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A Systemic View of Collaborative Leadership-A Partnership of Joy

Dale Kleimola
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, kleimoladmk@gmail.com

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Dale M. Kleimola

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Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO

Advisor: Dr. Joseph Barbour — DATE 6/23/94

Reader: Dr. J.A.O. Preus III — DATE 5/31/94

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program
Dr. Andrew Bacon — DATE 6/17/94

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PREFACE

The idea of pastor and people working together in ministry is not new. The Apostle Paul introduced the concept in his letter 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" (Phi 1:5).[1] It is a concept Martin Luther and others echoed. Robert Kolb notes in his article, "The Doctrine of Ministry in Martin Luther and the Lutheran Confessions"

> [Luther] ignored questions related to dominance and dictation by one or the other, questions of who controlled whom and what in the church. Instead, he pursued the definition of the power to serve, both God and one another, within the assembly of God's people, through God's Word.[2]

The theme of partnership in ministry has also been discussed by the contemporary Roman Catholic couple James Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. They propose,

> for centuries the Christian community has thrived in the protective embrace of parental leaders. But today the

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[1]Unless other wise noted, all scriptural references are from The Holy Bible: New International Version (Colorado Springs, CO: International Bible Society, 1984).

[2]Robert Kolb, "The Doctrine of Ministry in Martin Luther and the Lutheran Confessions" in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry*, Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden, editors (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1990), 51.

> Spirit moves the whole Church toward the more adult embrace of partners.[3]

The goal of this Major Applied Project is to describe a model of parish management titled "Collaborative Leadership: A Partnership of Joy." This leadership model has three origins. The first is in scripture, where Paul speaks kindly of his "partnership in the gospel" with the Philippian Christians (Phi 1:5). The second is in parish ministry experience. The third is found in the concept of partnership described by Whitehead and Whitehead.

I am confident that God is calling pastors and people to embrace a partnership in the gospel. Whitehead and Whitehead define partnership both in gospel and contemporary life as

> an experience of shared power. In this communal process, we explicitly reject domination of one by the other. Partnership depends on mutuality. The giving and the receiving go both ways. Each party bring something of value; each receives something of worth. Partnership thrives when we recognize and respect this mutual exchange of gifts.[4]

When that is done, the church will become increasingly effective in proclaiming the gift of life and salvation offered by Jesus Christ to all humanity.

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[3]James D. Whitehead & Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *The Promise of Partnership: Leadership and Ministry in an Adult Church* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 3.

[4]Whitehead and Whitehead, 8.

ABSTRACT

This Major Applied Project (MAP) recognizes the relationship between the office of the public ministry and the priesthood of all believers. The thesis is that ministry is enhanced, and joy grows when the partnership between pastor and people is appreciated and celebrated.

To accomplish this goal, the project looks at the doctrine of church and ministry, as understood by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and applies to it, systems theory.

Recognizing the need for a paradigm shift in understanding church and ministry, the MAP looks at church and ministry from two systemic view points: the church as a complex organizational system, and the church as an emotional system.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The overall goal of this study is to demonstrate the necessity of power in the church. In particular, it will show how legitimate power, when exercised collaboratively, is useful in enabling the church to complete the work the Lord calls his people to do: to "make disciples of all nations" (Mat 28:19).

In the initial stages of this study, the goal was to define a particular congregational leadership style identified as "collaborative leadership." This led to asking questions regarding power and authority within the church, and identifying ways that power and authority either promote or inhibit the development of collaborative ministry. That, in turn, led to the exploration of causes of "power struggles" within the church.

These initial thoughts about collaborative leadership were rather naive. I had the assumption that this leadership style could be developed rather simply. First, define collaborative ministry. Second, determine how a collaborative style of leadership differs from other styles of ministry. Third, make the organizational adjustments

necessary to move from the congregation's traditional model of leadership to a collaborative model of parish leadership.

The reality is, while collaborative ministry is a biblically solid model of ministry, there are two dynamic forces working simultaneously for and against it: the organizational system of the congregation, and the emotional system of the congregation and those who belong to it. Both of these forces resist change and innovation. The blocking forces inherent within organization and emotional systems result in the power struggles that undermine ministry. As a result, the main focus has shifted to defining the organizational and emotional dynamics found in a congregation that promote or inhibit the development of collaborative leadership.

This study is also about authority and power in the church. Parish leadership and management, in any form, revolves around questions of authority and power. Power for the purposes of this study will be understood as the shared experience of two or more people or working groups striving toward a common goal (collaborative power). The study will demonstrate the difficulty in developing collaborative power, yet illustrate how valuable the model is for effective ministry.

The anticipated outcomes of working collaboratively in the parish are: increased ownership of the ministry of the congregation by the members of the congregation; greater

utilization of the creative energies of the members of the congregation, resulting in better decisions; and the enabling of individuals within the congregation to freely use their God-given gifts and talents for the glory of God and the good of God's people.

One of the initial difficulties experienced in embarking on this study is rooted in the word "power." Power, in many respects, is a word that is not associated with church and ministry very comfortably. The word "power" can make the "powerless" uncomfortable, while making the "powerful" proud. It is this dynamic between the "powerless" and the "powerful" that is the source of power struggles within the church; the source of the anxiety that inhibits the development of a collaborative style of ministry.

Yet, as unnatural as it is, power and power struggles exist at all levels of parish life. Some power struggles, such as those between a pastor and his parishioners, are very visible. Others, such as the day to day struggles that occur between competing members of a pastoral staff or members of the congregation, are hidden.

While power struggles between a pastor and parishioner are common, though uncomfortable, they are not nearly as devastating as the power struggles that arise between individuals serving a congregation through the office of the public ministry, auxiliary professional and para-professional ministries. While pastor/parishioner conflicts are

common knowledge, the conflicts that occur within a congregational staff are hidden, that is, kept secret, lest the reputation of the office of the public ministry be tarnished.

Though common, power struggles are offensive in the minds of many Christians. Power struggles are viewed as incompatible with the gospel parishes proclaim through the ministry of Word and Sacrament. This general denial of conflict in the church led Peter Steinke to note,

> "Church fight" sounds like an oxymoron. Where's the love, joy and peace we expect from people there? But what happens in the church is *natural*. It is what happens in all relationship systems. Regardless of the context, emotional processes are the same. In fact, these processes become more intense when we are dealing with what lies close to the heart and meaning of life. . . . Congregational skirmishes may be even more abusive than those that take place in less emotionally-charged groups.[1]

In other words, even though church fights make congregations anxious and reactive, they are inevitable. The challenge of developing a collaborative leadership style of ministry is to allow church fights to build and strengthen ministry, not undermine or destroy it.

Attention must be given to questions of power and authority within the church, particularly as they occurred in the early church and witnessed through the Holy Scriptures. The development of a collaborative community depends

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[1]Peter Steinke, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, with a Foreword by Rabbi Edwin H. Friedmann (n.p.: The Alban Institute, 1993), 25.

on a congregation's ability to effectively resolve power struggles. This will be the focus of the second chapter.

