the Father replies, "I have given you places to fish - your home, among your own family, the people you work or go to school with, your neighborhood and community. Those are the fishing holes for you."

"But Father, I don't know how to fish for men." "I will teach you," comes His answer. "I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19) Through My Word that you hear preached and taught here at this church I will train you to be my witness. What's more, just as there are many different kinds of fishing - fly fishing, commercial fishing, deep sea fishing, fishing with a cane pole - even so I have gifted each of you for different kinds of witnessing. To some of you," the Father goes on, "I have given a talent for teaching, others to be a good listener. To some I have given a talent for singing, others for planning and organizing. I have given you these talents to equip each of you in different ways to be my fishing partner, fishing for men."

"But Jesus, what if the fish bite? I want people to like me. What if they resent my witness?" "That could happen," He replies. "But remember this. You will never go fishing alone. "I will be with you always." (Matthew 28:20)

"What if the fish are too strong for me? I can't change a person's heart. I can't make anyone believe in You and get in your boat. What if I catch a fish and then it slips away? What if I make a mistake and blow my witness?" "Then I will forgive you," the Lord replies. "Please understand, I did not ask you to change anyone's heart. I will do that. Indeed I don't expect you to catch men and women for me. All I ask is that you faithfully live and speak the message of My death and resurrection. I will work on men's hearts to change them." Jesus will hook people with His love and reel them into His Kingdom.

Sometimes when that father and son went fishing they didn't catch anything. When they did, though, the little boy felt so good. Yet always he knew he had caught that fish only with his father's help. Fishing for men is just like that. When we, as Christian stewards, go fishing for men we go as God's partners. When our witness does reach some one and bring them to faith, we, like that little boy, know that the truth is that our fishing partner is using us to catch men and women in His nets! Amen!

Stewardship Sermon # 3
Preached on January 28, 1996

"A CHRISTIAN STEWARD SERVES ONLY ONE MASTER- GOD"

Text: Luke 16:13

The President of the bank is free to run the bank. However, he or she is not free to run the bank in whatever way he or she pleases. After all the bank president doesn't own the bank. He or she is a steward, who manages the bank on behalf of the owners.

We need to understand this fact. The steward is not the owner. The steward is the servant of the owner. Indeed the word "steward" means "One who manages the household of another."

That's the way it is with Christian stewardship. We do not really own anything! Instead everything we have - clothing, food, cars, homes - indeed everything in this world belongs to God. As we heard in today's Old Testament reading God has charged us with working this world and caring for it. He has charged us with managing His household. Indeed that's our definition of stewardship "to manage all of life and life's resources in accordance with the purposes of God." He is the owner! We are the stewards of all that He gives us. He is the Master. We are His servants!

That becomes difficult for us whenever we forget that He is to be our only Master. Far too often we end up trying to serve two masters. One of them is God. I really believe that everyone of us here wants to serve God. We try to live our lives for Him.

Yet at the same time that we offer ourselves to Him, we offer ourselves to other masters as well. We are like the little child who wants to play with his toys yet also wants the toys his brother is playing with. In the same way we are God's children. Yet

when we see the wealth, the success, the possessions, the popularity or the power of others around us, we want those things too. Why? We want them for the same reason that Eve took the fruit and ate it. We want to be masters over our own lives. We think that having money, or things, or popularity, or power will give us that control.

We think that we can serve two masters. We believe that we can serve those other things and still serve God. Yet the truth is we can't. That's the point of today's text. "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or He will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Luke 16:13) When money or anything else becomes the focus of our lives, that thing displaces God in our lives.

Then, instead of us being masters over these things, these things become our masters. Think about it. If you worry much about money, if you resent being asked for money, if money is what makes you feel secure, are you the master or is money? How low have you been willing to stoop in order to get ahead, to advance in the world? Have you degraded or manipulated someone, maybe your spouse, in order to maintain control? Do you find yourself playing both sides of the fence to keep everybody happy, because more than anything you want to be liked and popular? Serving two masters makes life miserable. On the one hand, you become enslaved by your desire for popularity, your coveting after things, and your greed for money. On the other hand, you are miserable with guilt for you know that something other than God has become your master.

Yet God does not desire that misery for you and me. What He wants more than anything is to restore us to a right relationship with Him. What He wants is to be our

Master and we, His servants. He wants to free us from all those other masters we take for ourselves. Indeed He wants this for the whole world. He wants this so much that Jesus Christ became a man. "Being in very nature God, He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness..." (Philippians 2:6-7) Jesus did not stop being God. But He temporarily set aside the glory that was His to deliver man from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Yes, when God took on human flesh and blood, then God, in the person of Jesus Christ, became a servant like you and me. Thus He submitted Himself to both the masters that we try to serve. To God He offered himself as the perfect, obedient servant that man failed to be. Yes, He became like us in every way, except He was without sin. Of Jesus the Father said, "This is My Son, with Him I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17) He offered His obedience as the substitute for all of humanity, even though that obedience ultimately led Him to death on the cross.

Thus in dying on that cross Jesus submitted Himself to our other master, the sin and death that enslave us. There on the cross He accepted, in man's place, the punishment which man deserves for his attempts to grasp the equality with God, which Jesus temporarily set aside. He paid the price for man's desire to be masters of his own destiny. Thus when He rose again He crushed the power of those other masters. He cut through the chains. He did this so that all who believe "might be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. . . ." (Luther's *Small Catechism*) That's the Gospel.