At the same time, a healthy understanding of church and ministry contributes to building a partnership of joy. This will be the focus of chapter three.

In exploring the concept of shared power, the two ways power struggles develop will be discussed. The first is through the organizational structure of the congregation, where the laity and/or the pastoral staff vie for positions of traditional congregational power. This quest for power is sought passively or actively through the political process of the parish, that is, through the organizational structure of the congregation.

This aspect of congregational power struggles is well defined by Paul Dietterich and Inagrace Dietterich of the Center for Parish Development (CPD) in Chicago. This agency has given careful thought to understanding the church as a "complex organizational system." They suggest the organizational structure of the church itself can foster power-struggles. How the church functions as an organizational system and how this contributes to controls power struggles will be explored in more detail in chapters four and five.

The second way power struggles develop within a congregation is through the emotional dynamics of the staff, lay leaders and other members of the congregation. Peter

Steinke's book, *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, helps define how the emotional processes of individuals and the congregational system contribute to the development of power struggles, and how these power struggles inhibit the development of a collaborative style of leadership. The concept of the church as an emotional system will be explored in chapters four and six.

Both aspects of congregational life, the church as an organizational system and emotional system must be seen as harnessed forces, like two oxen pulling a wagon. The church is simultaneously a complex organizational system and an emotional system. Even if a congregation has the most well-developed organizational system possible, it will not work to its full potential if the emotional dynamics of the congregation are unhealthy. At the same time, the most emotionally healthy congregation will not function very effectively if the organizational structure of the parish is inefficient.

This study will take a close look at the dynamics of a power struggle taking place in a large midwestern congregation. To protect the integrity and reputation of the congregation, individuals and ecclesiastical jurisdiction involved, the particular congregation and location will not be revealed. The goal in sharing this story of ministry is not to bring embarrassment to the church or any part of the

body of Christ, but rather to help others learn from the experiences of one who has been intimately involved in the challenging quest for shared power. These events will be shared in the body of the paper, as appropriate, and summarized in chapter seven.

CHAPTER TWO

AUTHORITY AND POWER IN THE CHURCH

It is hard to acknowledge that power struggles are found in the church. We often assume that as the people of God, who are led by the Spirit of the Lord, and controlled by the love of Christ, that we will naturally grow in Christ-likeness. As a result, quests for power and authority are not considered compatible with the Christian faith. Unfortunately, that is not at all the case. Power struggles are a fact of life for a congregation, any congregation, just as they are for any human organization. Steinke contends Dietrich Bonhoeffer was speaking of the power struggles found within the first century church when he wrote, "At the very beginning of Christian fellowship there is engendered an invisible, often unconscious, life and death contest" (*Life Together,* 90).[1]

An event in Jesus' ministry shows the reality of power struggles in the church. Mark the Evangelist tells of James and John approaching Jesus with a personal request: "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory" (Mark 10:37). Mark then shares the reaction

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[1]Steinke, ix.

the other ten: "They became indignant" (Mark 10:41). A power struggle was at work. The other ten were asking themselves, "What gives them the right to seek that position? Are we not just as qualified as they? Haven't we suffered as they have? Haven't we been called by Jesus just as they have? Haven't we received the same instructions they have received?"

Jesus quelled the rebellion when he defined the source of authentic power in the Church. "You know that those who are regarded as 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 slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:42-45).

With that statement, Jesus introduces the paradox of power in the church. The greatest, the most powerful person in the Kingdom of God is the one who serves. The weakest, the least powerful person in the Kingdom of God is the one who takes positions of power and authority by force, or by assuming that it is his or hers by virtue of one's call, election, position or tenure of membership.

Properly understood, by its very nature, power in the Christian Church is a humbling word. It is a word that says "I need others. I cannot accomplish this task of

ministry alone. I need the assistance of others. I need to share the power and authority of the Gospel with other people." That is the underlying concept of collaborative leadership, of shared power. It is a concept that is rooted and grounded in the gospel in the proper sense: God's love for humanity shown in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and God's gift of the ministry of Word and Sacrament to his people collectively. Jesus described where true power is found: in the gospel, and in the relationships the gospel creates when it is at work in the lives of the people of God.

Though the word generates discomfort, nevertheless, power is a necessary part of parish ministry. Power is always found within the Christian Church. When used as God intends, it builds the church and allows the Spirit of God to work salvation in the hearts of people. However, when power is exercised improperly, the congregation will suffer. If power and authority are understood as a gift of God to the people of God, the church can experience the healthy benefits of shared power in ministry. Whitehead and Whitehead note, "[When using power appropriately,] religious authorities engender faith, foster growth, and stir us to virtuous action".[2] To clearly understand what is meant by both, the words authority and power will be described based

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[2]Whitehead and Whitehead, 35.

on their biblical usage, particularly as they relate to the relationship of the people of God to their Lord.

Authority

The Greek word, *exousia,* is rendered in a variety of ways in the English translation: Authority, right, power, disposal, ability, control and dominion. The word is also applied to a number of people or positions, the most popular being the *exousia* belonging to God. In addition, the Scripture speak of the *exousia* of the dark side of the created world, authority belonging to God's people, the authority to preach the Gospel and the authority to govern. Even though the word is used in a variety of contexts, the Scriptures make clear that all *exousia* is of divine origin. Jesus' *exousia* came from God (Mat 9:6, Mat 28:18, John 5:27 and John 10:18). The *exousia* of the disciples and apostles to preach and teach in the name of Jesus came from God (Mat 10:1, Mat 28:18-19, 1Co 9:4ff. and 2Co 10:8 and 13:10). The *exousia* to be called "children of God" is from God (John 1:12). The kingdom of darkness exercises *exousia* with the of God, so that in the end, the will of God might be shown (Col 2:10-15). Finally, St. Paul makes the blanket statement that "there is no *exousia* except that which God has established" (Rom 13:1-2).

In the wider uses of the term in Scripture, human authority frequently refers to the authority given to rulers and kings. However, this *exousia* is given either by the

people, or by divine right (Gen 41:35, Num 27:20, Deu 1:15, Neh 3:7, Est 9:29, Isa 22:21 and Mat 8:9).

Exousia is also used to describe a person's ability to exercise power because permission has been given by another person or institution. Some notable examples are found in Matthew 9:6, when Jesus shows that he was given the authority to forgive sins; Matthew 10:1, when the disciples were given the authority to drive out evil spirits and heal the diseased and sick in the name of Jesus; and Matthew 21:23-24, when the religious leaders asked Jesus who gave him authority to preach and teach in the temple. In nearly every case, human authority is that which is given to or received from another; it is not self-imposed.

There are only two exceptions to this. The first is found in Jeremiah 5:31: "The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?" Here the word refers to the temple priests who ruled by their own authority, without a call from the Lord. The prophet describes the result as "appalling and horrible" (Jer 5:31).

The other occurrence is found in Jesus' comment in John 10:17-18: "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." Jesus tells us that he

chose to use his authority to lay down and take up his life. But he tells us he did so in response to the command he received from his Father. His authority to lay down and take up his life was given by another, not something he assumed for himself. It was an act of obedience.

Yet, when divine authority is described, there is no mention of giving and receiving. Divine authority is simply from God to God. The source of God's authority is found in God himself. This includes the ability to forgive sins (Mat 9:8), the ability to create humanity as God himself chooses (Rom 9:21), and God's *exousia* over the powers and authorities of this world.

In summary, authority held by human beings can only be given, it cannot be taken. When it is taken by force, the results are disastrous. Divine authority, on the other hand, is God's simply because he is God. This is significant in understanding the nature of authority in the church. Genuine authority is always given first from God to the church, or from God to a person in a position of responsibility, i.e., the apostles.

Power

Where *exousia* refers to authority that is given, the word *dunamis* is used to describe an individual's attributes, ability or character. For instance, in Genesis 49:3 and Judges 6:2, power refers to physical strength. Power is also identified as the oppression of others by those who use

their ability in a self-indulgent manner (Jud 6:9, Pro 28:12, 28 and Ecc 4:1). In addition, power is equated with the ability to act with wisdom (Pro 3:27, 8:14 and 24:5), that is, using one's intellectual skills toward a specific purpose. Finally, power is equated with pride, "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me,'" (Deu 8:17). But this power is in reality a lack of power: "When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing" (Pro 11:7).

Taking a closer look, however, *dunamis*, like *exousia*, is given. *Dunamis* is identified as evidence of divine *exousia* found in God and humanity. For example, Jude reminds us, "to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Jude 25). When Jesus did his mighty works *(dunamis)*, the people of Nazareth asked where he got his *dunamis*, supposing him to be the son of Joseph and Mary (Mat 13:55). At the ascension of our Lord, the angel promised the disciples *dunamis* from on high, enabling the followers of Jesus to bear witness to the work of the risen and ascended Lord (Acts 1:8). Paul points to the gospel as the *dunamis* of God, capable of bringing salvation to all who believe (Rom 1:16). Finally, Paul points Christians to the *dunamis* of God as the source of his proclamation, signs and wonders (Rom 15:19). In other words, *dunamis* refers to the power of God at work in

the life and witness of the people of God (1Co 1:23, 2:4-5; 2Co 4:7).

As with authority, clearly the power of God belongs to God by virtue of his divine being. Power cannot be given to God, nor can power be taken from God. God's power is his to be used for his purposes. God's power is his mighty deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, giving his people the ability to ward off enemies and invaders. It is God's power given to Israel's enemies so the people of God are brought into submission. God's power is stronger than death and the grave, an indication of his supreme power (Isa 33:13, 40:26, 29; Hos 13:14). Power is frequently identified as a character trait unique to God Himself, but yet is given freely to his people, and is to be shared by the people of God from one generation to the next.

Within the New Testament, *dunamis* refers to knowledge of scripture (2Pe 1:3), is equated with the Gospel (Rom 1:16, 1Th 1:5), the cross (1 Cor 1:17), and the ultimate power of God found in Jesus' victory over sin and death through the death and resurrection of Jesus (Rom 1:4 and Phi 3:1).

Authority and power are God's gifts to his people. They are not to be assumed with pride or arrogance; nor are they to be understood as a measure of importance or stature. Authority and power are God's gifts to his people to act in God's behalf for the good of all humanity. Authority and

power are linked not to greatness, but, as Jesus demonstrates, to servanthood (John 12:26, 13:16, 15:15 & 20), the paradox of power.

A concept of power described by Theodore J. Weeden, Sr. is "relational power". Weeden contends "the purpose of this kind of power is to enable and sustain relationships, relationships that build, deepen and grow as a result of the reciprocal influence of the participants on one another."[3] Whitehead and Whitehead add, "Religious authorities fail when they use their power to inhibit and defeat our maturing."[4] Whitehead and Whitehead make much the same point when they note,

> All genuine authority expands life, making power more abundant. Religious authority succeeds by nurturing spiritual growth. This genuine religious authority calls us to greater responsibility, finally welcoming us as partners.[5]

Power in the church is not a personal right belonging to an individual who holds the office of the public ministry, or to those who are part of the priesthood of all believers. The church will most effectively accomplish its mission when pastor and people work together collaboratively, recognizing that authority and power in the church

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[3]Theodore J. Weeden, Sr., "Two Conceptions of Power and the Doctrine of God" in *Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation* (Chicago: The Center for Parish Development, 1987), 29.

[4]Whitehead and Whitehead, 35.

[5]Whitehead and Whitehead, 27.

are given by God, and that all work of ministry must be shaped and molded by the enabling power of the gospel.

Power Struggles

With this scriptural understanding of authority and power in mind, it is important to look at these concepts in another biblical context. That is, to look at instances where power struggles interfered with the ministry of the gospel.

The initial power struggle after the resurrection of our Lord was the assertion by the circumcision party that Paul did not have a legitimate call to be an apostle to the gentiles. The power struggle, described in detail in Acts 15 and Galatians 2, centered around two questions: "What is the relationship between the works of the law and salvation?" and, "Can gentiles become Christians without being circumcised?"

This matter was brought before the Jerusalem Council for their advice. After hearing from Paul and the circumcision party, they made their decision: "We should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:19-20). With the blessing of the Jerusalem Council, Paul and Barnabas set off with a letter of recommendation to the Gentile Christians encouraging them to remain faithful to their Savior.

The key to breaking the power struggle between the circumcision party and Paul was the Word of God. The leaders of the church searched the Scriptures (Amos 9:11-12, Jer 12:15 and Isa 45:21) to discern the will of God. On the basis of this prophetic word, they made the determination,

> "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things" that have been known for ages (Acts 15:16-18).

The power struggle was also broken with the observation that the gentiles, having heard the gospel, came to faith, as evidenced by their ability to speak in tongues, and their desire to be baptized (Acts 15:8-9).

Paul was also caught up in power struggles with regard to his authority to be an apostle. It was common knowledge that Paul had persecuted Christians prior to becoming a Christian. Questions were raised whether Paul could be an apostle since he had persecuted the church. In addition, an apostle was expected to have "accompanied us [the other apostles] during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us" (Acts 1:21-22). It was general knowledge that Paul was not a first generation witness to the Lord's resurrection and ascension.

Paul responded to his attackers by acknowledging his guilt in persecuting fellow believers (Acts 22:4-16; 26:9-18; 1Co 15:9), and rejoicing with them that God had freed

him from the guilt of his sin. Second, he described his personal encounter with the risen Lord not only in the Damascus experience, but also in the desert (1Co 9:1-2, Gal 1:15-17). Third, he consistently acknowledged that his call to be an apostle did not originate with "men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (Gal 1:1). He defended his office on basis of his call from God himself, through Jesus Christ, for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1, 1Co 1:1, 2Co 1:1, Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, 1Ti 1:1 and 2Ti 1:1). Finally, he pointed to his "success" in sharing Jesus as Savior: "Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord" (1Co 9:1-2).