Now, through baptism, the Holy Spirit has worked in our hearts faith in that Gospel. Through faith in that Gospel He has made us to be God's own sons and daughters. He assures us through faith in the Gospel that all our sins - past, present and future - have been forgiven! Thus He sets us free to be the stewards God intended us to be. Those other masters can no longer enslave us.

Through faith, God is now our one master. Thus, we are free to see everything we have properly - wealth or power, or material possessions, or talents. God has set us free so that we might recognize that everything we have is an undeserved gift of His love. He has given us those things so that we might use them to love and serve Him. When God is our Master we are free to manage all of life and all of life's resources in the manner Peter described in today's Epistle - "using whatever gifts God has given us to serve each other, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

I talked to Ray Schkade this week about the Sunday when He will be here with us to challenge us to put faith into action. He told me the story of a woman who came up to him after one of his other "Faith in Action" weekends at another Texas congregation. She and her husband committed themselves to give 10% of all that God gives them. She said it was as if a great heavy burden had been lifted from their lives. Money, it seems had been that other task master in their lives. They had always been so worried about having enough for themselves, that they had never felt free to give. That weekend they heard the precious Gospel that "God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting men's sins against them. . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:19) They heard again the precious good news that "since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his

death he might destroy him who holds the power of death -- that is the devil -- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (Hebrews 2:14-15),

As they listened to that Gospel, the Holy Spirit worked in them that precious assurance that by His death Jesus had set them free from sin, death and the power of the devil.

Through faith, he set them free from the god of mammon. He set them free so that they might respond to His love as free and joyous children of God, by making their pledge to the work of the Lord. He set them free to be Christian stewards - servants with only one master - God! Amen!

Stewardship Sermon # 4
Preached on Sunday, February 4, 1996

"The Christian Steward Gives Freely From the Heart"
Text: 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

I want to share a story I heard recently about something that took place in another congregation! In this other congregation they were entering into a building program. Obviously they needed to raise the money necessary for this program. Groups were sent out to solicit the needed funds. The methods used by these groups left something to be desired. They went into homes and told people what they thought they ought to give. In one home the visitors commented that since the couple owned such an expensive car, they ought to give even more than the required amount. My friends, I share that example with you to make a point! When you give to the Lord only because someone told you what you had to give, you are giving as a slave. That's not Christian stewardship!

To be sure there is nothing wrong with the church giving guidance or challenging us to give more of ourselves to the Lord! The church has the responsibility to hold up the mirror of God's law before us, so that we might see when we have failed to put God first. However to compel someone to give a certain amount, while perhaps an effective fund raising tactic, is not Christian stewardship. That's not the kind of giving God wants. Christian stewards give freely. They give from the heart. They give in the manner described in today's text, 2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Yes, God loves a cheerful giver! The trouble is, we are not always cheerful! At times we give grudgingly, from resentful hearts. What's more, our lack of cheerfulness is not always the fault of the person or group which asks us to contribute something. More

often than not the real problem is in here, in our hearts!

How many of us have ever felt inconvenienced when someone asked us to give some of our time and talents with some project or effort? We said yes with a smile on our faces, but inside we grumbled to ourselves. We grumbled to ourselves because we had other plans and now those plans would have to change. We resent having to give up what we wanted to do. Then later when all was finished without much inconvenience, how many of us have not at that point felt guilty for all those earlier resentments?

Sometimes we give with resentment because they always seem to ask us. They know we're push overs and they take advantage of us! Though we may not say this out loud we feel like we're being used, even abused! Can't they ask someone else? Rather than rejoicing because others know us as reliable... rather than learning to say no when we have to, we give with resentment. Is that giving freely, from the heart?

There are times when we're asked and freely say yes! But then the whole time, even though we're glad they asked, we grumble. We grumble because we want them to realize just how grateful they ought to be for what we're doing. Is that cheerful giving?

What about the times when we agree to give only if things are done our way? If the church decides to do things differently than how we think things ought to be done, well then they can just ask someone else. Is that Christian stewardship?

In each of these examples, the problem that prevents us from being cheerful givers is to be found here, inside of us, in our hearts! Think about it. Why do we feel inconvenienced when asked for help by others? Because we are selfish. We want to be able to do whatever we want, when we want and we resent anything that interferes with

our wants. What causes us to pout when others won't do things our way? Could the problem be our own selfish desire to get our own way? Why do we feel the need to let everybody know how much we've sacrificed in order to help out? Because we want others to know how wonderful we are! What prevents us from being the cheerful givers is our own sinful, selfishness. These are the chains that keep us from giving freely from the heart!

Thank the Lord that no such chains enslave our God! Our God who loves a cheerful giver is a cheerful giver! He never gives reluctantly or under compulsion. Indeed He is one who gives freely from the heart! The great gift which He decided in His heart to give is the gift of His own Son! "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life!" (John 3:16) He did not have to save the world! He did not have to give His Son! No one compelled Him to give Jesus! Yet He did give Him!

What's more He gave Him without reluctance! He gave Him completely, even though that giving meant that Jesus would die on the cross! He gave Him to die on that cross for the sins of the whole world! He gave Jesus to die and rise again that all who believe might have "life and have it to the full." (John 10:10) He gave His Son because that's how much He loved this world. Yes it was with joy that God, freely, out of His heart felt love gave His own Son!