Paul overcame power struggles in two ways. First, he reiterated that his call to be an apostle, and therefore the power and authority of the apostolate, came from the Lord himself. Second, he dealt with the facts: he did witness the risen Lord, he was acknowledged to be an apostle by the other eleven, and his faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ demonstrated that his goal was not to serve himself, but to serve the risen and ascended Lord (2Co 5:20-21).

With Paul's example, the Scriptures demonstrate several concepts to keep in mind when resolving struggles regarding authority and power within the church. First, power and authority comes from God or others with designated authority. Second, when exercised faithfully, authority and power cannot be taken away by any mortal. Third, when one's authority and power is challenged, the power struggle can be broken by pointing the one's call to be a pastor, contract to serve in an auxiliary position in the church, or one's election to serve in a position of influence. Fourth, the Scriptures show the importance of simply dealing with the facts, the objective truth that applies to the given situation, that demonstrates faithfulness to one's calling or position.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DOCTRINE OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY

In his Epistle to the Philippians, Paul shares exciting words about the relationship between the office of the public ministry and priesthood of all believers experienced by the church in Philippi:

> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now (Phi 1:3-5).

As already noted, however, the "partnership in the gospel" which Paul refers to with such glowing words is a rare commodity in the church. The concept of partnership in ministry is often replaced with an unhealthy "we versus they" mentality, the basic ingredient of a power struggle, and the denial of partnership in ministry.

Congregations often have a variety of options to choose from in prioritizing parish activities, but have limited financial and personnel resources. When priorities cannot be established, or when the congregation does not clearly define who has the authority to prioritize parish activities, power struggles will develop.

When congregational positions, whether called, contracted or elected, are not clearly defined, boundaries

separating the various functions are easily crossed. When that happens, power struggles can develop, as "turf" or ministry interests are threatened.

As I have reflected on personal frustrations, due to a lack of joy and the absence of partnership in ministry, and as I listen to colleagues share their frustrations, a common theme appears. The discussion frequently centers around questions introduced by systems theory, that is, questions of expectations, roles and rules.

Expectations, Roles and Rules

The concepts of expectations, roles and rules were developed by family therapists through research looking into family histories and traditions to help families grow in emotional and relational health. Simply stated, family therapists work with the paradigm that families are governed by spoken and unspoken expectations of what each family member will be like in the family; by roles, which are the assigned behaviors of each family member based on the family's rules; and by rules, which define the internal dynamics of a family that are expressed in quantifiable form, i.e., "One must never be angry."

When family boundaries in those three areas are appropriately defined, understood and adhered to, the family functions with health and a cooperative spirit. When those boundaries are rigid, undefined, violated, or ignored, the

family will suffer from the dysfunction that comes with parent-child or husband-wife power struggles.

As will be seen in the following pages, expectations, roles and rules are tightly intertwined. Expectations cannot be understood apart from roles and rules, and so forth. One systemic behavior or thought effects other systemic behaviors and thoughts.

What is found in a family of origin is also found within the church. When expectations, roles and rules are not carefully and intentionally spelled out, power struggles will often fill the void caused by a lack of clear communication and agreement. Anne Marie Nuechterlein describes these concepts as they are found within a congregation as "expected behavior patterns that are socially defined and that are a part of a social position, such as in a family or staff environment."[1]

Within the church, as in a family system, the problem is often exacerbated because of the spoken and unspoken assumption, "That's the way we have always done it." Congregations, like families, are notorious for becoming "stuck" or "rigid" in a particular way of relating, whether or not the relational pattern is healthy. Changing the formal and informal organizational structure of a congregation is one action that can be taken to help the family of

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[1]Anne Marie Nuechterlein, *Improving Your Multiple Staff Ministry: How to Work Together More Effectively* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989) 60.

God grow in relational health. That means intentionally working through the concepts of expectations, roles and rules by the pastor, staff and members of the congregation.

Expectations

An expectation describes a congregation's conscious or unconscious determination of how a person, i.e., the pastor, is supposed to act in a given role within the congregation's spoken and unspoken rules. Expectations, then, lead to rules that are to be put into action.

The fundamental question a pastor should ask his congregation, or the congregation ask the pastor and other members is, "What am I expected to contribute to this congregation?" The question can be answered in two ways. It can be answered theologically, by defining what is expected of one who serves in the office of the public ministry or in the priesthood of all believers; or it can be answered organizationally, by defining the position the individual holds within the congregation.

On the one hand, a pastor has a specific relationship to the congregation based on the scriptures and Lutheran Confessions. At the same time, he has a relationship to the congregation based on the parish community's traditions, experiences and practices of ministry.

As one might expect, the question is more complicated in a multiple staff situation. When a congregation has two or more pastors, the individual pastor's role is also

answered by the specific call offered by the congregation itself.

The congregation considered in this paper has two pastors. One is identified as the "Senior Pastor," the other as the "Associate Pastor." Even though both are pastors, as defined by the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, the expectations the congregation has for each pastor is different, by virtue of their respective calls (see Appendix A and B). Therefore, what is expected of each pastor, is not the same, for each has his own calling. Nor can they be the same, without one violating the other's call. If efforts are made to make the two pastors identical, professional boundaries would quickly be violated, and a power struggle might result. In large measure, the expectations a congregation has for its pastors determines the rules that govern each pastor's behavior, and the unique role they assume as public figures in the spiritual community.

Peter Steinke puts this in perspective as he notes, "power struggles are broken boundaries."[2] When boundaries are not intentionally defined, either open or hidden power struggles will undoubtedly result.

The issue of boundaries within a congregation is critical for healthy group life. The *Family Therapy Glossary* defines boundaries as:

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[2]Steinke, 119.

> Abstract dividers between or among systems and subsystems. Boundaries are set by the implicit rules defining who participates in which system and how. Boundaries and the subsystems they define may change over time and by situation. They are characterized as rigid or flexible, and diffuse, open, or closed (Minuchin, 1974).[3]

The professional boundaries separating pastors in a partnership can be understood by recognizing the traditional expectations and relationships experienced by previous pastor(s). In other words, how would the congregation describe historic relationships between their pastors? When a power struggle between pastors develops, how does the congregation's traditional way of relating to its pastors affect the struggle? If a change has been made in the way the pastors relate to one another, and if the congregation has redefined the relationship of pastor to pastor, how does that affect the balance of power? Each of these questions are related to the expectations of a congregation with regard to its pastors.

At the same time, similar questions regarding expectations can be asked by those who share the office of the public ministry in a congregation. Their own preconceived ideas of what it means to be called into the office of the public ministry in partnership with other church workers, will either encourage the development of a collaborative ministry, or be detrimental to the development of a partner-

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[3]Vincent D. Foley and Craig A. Everett, eds., *Family Therapy Glossary,* with a Foreword by William C. Nichols (n.p.: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, [1982]), 1.

ship in ministry. Therefore, a pastor's unspoken expectations with regard to his call are a critical component to working together in a healthy manner.

In a larger congregation, the question of the expectations for ministry is complicated by the addition of other professional and paraprofessional staff. The congregation under study has a staff that includes a full-time Minister of Children and Youth, a full-time Parish Administrator, a full-time Principal, a part-time Coordinator of Volunteers (who functions primarily as a pastoral assistant) and a part-time Minister of Music/part time class room teacher.

The concept of expectations begs the questions, "For what were each of these positions created? How do they relate to the office of the public ministry and the holy priesthood of the congregation? What do we expect of those entrusted with the responsibilities of the position? How do they enhance the partnership in ministry? How can they inhibit the growth in partnership?" These questions can be answered most effectively with a clear description of ministry expectations and objectives spelled out in a formal, yet flexible, ministry description, with levels of accountability clearly defined. This means that the expectations the congregational system assumes to be mutually understood be put into writing.

However, as will be demonstrated later, these levels of accountability should not be viewed as levels of hierar-

chical accountability, as much as relational accountability. That is, the Senior Pastor should be as accountable to the rest of the staff as the staff members are accountable to him. Mutual accountability will promote systemic health.

A third aspect of expectations must be raised. That is, what is the congregation's expectation of the lay leadership, particularly as the lay leaders relate to the pastoral staff and the rest of the congregation.

The question of expectations is critical for the development of a congregation's ministry. Depending on how expectations are defined, pastors, professional church workers and lay leaders will either be empowered for leadership or be compromised in their ability to lead. Therefore, if the question of expectations is not properly addressed, the ability of the congregation to proclaim the gospel will suffer. At the same time, the careful definition of expectations can enhance the effectiveness of a congregation's ministry simply because the positions of authority are clearly defined. If an individual does not know what is expected of him, neither can he understand the rules that govern his official behavior, nor will he be able to understand and learn the role he is expected to play in the congregational system. As a result, effective ministry is either stymied or enhanced by careful evaluation of expectations.

The goal in looking at the concept of expectations within a congregation is to help the people of God see that there are many ways of defining what is expected of pastors, other church workers, lay leaders and the uninvolved. When the congregation recognizes the variety of options available, power can be defined as required by the needs of the congregation, and change becomes possible. If the congregation is unwilling to see options, power and authority cannot be defined. As a result, there will be no change in the way the balance of power is understood.

Roles

The concept of roles is fundamental to the way a congregation operates. Roles are "behaviors expected of one person by another" (McCrady and Paolino, 1977). They are "defined according to subsystems . . . according to special interactional patterns" (Ackerman, 1958).[4] A role, in other words, is how one or more individuals determine another is supposed to behave within the system.

The role one is expected to play is determined within a congregation by a number of factors, theological preconceptions being only one of many, and, unfortunately, in most cases, a minor consideration. Roles are established by the conscious and unconscious, the spoken and unspoken politics of the body of believers; they are determined by

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[4]Foley and Everett, eds., 21.

the cultural background of the people of God; and they are limited or enlarged by the spiritual maturity of the members of the congregation.

One example of the concept of roles in a congregation is found in the statement, "That is what we pay you for," when, for instance, the pastor asks an elder to offer the prayer in worship or teach a Bible class. When a pastor works to define or redefine his role, conflict may be generated, for one or more parishioners may have the impression that their pastor has violated a congregational expectation or rule by adopting a different role.

During the process of nominating candidates for congregational offices. A pastor took the liberty of speaking with a layman with an impressive degree of spiritual maturity and self confidence about being nominated for the position of Vice Chairman of the congregation. After several meetings, the potential nominee gave his pastor permission to place his name in nomination.

When the Pastor reported his action to the Nominating Committee, the immediate reaction was, "And who gave you the right to do that!" While the pastor assumed he could make that inquiry and report it to the Nominating Committee because of his role, the Nominating Committee did not agree. Without intending to, he had overstepped a boundary of the Nominating Committee by speaking with a potential candidate prior to consulting with them. The unspoken rule of the

Nominating Committee, which impacted the pastor's role, is "Consult us first, then act."

The concept of roles invites the pastor, other professional church workers and lay leaders to ask the question, "How am I supposed to do what I have been called, contracted or elected to do?" At the same time, the concept invites the rest of the priesthood of all believers to ask the question, "What should I be doing in service to the Lord?"

Rules

The third question, the question of rules, is closely related to roles. Gary Yeast, a family therapist, defines a rule as "the primary determiner or governor of the roles family members occupy." He notes further, "rules are conceptualizations of established behaviors that serve to govern the way the family [or congregational system] is organized and how they operate". Finally, he said, "rules are most often implied, not directly communicated."[5]

The *Family Therapy Glossary* notes "[rule] refers to mechanisms related to shared norms and values which govern repetitious patterns of family functioning."[6] In other words, rules are those behaviors that enable the congregation to remain homeostatic, or unchanged. Therefore, chang-

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[5]Gary Yeast, interview by author, Telephone, Wausau, Wisconsin, 25 January 1994.

[6]Foley and Everett, eds., 11.

ing rules gives permission to change behavior, which in turn, changes one's role within the congregational system. When permission is given for one to change his or her role, then the congregation, too, must be willing to change its expectations. For if the congregation's expectations do not change, neither will one's role change, particularly when the congregation or individual involved is experiencing stress.

One of the paradoxes of "expectations, roles and rules" is the impact this concept has on parish life. A pastor could properly expect to hear the encouraging and comforting word from those he is called to serve, "well done, good and faithful pastor" when he follows the expectations, roles and rules that govern parish life. Unfortunately, that is not the case. For the rules of the congregation may very well include, "We are never to commend the pastor, only criticize him." As a result, no matter how faithful he is to his calling, the congregation will not be satisfied with his ministry. In this situation, the congregation expects their pastor will have the skin of an elephant, and carry the role of the congregational scapegoat with dignity. The cartoon from a recent edition of *Leadership* illustrates this paradox well.[7]

The cartoon showed an individual who was obviously being interviewed for a call to serve a congregation as

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[7]Rob Suggs, *Leadership*, XV (Winter 1994): 77.

their pastor. The caption read, "We expect our pastors to be bold, initiating leaders." On the wall, above the heads of the committee members, are pictures of the three preceding pastors: "Our Last Pastor," "Our Pastor from Two Years Ago," and "Our Pastor from Three Years Ago." The unspoken rule of the congregation is, "If you are called with the expectation of being a bold, initiating pastor, don't be surprised if you don't stay here very long, if you are a bold, initiating pastor."

For the most part, rules are begun in one generation, and carried on to the next. As a result, rules are very difficult to define, for they are often rooted in internal areas of family life.