Indeed that is the manner in which God gives to you and me. Paul wrote in our text that "God makes all grace abound to you..." (2 Corinthians 9:8) In baptism He freely washed away all your sins. He adopted you as His own child! He gave you freely

to drink of the water of everlasting life! Through baptism He poured out His Spirit into your heart! Daily He provides you with all that you need to support this body and life - with food and drink, house and home jobs, friends, family, cars! In the Lord's supper today He gives you the very body and blood of His son to eat and drink so that you might know that He loves you and forgives you!

My friends, only this selfless giving of God can set us free from the selfishness that binds our hearts. Only this cheerful, no holds barred giving to us from His heart frees us to give cheerfully to others! The Gospel reminds us that God, with His freely given love in Jesus Christ, has already shattered the chains of sin and death. He did that once and for all, for the whole world, when He died on the cross and rose from the dead three days later. The Gospel assures us that even before we confess our selfishness He has already forgiven us. The chains were broken and the price was paid, even before we asked, even before we were born, some 2000 years ago on the cross. God, having forgiven us freely from His heart, makes our hearts new again!

From those new hearts we are now able to decide in freedom to give to and share with others! Such hearts, filled with the lavishness of God's grace, are enabled by God's grace to be generous and lavish with others. Indeed, what an opportunity God gives us when we are asked to help a friend, be involved at the church, or give to a charity. Such opportunities are chances for us to be as generous with others as God has been with us! They are opportunities for others to recognize the light of God's generosity at work in us.

This week you are going to be presented with one such opportunity. You will receive a letter in the mail from the stewardship committee of this congregation. In that

letter the stewardship committee will ask you to prayerfully consider what portion of your time, talent and treasure you wish to return to the the Lord to support the ministry of this congregation. We know that the stewardship of the Gospel to which God has called you involves every area of your life, not simply your responsibilities as a member of this congregation. What we are asking is for you to pray. In your prayers meditate this week on God's abundant gifts to you in Christ. Take into consideration all the various opportunities God gives you to use those gifts in His service. Then freely in your own heart decide what portion of those gifts you will return to the Lord to support the ministry of this congregation. That's what Christian stewardship is - the free and joyous activity of the child of God, in every area of life, as a response to God's love in Christ. Amen!

APPENDIX E
THREE WEEK BIBLE STUDY
ON STEWARDSHIP
JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1996

(These Bible studies have been revised since being presented to the congregation.)

BIBLE STUDY ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

LESSON ONE "The Basis of Christian Stewardship"

Introduction

What do most people think of when they hear the word "steward?"

Why does the subject of stewardship make most people feel uneasy?

If you were to try and explain the word "steward" to a little child how would you do it?

I. Definition

- A. The English Word Steward
- B. The Greek Word - *oikonomia, oikonomeo, oikonomos*
- C. The LCMS definition

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, as a response to God's love in Christ, in managing all of life and all of life's resources in a God-pleasing manner and in partnership with Him towards the ultimate purpose of glorifying Him by making disciples of all nations.

II. The Basis, Power and Motivation of Christian Stewardship

- A. Apart from Christ we are not free in spiritual matters
 - John 8:34
 - Hebrews 2:14-15
 - Romans 11:1-6
 - Romans 6:23

The effect of the fall is that we have lost the divine sonship and both the willingness and the power to carry out the tasks which it implies.

Ephesians 2:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:6

- B. The Gospel is the only basis for Christian Stewardship

What is the Gospel? 2 Corinthians 5:19ff

The Gospel is the good news that in Jesus Christ God has reconciled the world to Himself, not counting men's sins against them.

John 8:36; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

We distinguish between **Objective Justification** and **Subjective Justification**.

Objective Justification "means that God has declared the whole world to be righteous for Christ's sake and that righteousness has been procured for all people. It is objective because this was God's unilateral act prior to and in no way dependent upon man's response to it, and universal because all human beings are embraced by this verdict. God has acquired the forgiveness of sins for all people by declaring that the world for Christ's sake has been forgiven." (From CTCR Document - *Theses on Justification*, page 12.)

Subjective Justification is the forgiveness which has been acquired by God for the whole human race "as it is received, appropriated by and applied to the individual sinner through God-given faith alone. . . ." (From CTCR document - *Theses on Justification*, page 8)

Objective justification is the basis and foundation for subjective justification.

Luther's explanation of the Apostle's Creed

Hebrews 11:1 & 6 Without faith in the objective Gospel no stewardship activity can be called Christian stewardship.

Luther in *The Freedom of a Christian*"

Christ is full of grace, life and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death and damnation. Now let faith come between them and sins, death and damnation will be Christ's, while grace, life and salvation will be the soul's; for if Christ is a bridegroom, He must take upon Himself the things which are His bride's and bestow on her the things that are His.

C. Through faith in the Gospel God has done more than simply set us free from something. Through faith in the Gospel God has also freed us for something.

Luther's Explanation

Galatians 5

Not free to be your own lord - that is the same old slavery of sin!

1. Free because through faith in the Gospel God has freed us from those enemies which prevented us from being stewards.
2. Free to engage in stewardship willingly, not under coercion!

D. Thus we see that the Gospel empowers and motivates Stewardship!

1. Be careful that we don't turn the Gospel into a law!
2. Gospel enables stewardship
 - 1 Cor. 15:58 - Never in vain!!!
 - 2 Cor. 5:15ff
 - Romans 12
3. The transforming power of the Gospel in our lives!
 - Galatians 2:20 "Christ living in me!"
 - John 15:1-11
 - Romans 6:3-4 "to live a new life"

Conclusion - From the Lutheran Confessions as quoted in chapter one of
Major Applied Project

BIBLE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Lesson Two The Nature of Christian Stewardship

I. SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

*Divide the group into small groups around each table and the room into thirds.
At one third of the tables they will read the following Bible Passage and answer the accompanying questions -*

Genesis 39:1-10

Who is the "owner" in this story?

Potiphar

What is Joseph's role in this household?

To manage all of Potiphar's household

What freedom does he have in this role and what limits, if any are there on his freedom?

He is completely free, Only Potiphar's wife is withheld

What can we learn about Christian stewardship from this story?

The steward is not the owner

The steward is the free representative of the owner

His responsibility is to manage the household in keeping with the owners wishes and best interests.

Faithfulness is an essential quality of a steward

At the second third of tables they will read the following Bible verses and answer the accompanying questions -

Genesis 41:33-45 (*set the context of this reading for this group, filling them in on the dream that Joseph has just interpreted for Pharaoh*)

What role is Joseph given in this story?

Over all of Egypt

What freedom does he have in this role? Are there any limits? If so, what? and Why?

Completely free, except he's not Pharaoh. He governs on Pharaoh's behalf and in Pharaoh's best interests

Why do you suppose Joseph was chosen for this position?

He had a plan! Wise! Discerning!

What can we learn about stewardship?

Not the owner

Free but limited by our responsibility to owner

Qualities of a Steward - plan

Wisdom

Discernment

The third group of tables will look at the following Bible passage and discuss the following questions -

Ephesians 3:2-11

What role has Paul been given?

To preach the Gospel to the Gentiles

How did Paul come to have this role?

By God's gracious gift

Whose intentions govern Paul in this role?

God's

What are those intentions?

To make known His grace and love in Jesus Christ to all people

What lessons can we learn about Christian Stewardship?

God's will is paramount

Our role as Christian stewards may be different from that of others

To be a steward in whatever role is a gift of God!

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Now have each of the groups share what they learned from the Bible Passages they examined. Focus the discussion on what lessons they learned about Christian stewardship. Write these on the board!

II. BIBLE STUDY/LECTURE

A. "Managing All of Life and all of Life's Resources in a God-pleasing manner "

B. As Christian Stewards we are not the OWNER. We are SERVANTS of the owner.

Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it."

James 1:17 "Every good gift is from above..."

All of life and all of life's resources are from above

C. We are the representatives of the owner!

Genesis 1 & 2

"Image of God"

"What else is this than that a wisdom and righteousness was implanted in man that would grasp God and reflect Him..."

(Apology, II:18)

Dual Purpose - to have relationship; to serve as His agents

Man is called to "rule" to "have dominion" to work and take care of the earth because He is only creature made in God's image. "As image bearer, man also represents God on the face of the earth. he is God's vice-regent, the rational, responsible creature who in communion and cooperation with God shares in God's work in the world."

The problem for us is that in the fall into sin, we have lost the image of God. "The Lutheran theologians are agreed that the image of God, which consists in the knowledge of God and holiness of the will, is lacking in man after the Fall. . . ." (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* vol. 1, page 518-519)

Apart from the Gospel, we cannot be the stewards God intends us to be. The Gospel is the good news that in Christ God has reconciled the world to Himself. Through faith in that Gospel we are reconciled to God in Christ! Col. 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24 distinctly state that through faith in the Gospel the image of God "is being restored in the believer." (Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* vol. 1. page 519)

Look at the First Article of Creed and Luther's explanation, as well as at second table of commandments and their explanations

Christian stewardship touches every area of life

God has given us these resources for the "support of this body and life.

Our Lord wants us to use them to help our neighbor

"help and support Him in every physical need..." "to help him improve and protect his property and business" "to help and be of service to him in keeping it..."

As representatives of God in our stewardship the PURPOSES OF GOD are paramount.

C. Qualities of Christian Stewards

1. We saw in Joseph
Wisdom, discernment

Luke 12:42ff- "faithful and wise"

Matthew 25:14ff - accountable

I Cor. 4:1ff - faithful

D. God is the owner, not us!

1 Peter 4:7ff

We administer His gifts
Gifts of Grace
In various roles
To His praise and glory!

Christian stewardship is not the recognition that we should give everything to God. Rather, it is the recognition that everything belongs to God.

III. FINAL DISCUSSION

As a large group make a list of the various roles we fulfill in life.

Now divide up into tables and assign a different role to each group. Ask them to answer the following questions -

What resources has God given us to perform this role?

How can we use these resources to fulfill this role?

How are we free in this role and what are the limits of our freedom?

**BIBLE STUDY
ON CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP**

Lesson 3
The Purpose of Christian Stewardship

I. What is the Purpose?

- A. List all the different areas in which we are stewards?
Creation, work, school, community, parents, marriage
- B. Now what are the purposes for being stewards in these areas?
- C. Distinguish Primary from Other purposes.