What is known about families, can also be applied to congregations. The rules of conduct for professional and lay leaders is the result of a congregation's theological heritage, history, pastoral traditions and congregational practices. Unfortunately history, traditions and practices often overshadowing theology.

For an example of how history and tradition affect congregational expectations, a pastor who served the parish faithfully for 54 years developed an intensive visitation program. He had the personal goal of visiting at least two families in their home every day, regardless of the weather.

Even though the pastor died in 1974, and has been succeeded by seven pastors, who were not "visiting pastors,"

home visitation on the part of it pastors is still the expectation of a large part of the congregation. The pastor who visits is the pastor who fills the congregation's understanding of the pastoral rule. The Senior Pastor, called in part because he is not a "visiting pastor," is not always thought of as being faithful to his ministry, since he fails to keep the rule that pastors always visit parishioners.

The goal in understanding the expectations, roles and rules that govern pastors, professional staff and laity is to move beyond history, tradition and practice to ask the question, "What are the rules God gives to his servants through his objective Word?" And then, "How can these biblical 'rules' be clearly defined and communicated at all levels of parish life?"

Expectations, Roles and Rules in Contemporary Ministry

Over the past several decades, the doctrine and practice of church and ministry has come under increased scrutiny as questions are raised regarding the Church's understanding of expectations, roles and rules for the exercize of the Office of the Public Ministry. As the questions are debated, healthy contributions will be made to the life and ministry of the Christian Church in general, and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in particular.

A Bit of History

Questions about the relationship between individuals who hold the office of the public ministry and the members of the priesthood of all believers whom they serve are not new. The questions have been asked for generations. The early struggles of what eventually became "the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" were in large part created by conflict between the pastors and laity involved in the Saxon Immigration. In 1841, a dispute regarding what constitutes the legitimacy of the office of the public ministry and the relationship of the office of the public ministry to the priesthood of all believers was raised.

The tension among the Saxon Immigrants was prompted by the abuse of power by the leader of the immigration, Martin Stephan. Ethical questions were also raised regarding Stephan's life and ministry, which resulted in his forced exile from the Saxon colony. However, the Stephan scandal had far-reaching effects, as the immigrants started to question the legitimacy of their exodus from Germany. In *A Brief Historical Sketch of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*, Carl Meyer notes the Saxon immigrants asked hard questions of themselves. "Had they acted right in leaving Saxony? Could they still lay claim to being a church? What assurance did they have that even the sacraments administered by the pastors among them were valid?"[8] Their ques-

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[8]Carl S. Meyer, *A Brief Historical Sketch of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 8.

tions and misgivings had to do with expectations, roles and rules. These questions were resolved through the leadership provided by C.F.W. Walther.

To settle these difficult theological questions, a landmark debate in Missouri Synod history was held in April, 1841. At that time, Walther shared his classic treatise *Kirche und Amt.* In the course of the debate, "[Walther] convinced the colonists that they had the right to regard themselves as members of the true church and that the Word of God was in their midst."[9] Through *Kirche und Amt,* Walther was able to clearly define the expectations, roles and rules of pastors and laity within "the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States."

Walther had this to say in his 1852 pamphlet, *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry*:

> We are convinced that the great divisive battle of the Reformation which our church fought against the papacy in the 16th century centered in the doctrines of the church and ministry, which have now again been called into question, and that the pure and clear teaching concerning them constitutes the precious spoils that our church gained from this struggle.[10]

His expectation was that the clergy would continue to fight the theological battles initiated by Luther and the other reformers. The role of the pastor was to enforce

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[9]Meyer, 8.

[10]*Walther On the Church: Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther,* trans. John M. Drickamer, with a Foreword by August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 12.

obedience to and absolute confidence in, the Word of God. The rule was that no one dare question the authority of scripture, nor the goodness of the reforming work of Dr. Martin Luther. In other words, the expectation, rule and role of the church and ministry was largely defensive, or apologetic.

Contemporary Questions

Yet the work that was begun in the latter half of the nineteenth century must be reconsidered and reevaluated in light of the needs and challenges of the church in the latter half of the twentieth century. That is certainly part of former synodical President Ralph Bohlmann's concern in his February, 1992 "Letter to Pastors."

In his correspondence with the pastors of the Missouri Synod, Bohlmann addressed the question of difficulties in ministry today. He noted that "supporting pastors and the pastoral office is one of the top priorities of the Synod."[11] Later in the article, he noted that there are eight factors which generate questions and difficulties concerning the role of the office of the public ministry.

> (1) Our society--and we as a part of it--suffers from a general lessening of respect for clergy, which is encouraged by negative treatments in the secular media and by highly publicized instances of clergy misconduct and malfeasance;
> (2) the ascendancy of a secular corporate mind-set in the calling and evaluation of pastors--what we might call a "hire-fire" mentality;

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[11]Ralph Bohlmann, "Letter to Pastors," February, 1992.

(3) increased demands and expectations of parish pastors by parishioners and church leaders;

. . . . . .

(5) theological confusion, including both functionalist and clericalist misunderstandings of the office;

. . . . . .

(7) continuing questions about lay ministry.[12]

Questions lurk behind Dr. Bohlmann's comments. "How does contemporary society understand the role of the pastor? Who determines what a pastor can and cannot do? Who is the pastor responsible to and for? Who determines the expected outcome of the parish pastor?" These are questions that ask, "What are the expectations, roles and rules for today's parish pastor and, for that matter, professional church worker and lay leaders?"

Roland Martinson, a contemporary theologian from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, notes that the same problem also exists in his church body. He asks the questions, "Who is the pastor? What is the pastor called to do?" He makes the salient point

> Each generation of clergy is faced with the challenge of reenvisioning the work of ordained ministry in new and radically different contexts . . . In so doing there is always great risk; risk that the authority and heart of ministry will give way to that which is tangential. At its best this distortion results in ineffective ministry; as its worst it compromises the gospel.[13]

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[12]Bohlmann, February, 1992.

[13]Roland Martinson. "The Pastoral Ministry" in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry*, Todd Nichols and Marc Kolden, eds. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), 182.

Roy A. Harrisville, a theologian from the American Lutheran Church, prior to its merger with the Lutheran Church of America and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, wrestled with the question of the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the public ministry as it relates to the episcopacy in a seminal work titled, *Ministry in Crisis*. The very title of his book reflects his perception of the ongoing conflict between the clergy and laity regarding the expectations, roles and rules of ministry.

Harrisville addresses, in part, the responsibility of the Christian community to forgive and retain sins. On the one hand he offers the argument that

> The pastor alone has the authority to "loose," to forgive the penitent, and the authority to "bind," to shut heaven against the obdurate. Absolution is thus the most official and characteristic pronouncement of the minister.[14]

Harrisville describes this as an "ontological"[15] distinction between pastor and parishioner, the distinction of being.