D. What is the Primary Purposes for our Stewardship?

1 Peter 4:10-11

Notice the Other - Serving and loving others

Administering God's Grace

Primary - Glory of God, Salvation

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Other purposes - Prayers for everyone

Peaceful and quiet lives

Primary - God wants all to be saved

2 Cor. 8 & 9

Other Purpose - to help the needy

Primary - so that God might be praised

for witness and salvation

D. The Primary Purpose of Christian Stewardship

Ephesians 1:9-10

The plan - to bring all things together under Christ

Ephesians 2:6-7

Ephesians 3:10

This stewardship was entrusted to us.

Matthew 28:19-20

II. This stewardship is entrusted to us as God's Partners!

A. *Koinonia* means fellowship or partnership in a common thing

It stresses our common bond with Jesus Christ.

Participation with Christ in Holy Spirit - Heb. 3:14;
Heb. 6:4; 2 Cor. 3:4

Participation with Christ in the Lord's table (1 Cor
10:14ff;

In suffering and glory - 2 Cor 1:7; Heb 12:8; 1 Peter 5:1

In the mission - Phil 1; Heb. 3:1; 1 Cor 3:1 Cor. 9:42

**Notice that all the things which we share in common, which
make us partners are gifts of God. Add Phil 2 & Eph. 4**

B. Its not an equal partnership!

2 Corinthians 3:6-9

The results are God's work. He gives the growth

We can do all the right things as a congregation and not grow, because it is
not our doing the right things that makes growth. Then why worry?

Because we can become obstacles to God's work. We want to do our best
in keeping with the fact that God has done His best!

God is the owner, we the trustees, God is the MASTER, we are His
slaves, God is the Father, we are His sons and daughters through faith in
the Gospel.

III. We are Partners in God's stewardship Plan

A. God provides for the carrying out of His work through us!

I Peter 2:9

Priesthood of all believers

How many priest does this congregation have? Every believer

God works through us!

He makes us partners together - 1 Cor 12

How do you know what your priestly role is?

What talents has God given you??

What roles? - Parent, Work, Neighbor, Elder

What resources? How much time?

God has made us His Ambassadors in these roles!

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

John 20:21-23

Has given the authority of the keys to all Christians
to carry out privately

ie., - witness to neighbor

Teaching kids

Listening to a troubled friend and telling them
they are forgiven!

B. Yet God also provides the **Pastoral Office**

Different, yet very much the same as the Priests

a. Same - office of the keys

b. Different - 1 Cor. 4 - Public Ministry - "On Behalf of"
Stewards of the mysteries of God - Word and
Sacrament

Divinely established office - called through
the church by God

Good Order

Look at Catechism - As if God Himself

For training of priest hood

Eph. 4:11ff

In the Pastoral office God has provided an objective voice speaking the objective message of the Gospel - "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:19) - so that our faith might rest firmly on the objective Gospel. The pastor holds the office established by God and in that office speaks God's objective message, "in the stead and by" God's "command. . . ." Thus through faith in that message we can be fully confident of our salvation!

APPENDIX F

STATISTICS USED FOR CHARTS

STATISTICS FOR CHART # 1
Total Membership/Average Worship Attendance
1980 - 1993

Year	Average Worship Attendance	Total Membership
1980	148	301
1981	168	375
1982	176	434
1983	182	481
1984	185	517
1985	163	518
1986	134	504
1987	159	445
1988	155	433
1989	164	447
1990	168	461
1991	178	476
1992	180	497
1993	166	515

Chart # 2
First Lutheran Church Sunday School Attendance 1980 - 1993

Year	Total	K - High School	Adult Bible Class
1980	62	31	31
1981	71	39	32
1982	72	42	30
1983	76	47	29
1984	72	39	33
1985	67	40	27
1986	53	32	21
1987	80	42	38
1988	81	43	38
1989	78	40	38
1990	100	41	59
1991	88	41	47
1992	91	48	43
1993	83	48	35

CHART # 3
Frequency of Sunday School Attendance
1993

NOT AT ALL	57%	of members did not attend Sunday School at all
INFREQUENTLY	20%	of members attended infrequently (1 - 14 times)
FREQUENTLY	13%	of members attended frequently (15-33 times)
ALWAYS	9%	of members attended almost always (34 or more times)

CHART # 4
1993 Membership According to Sex

46%	Male
54%	Female

CHART # 5
% Of Membership By Ages
Male/Female
1993

<u>Age</u>	<u>% Male</u>	<u>% Female</u>
65 +	7	9
55-64	6	6
45-54	6	6
35-44	8	10
25-34	7	7
20-24	3	4
15-19	4	4
10-14	3	4
5-9	4	3
0-4	1	1

CHART # 6
Natural Increase/Decrease 1983 - 1993

Years	Births	Deaths
1983	24	4
1984	6	4
1985	13	10
1986	3	2
1987	5	5
1988	8	5
1989	7	5
1990	1	3
1991	8	5
1992	3	6
1993	4	3

CHART # 7
Transfer Increase/Decrease 1983-1993

Years	Transfers In	Transfers Out
1983	18	6
1984	24	9
1985	23	13
1986	1	0
1987	25	26
1988	10	14
1989	11	24
1990	17	7
1991	16	12
1992	22	2
1993	21	2