Harrisville summarizes a second argument in this way:

> The minister does what all baptized Christians are authorized to do, but which they assign to a single person for the sake of order. All believers have the

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[14]Roy A. Harrisville, *Ministry in Crisis: Changing Perspectives on Ordination and the Priesthood of All Believers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 13.

[15]Harrisville, 13.

> right to baptize, to preach, teach, and absolve, but delegate these responsibilities to individuals they select so as to inhibit confusion in the church.[16]

This understanding of the relationship between pastor and people is, by Harrisville's definition, "merely functional."[17] Whether the distinction between those called to be pastors and the laity is ontological or functional is significant. If the distinction is ontological, the argument for partnership is compromised, for the contrast between pastor and people is substantial. If, on the other hand, the distinction is functional, the relationship between pastor and people is simply a contrast in basic "expectations, roles and rules" not in their essential being. Partnership in ministry can be enhanced and encouraged when the distinction between the pastor and parishioner is understood to be essentially functional.

C.F.W. Walther, representing the Missouri Synod of the 19th century; Ralph Bohlmann, representing the Missouri Synod of the 20th century; and Roland Martinson and Roy Harrisville, representing the wider Lutheran Church of the 20th century, all sound an alarm that must be heard and be given a clear response. First, what is the relationship between the office of the public ministry and the priesthood of all believers? How are the two similar? How are they different? What expectations do pastors have for each other

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[16]Harrisville, 13-14.

[17]Harrisville, 13.

and the staff they work with? At the same time, what expectations do pastors have for the laity and the laity for pastors? What are their respective roles? What rules govern their approach to ministry?

The remainder of this chapter is intended to address only the first of those three questions, the respective expectations of pastors and people. The remaining two questions concerning roles and rules will follow in subsequent chapters.

Who Owns the Church?

The question of the relationship between the public ministry and the priesthood of all believers is like the riddle of the chicken and the egg, that is, which came first, the church or the office of the public ministry?

The riddle has been answered both ways. Some theologians insist God created the ministry first, then the church; others argue the exact opposite--church first, then the ministry. In his essay, "Ministry in 19th Century European Lutheranism," Walter Sunderberg refers to Wilhelm Loehe, who asserted that the gospel depends on the apostolic ministry established by Christ. Therefore, he maintains that the office of ministry stands above the congregation, or putting it in the context of the chicken and egg, the ministry is first, the church (congregation) is second. Referring to Loehe, Sunderberg writes, "not the office

originates from the congregation, but it is more accurate to say, the congregation originates from the office"[18]

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is attempting to clarify traditional terminology that effects the relationship between the office of the public ministry and the church. The theological document, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* clearly demonstrates the contemporary debate within the Missouri Synod. "Ministry" is defined twice in the opening pages of the document, both times demonstrating the synod's internal struggle with terminology. The tension is described first with a quotation from Francis Pieper,

> The term "ministry" is used *both in Scripture and by the Church in a general, or wider, and in a special, or narrower, sense.* In the wider sense it embraces every form of preaching the Gospel or administering the means of grace, whether by Christians in general, as originally entrusted with the means of grace and commissioned to apply them, or by chosen public servants (*ministri ecclesiae*) in the name and at the command of Christians (emphasis mine).[19]

Later, the comment is made,

> *Ministry*--This is a general term when it stands alone. It *may* be used in the most general sense of the service

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[18]Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke,* ed. Klaus Ganzert, Vol. 5 (Neuendettelsau: Fremund-Verlag, 1954), 262. Quoted in Walter Sunderberg, "Ministry in 19th Century European Lutheranism," from *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry,* Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden, editors (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), 85.

[19]Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* Vol. 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 439. Quoted in *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations,(n.p, September 1981), 11.

> it is preferably used to indicate the special service of those who are called to function publicly in the church.[20]

Pieper and the Commission on Theology and Church Relationships (CTCR) agree that both in biblical and general usage, the word "ministry" may be used to describe both the priestly service of all Christians, or the specific service of those called into the office of the public ministry. Yet the CTCR recommends that the term "ministry" be used to describe those called to the office of the public ministry.

That position is not compatible with a concept of collaborative ministry, or the concept of partnership in ministry described by Paul in Philippians 1:5. Writing from a Roman Catholic perspective, Whitehead and Whitehead argue strongly for a concept of partnership in ministry between the laity and those called into the priesthood. They note that an insistence on a hierarchy denotes a scarcity of power, while partnership creates an abundance of power.

> The church had come to picture the priest not as orchestrating the shared power that is a faith community but as uniquely supplying to this receptive group God's power in the sacraments.
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> In this hierarchical world, Christians came to perceive pastoral power as belonging exclusively to the clerical leader.[21]

Lay Christians were seen as "ungifted consumers" and "unqualified to select leaders or raise questions of account-

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[20]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 12.

[21]Whitehead and Whitehead, 22.

ability."[22] Power is scarce because it belongs to the chosen few. They argue for an abundance of power, which, they suggest, comes from the Spirit.

> We forget that the power of the *Spirit* shapes Christian ministry, not the power of the *pastor*. In such an environment the church mimics the culture's view of power as a scarce possession instead of announcing the gospel vision of power in abundance flowing through a community.[23]

Later they note Jesus is the Source of abundance of power.

> In Jesus Christ, God has given us great abundance. We, the church, have invented scarcity. And yet clues and hints abound, in this world of scarcity, of God's surprising and abundant power.[24]

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, even while struggling with the relationship between church and ministry, recognizes the clear connection between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the public ministry; the connection between church and ministry.

The doctrine of church and ministry proposed by Walther suggests that the office of the public ministry comes from God through the congregation,[25] and, at the same time, the congregation comes from God through the ministry of Word and Sacrament[26]. In other words, the office of the

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[22]Whitehead and Whitehead, 22.

[23]Whitehead and Whitehead, 22.

[24]Whitehead and Whitehead, 25.

[25]Walther, 85.

[26]Walther, 17.

public ministry is dependent upon the congregation, and the congregation is dependent upon the office of the public ministry. Just as there can be no office of the public ministry where there is no congregation, there can be no congregation where there is no office of the public ministry.

Walther offers the following theses regarding the relationship between church and ministry:

> Thesis VI
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> The ministry of the Word is conferred by God *through the congregation as the possessor of all ecclesiastical power*, or the power of the keys, by means of its call which God Himself has prescribed [emphasis mine].[27]
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> Thesis VII
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> The holy ministry of the Word is the authority conferred by God *through the congregation*, as the possessor of the priesthood and all church authority, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office on behalf of the congregation [emphasis mine].[28]

The implication can be drawn that God created the church, the priesthood of all believers, and the office of the public ministry for the mutual benefit one will give to the other.

The effect of the two points is significant. They relate directly to what is expected of the pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, and the ministry of the laity. We acknowledge

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[27]*Walther On the Church*, 85.

[28]*Walther On the Church*, 93.