CHART # 8
Outreach Increase/Decrease 1983 - 1993

Year	Gained from Outside	Members Released
1983	21	0
1984	7	0
1985	13	0
1986	17	0
1987	7	5
1988	9	5
1989	16	12
1990	16	0
1991	10	5
1992	3	0
1993	3	4

CHART # 9
Membership Increases/Decreases 1983-1993
Composite

Year	Total Increase	Total Decrease
1983	63	10
1984	37	13
1985	49	23
1986	21	2
1987	37	36
1988	27	24
1989	34	41
1990	34	10
1991	34	21
1992	28	8
1993	28	9

CHART # 10
Finances at First Lutheran 1987 - 1993

Year	Total Amount Budgeted	Total Expenses	Total Contributions
1987	\$ 116,449	119,691	113,780
1988	\$ 134,941	143,885	112,563
1989	\$ 130,226	131,979	116,329
1990	\$ 140,106	135,990	119,849
1991	\$ 166,187	128,526	130,286
1992	\$ 174,575	150,765	141,908
1993	\$ 182,665	158,337	145,928

CHART # 11
Three Areas for Growth at First Lutheran

Increasing Worship Attendance and Member involvement -	122 Comments
Increasing Staff -	52 Comments
Improving and Adding to Facilities -	91 Comments

CHART # 12
Three Types of Growth Desired By
Members of First Lutheran

Out of a total of 966 comments made in response to the Survey

13 %	related to "Growing Up in the Lord"
30 %	related to "Growing Together in Fellowship"
11%	related to "Growing Out To Reach Others"
46 %	related to numerous other areas

CHART # 13
Total Membership/Worship Attendance 1991-1996

Year	Average Worship Attendance	Total Membership
1991	178	476
1992	180	497
1993	166	515
1994	193	529
1995	205	564
1996	199	554

CHART # 14
Sunday School Enrollment 1992 - 1996

<u>Year</u>	<u>K -12 Enrollment</u>	<u>Adult Bible Class Enrollment</u>
1992	98	95
1993	134	95
1994	122	108
1995	143	121
1996	135	143

CHART # 15
Net Membership Increase/Decrease 1992 - 1996

<u>Year</u>	<u>Members Gained</u>	<u>Members Lost</u>	<u>Net Increase/(Decrease)</u>
1992	28	8	20
1993	28	10	18
1994	36	22	14
1995	40	5	35
1996	30	40	(10)

CHART # 16
Finances at First Lutheran 1992 - 1996

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual Expenses</u>	<u>Total Contributions</u>
1992	\$ 174,575	150,765	141,908
1993	\$ 182,665	158,337	145,928
1994	\$ 199,660	156,355	166,537
1995	\$ 184,750	165,188	177,227
1996	\$ 218,390	203,286	195,407

Bibliography

- Anderson, Hugh George. "Stewardship as a Lifestyle." The Mennonite 93:1 (January, 1978): 34 - 36.
- Arnold, Duane W. H. and C. George Fry. The Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1982.
- Avery, William O. "Stewardship and the Gospel: A Practical Approach." Lutheran Theological Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 21-31.
- Bachmann, Lori, and Doering, Martin, ed. Youth Stewardship Style. Austin: The Texas District of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1990.
- Barna, George. Seven Trends Facing the Church in 1990 and Beyond. National and International Religion Report, 1990.
- Barna, George. The Frog in the Kettle. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1990.
- Barna, George. The Power of Vision. Ventura California: Regal Books, 1992.
- Barth, Karl L. "The Doctrine of the Ministry: Some Practical Dimensions." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988): 204 - 214.
- Bassler, Jouette M. God & Mammon Asking for Money in the New Testament. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- Beisner, E. Calvin. "Stewardship in a Free Market." Crosswinds: The Reformation Digest II:2 (February, 1979): 60-65.
- Belasic, David S. Guidelines for Christian Stewards. Federal Way, WA: Seven Hills Publishers, 1990.
- Berner, Sr. Carl W. "The Power of Pure Stewardship." Concordia Journal 7:6 (November, 1981): 229 - 233.
- Betz, Hans Dieter. 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1985.

- Bickel, Phillip M., and Robert L. Nordlie. The Goal of the Gospel. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1982.
- Birkner, W. C. "Christian Stewardship." in The Abiding Word: Doctrinal Essays, Volume One, edited by Theodore Laetsch D. D. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946.
- Bleick, Roy. Much More Than Giving. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1985.
- Brodd, Sven-Erik. "Stewardship and Ecclesiology." In Stewardship -- Our Accountability to God, by the Lutheran World Federation, April, 1994, 19-29.
- Brown, Francis, D.D., D.Litt., Driver, S. R., D.D., D.Litt., Briggs, Charles A., D.D., D.Litt. The New Brown-- Driver -- Briggs -- Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon. Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1980.
- Callahan, Kennon L. Effective Church Finances. San Francisco, California: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995.
- Callahan, Kennon L. Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church. San Francisco, California: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.
- Chellappa, J. "Stewardship and Ethics." In Stewardship -- Our Accountability to God, by the Lutheran World Federation, April, 1994, 52-73.
- Clinard, Turner N. Responding To God: The Life of Stewardship. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980.
- Coiner, Harry G. "The Secret of God's Plan: Guidelines for a Theology of Stewardship." Concordia Theological Monthly (May, 1963): 1 - 34.
- Corely, Bruce. "The Intertestamental Perspective of Stewardship." Southwestern Journal of Theology XIII:2 (Spring, 1971): 15-24.
- Cunningham, Richard B. Creative Stewardship. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1979.

- Daniel, David P. "A Spiritual Condominium: Luther's View on Priesthood and Ministry with Some Structural Implications." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988): 266 - 282.
- Dumbrell, William J. "Genesis 1-3, Ecology, and the Dominion of Man." Crux XXI:4 (December, 1985): 16-26.
- Fisher, Wallace E. "A Strategy for Doing Biblical Stewardship: A Report from the Field." Trinity Seminary Review 9:1 (Spring, 1987): 10 - 17.
- Fisher, Wallace E. All The Good Gifts: On Doing Biblical Stewardship Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House: 1979.
- Foebler, E. E. "The Office of the Public Ministry." in The Abiding Word: Doctrinal Essays, Volume Two. edited by Theodore Laetsch D. D. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947.
- Fowler, James. Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning. San Francisco, California: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981.
- Fryar, Jane L. Go and Make Disciples: The Goal of the Christian Teacher. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.
- Gahl, Dick, and Hoover, Dave, ed. Congregational Stewardship Workbook. St. Louis, Missouri: The Department of Stewardship of The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1993.
- Georgi, Dieter. Remembering the Poor. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1965.
- Getz, Gene A. Real Prosperity. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1990.
- Grimm, Eugene. Generous People. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- Gritsch, Eric W. "Gospel and Stewardship: The Perspective of Martin Luther." Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 32-45.

- Grothe, Jonathan F. Reclaiming Patterns of Pastoral Ministry: Jesus and Paul. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1988.
- Habeck, Irwin J. and Armin W. Schuetze. The Shepherd Under Christ. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1974.
- Hamann, Henry H. "The Translation of Ephesians 4:12 -- A Necessary Revision." Concordia Journal 14:1 (January, 1988): 42 - 49.
- Hardt, C. August. "Christian Fellowship." Concordia Theological Monthly XVI:7 (July, 1945): 443-469.
- Heiges, Donald R. The Christian's Calling. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.
- Heinecke, Paul T., Hunter, Kent R., and Luecke, David S. Courageous Churches: Refusing Decline, Inviting Growth. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.
- Hendricks, William L. "Stewardship in the New Testament." Southwestern Journal of Theology XIII:2 (Spring, 1971): 25-33.
- Herrmann, J. E. The Chief Steward: A Manual on Pastoral Leadership. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, Department of Stewardship, Missionary Education and Promotion, 1951.
- Holladay, William L., ed. A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based on the First, Second, and Third Editions of the Koehler - Baumgartner Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.
- Huebel, Glenn. "The Church Growth Movement: A Word of Caution." Concordia Theological Quarterly 50:4 (July - October, 1986): 165 - 181.
- Hunter, Kent R. Moving the Church Into Action. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989.
- Jones, Bruce W. Ministerial Leadership in a Managerial World. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988.

Kantonen, T. A. A Theology for Christian Stewardship. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956.

Kettner, Elmer. The Secret of God's Plan: A Series of Four Sermon Guides Based on an Essay by Harry G. Coiner. St. Louis: Faith Forward Committee of The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1967.

Klug, Eugene F. A.. Church and Ministry The Role of Church, Pastor, and People from Luther to Walther. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.

Klug, Eugene F. "Luther on Church and Ministry." Concordia Journal 7:4 (July, 1981): 149 - 151.

Knowles, Malcolm. The Modern Practice of Adults Education. New York, New York: Association Press, 1970.

Knowles, Malcolm. Self-Directed Learning. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Cambridge Adult Education, 1975.

Knowles, Malcolm. The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company: 1973.

Knutsen, Mary M. "Is There an Imperative in the Gospel?' A Systematic Perspective." Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 12-20.

Koester, Robert J. Law & Gospel: Foundation of Lutheran Ministry. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1994.

Kolb, Robert. The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1993.

Kolden, Marc, and Todd Nichol, editors. Called and Ordained Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1990.

Krauss, George, and Norbert H. Mueller. Pastoral Theology. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1990.

- Leas, Speed B. Time Management. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- Lee, Harris W. Effective Church Leadership: A Practical Sourcebook. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989.
- Lindberg, Carter. "Church Growth and Confessional Integrity." Concordia Theological Quarterly 54:2-3 (April - July, 1990): 131 - 154.
- Lindberg, Carter. "The Ministry and Vocation of the Baptized." Lutheran Quarterly VI:4 (Winter, 1992): 385 - 401.
- Lindgren, Alvin J. Foundations for Purposeful Church Administration. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1965.
- Luecke, David S. New Designs for Church Leadership. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1990.
- Luther, Martin. Luther's Works: American Edition. edited by Helmut T. Lehmann. Vol. 36. Word and Sacrament II. "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520." Translated by A. T. W. Steinhauser. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
- Luther, Martin. Luther's Works: American Edition. edited by Helmut T. Lehmann. Vol. 40. Church and Ministry II. "Concerning the Ministry, 1523." Translated by Conrad Bergendoff. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958.
- Luther, Martin. Martin Luther: Selections from His Writings. Edited by John Dillenberger. Garden City, New York: Anchor Book, 1961.
- Mager, Robert F. Preparing Instructional Objectives. Belmont, California: Lake Publishing Company, 1984.
- McConkey, Dale D. Goal Setting. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978.
- McNabb, Bill, and Mabry, Steven. Teaching the Bible Creatively. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990.

- Means, James E. Leadership in Christian Ministry. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1993.
- Moellering, H. Armin. "Some New Testament Aspects of the Ministry Identified and Applied." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988): 229 - 247.
- Mueller, J. T. "A Too Rigorous Insistence Upon Stewardship." Concordia Theological Monthly XXII:3 (March, 1951): 213 - 215.
- Mueller, J. T. "Stewardship -- Roman, Calvinist, Lutheran." Concordia Theological Monthly XXVI:7 (July, 1955): 543.
- Nagel, Norman E. "The Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988): 283 - 299.
- Nelson, Richard D. "Biblical Perspectives on Stewardship and the Gospel." Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin 70:4 (Fall, 1990): 3-11.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. "The Public Square: All You Needed to Know You Didn't Learn in Sunday School." First Things 10 (February, 1991): 51 - 52.
- Olson, Raymond M. Stewards Appointed: 10 Studies in Christian Stewardship Based on Luther's Small Catechism. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958.
- Pawley, Daniel W. "Gifts and Growth: A Case Study." Leadership III:1 (Winter, 1982): 92 - 99.
- Pieper, Francis, D. D. Christian Dogmatics Vol. I. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950.
- Pieper, Francis, D. D. Christian Dogmatics Vol. III. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1953.
- Petry, Ronald D. Partners In Creation: Stewardship for Pastor and People. Elgin, IL: The Brethren Press, 1980.

Pieper, Francis. Christian Dogmatics. Vol. 3. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1953.

Pohl, Wayne. "Growing Generous Givers." Leadership XIII:3 (Summer, 1992): 86 - 90.

Pragman, James H. Traditions of Ministry. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1983.

Rein, R. C. Adventures in Christian Stewardship. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1955.

Roop, Eugene F. Let the Rivers Run. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1995.

Rueter, Alvin C.. Organizing For Evangelism. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983.

Rusbult, Richard E. The Stewardship Workbook. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.

Russell, Letty. "Partnership in Stewardship: Creation and Redemption." In Teaching and Preaching Stewardship: An Anthology of Christian Stewardship, edited by Norden C. Murphy, 2-8. Commission on Stewardship of The National Council of Stewardship, 1985.

Schaller, Lyle E. Getting Things Done: Concepts and Skills for Leaders. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986.

Schaller, Lyle E. Looking in the Mirror: Self-Appraisal in the Local Church. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

Schaller, Lyle E. Parish Planning. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1971.

Schrieber, Paul L. "Priests Among Priests: The Office of the Ministry in the Light of the Old Testament Priesthood." Concordia Journal 14:3 (July, 1988): 215 - 228.

- Senkbeil, Harold L. Sanctification: Christ in Action. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992.
- Smith, Ralph. "Old Testament Concepts of Stewardship." Southwestern Journal of Theology XIII:2 (Spring, 1971): 7-13.
- Spitz, L. W. "The Universal Priesthood of All Believer." in The Abiding Word: Doctrinal Essays, Volume One. edited by Theodore Laetsch, D. D. 321-341. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946.
- Stephan, Curtis C. "The Office of the Keys." in The Abiding Word: Doctrinal Essays, Volume One. edited by Theodore Laetsch D. D. 342-365. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946.
- Stroh, Les. "One Step At a Time." St. Louis: Photocopied, 1988.
- Tappert, Theodore, ed. The Book of Concord. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Fortress Press, 1981.
- The Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Evangelism and Church Growth: With Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1987.
- The Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Spiritual Gifts. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1994.
- The Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1981.
- The Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship. St. Louis: The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, 1981.
- Vallet, Ronald E. Stepping Stones of the Steward. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1994.

- Wagner, C. Peter. Church Growth and the Whole Gospel. San Francisco, California: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981.
- Walther, C. F. W. Church and Ministry. Translated by J. T. Mueller. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1987.
- Walther, C. F. W. The Congregation's Right to Choose its Pastor. Translated by Fred Kramer. Ft. Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1987.
- Walther, C. F. W. The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel. Translated by W. H. T. Dau. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1928.
- Walz, Edgar. A Manual for Pastors and Lay Leaders: How to Manage Your Church. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987.
- Werning, Waldo J. Christian Stewards Confronted and Committed. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1982.
- Werning, Waldo J.. The Radical Nature of Christianity. Privately Printed, 1975.
- Werning, Waldo J. The Stewardship Call. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1970.
- Werning, Waldo J. Supply-Side Stewardship. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1986.
- Wingren, Gustaf. Luther on Vocation. Translated by Carl C. Rasmussen. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Muhlenberg Press, 1957.
- Zander, Dieter. "The Gospel For Generation X." Leadership XIV:2 (Spring, 1995): 37 - 42.
- Zettler, Penny. "Not Everyone Learns Alike." Leadership VIII: 3 (Summer, 1987): 28 - 33.
- Zill, Marcus T. Gathering and Managing God's Resources. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1979.