> There is only one pastoral *office,* but the office which we formally refer to as "the office of the public ministry" has multiple *functions,* some of which are best handled by another . . . The pastoral office with all of its functions is mandated for the church. Other offices are established by the church to assist in carrying out pastoral functions.[29]

The Missouri Synod's traditional distinction between the office of the public ministry and other ministries of the congregation is well said by the CTCR in this way: "The pastoral office is unique in that *all* the functions of the church's ministry belong to it."[30]

The Lutheran Confessions emphasize specific aspects of the Lutheran understanding of the ministry. Among them are the following:

- -- God has given the Word and sacraments that people may come to faith.
- -- God has arranged that the Word and sacraments should be taught and administered.
- -- Such a ministry has been established by God, individuals are called to be ministers by the church.
- -- Those who are called to be ministers hold and exercise the office of the ministry.
- -- The Power of Office of the Keys, given by Christ to the church, is exercised publicly on behalf of the church by the called ministers.
- -- The power of the ministers is the power to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments, and forgive and retain sins.
- -- Ministers cannot arrogate such authority to themselves, but it must be conferred by the call of the church.[31]

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[29]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* 19.

[30]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* 19.

[31]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* 8-9.

There are other historical and contemporary positions on the relationship of the church and ministry. Loehe believed the public ministry is over the congregation, even to the point that Loehe did not consider it proper for a congregation to select or call its own pastor. Sunderberg reports Loehe writing,

> Any collegial church order that gives congregations the right to vote on ecclesiastical affairs is 'not only unapostolic but highly dangerous.' The idea that congregations can choose their own minister is out of the question.[32]

The role of the pastor within that context is less likely to be an exercise in partnership and more likely to be paternal. The implication is that the pastor can be "over" the congregation, and has the last word in matters under dispute.

On the other hand, when a church body such as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has a theological practice that teaches "the ministry of the Word is conferred by God *through* the congregation (emphasis mine)",[33] roles change. In the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, where the *congregation* has the authority and responsibility of calling the pastor who will serve them, it would be most presumptuous for a group of clergy to determine who will serve a particular congregation. At the same time, the likelihood of the

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[32]Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke,* Vol. 5, 287f. Quoted in Sunderberg, 85.

[33]*Walther on the Church,* 86.

congregation rising up over against the pastor increases, and the impression of an employer-employee relationship can be created.

Clearly, the role of a pastor is different in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod from a church body that reflects more of Loehe's theology of church and ministry. In the Missouri Synod when a congregation and pastor have a healthy understanding of the role of the pastor, the pastor is seen as a servant of the congregation for Christ's sake, that is, for the sake of the gospel. The pastor labors for Christ in the public conduct of ministry on behalf of the congregation. The strength of the office of the public ministry is found in an attitude of servanthood, modeled first by the chief Shepherd, Jesus, who was willing to give up his life for his sheep.

Obviously there are advantages and disadvantages to both ways of thinking. In a sense, more can be accomplished, faster, by an authoritarian pastor than through the organizational system of the congregation. Yet the understanding of office of the public ministry as servants for Christ's sake can be compromised by an authoritarian pastor. At the same time, a congregational polity can result in a hire-fire, employer-employee relationship between the office of the public ministry and the congregation that devalues the Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Asking the Question In a Different Way

Norman Nagel puts the question of relationship between church and ministry in a different perspective. He does not answer the question, "which comes first, church or ministry," with either church or ministry. He contends there is a different beginning point for both church and ministry. The beginning point lies at the focal point of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ. "The progression here is Christ, church, disciples, pastors, Holy Absolution."[34] He suggests responsibilities flow in this manner:

> The church does not make itself church. The disciples do not make themselves disciples. Ministers do not make themselves ministers. They are all given to be what they are from Alpha Christ by the Omega of His forgiveness, surely delivered by the called ministers in Holy Absolution with the words given them to speak by the Lord Jesus.[35]

The source of church and ministry is found in Jesus Christ. Christ, church, disciples, pastors, and Holy Absolution are all from the Lord. All are God's gifts to people. The authoritative Word, which defines the beginning of the church, is found in Jesus' word to Peter. When Jesus asked the disciples the question, "Who do you say I am?", Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God!" To which Jesus responded, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the

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[34]Norman Nagel, "The Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions," in *Concordia Journal* (July, 1988), 286.

[35]Nagel, 287.

powers of death shall not prevail against it." Jesus then went on to announce, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mat 16:13-17).

In describing the origin of Christian ministry, Jesus does not speak of either the priesthood of all believers or the office of the public ministry. He commends the confession of faith, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus describes the church as originating in the confession of Him as Savior and Lord. Without the Savior, the church does not exist. The priesthood of all believers and the office of the public ministry exist to proclaim Jesus Christ and his saving work. Jesus then shows the Church is built on pastors who faithfully proclaim the Living Word. And finally, the church is found in the Gospel, that is, the promise of forgiveness of sins through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

In Nagel's model, the progression is Christ, people called to faith, pastors and absolution. The Lutheran Confessions define the church in like manner. "[The church] is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel" (Tappert, 32, AC, VII, 1). In the next article, the Augsburg Confession defines the church in much the same way: "Again, although the Christian

church, properly speaking, is nothing else than the assembly of all believers and saints" (Tappert, 33, AC, VIII, 1).

The beginning point for properly understanding the church is Jesus Christ, her Savior, Lord, Groom, and Master. From Christ, comes what Jesus came to do: to bring salvation to sinful humanity--to people. From the church, through Jesus Christ, comes the office of the public ministry so the Word of God might be proclaimed "in its purity and the holy sacraments administered according to the Gospel" (Tappert, AC, VII, 1).

When church and ministry are defined as beginning in Christ, roles and functions begin to be defined more clearly. One called into the office of the public ministry is called by God *through* the congregation as one who belongs to the priesthood of all believers. Clearly one is not above nor below the other. Both are included in the creative work of God; both are gifts of God to the world for the purpose of proclaiming in word and deed the saving activity of God within the world.

Herman Sasse also taught that church and ministry originate in the Lord. He noted, when viewed in that way, "[ministry] becomes very large and can be received and rejoiced in as the great gift it is."[36]

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[36]Herman Sasse, *We Confess the Church*, Norman Nagel, trans., Vol. 3 *We Confess Series*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 81-82.

Harrisville makes much the same observation regarding the contest between pastor and people, authority and power.

> *Both* the office *and* the universal priesthood are necessary. Neither can abolish or minimize the need for the other. The office of ministry is *both* a gift for service *and* a delegation of service. The universal priesthood *both* includes preparation for the office of ministry *and* excludes arrogating to oneself the occupancy of that office willy-nilly. "Both-and" frees the one from competition with the other; "both-and" regards neither as supplementing the other; "both-and" enables holding firm to one and the other. But "both-and" will no more check the symptom than will construing the office of ministry after the analogy of Christ or of the local elected official. And the reason is that all three responses to the symptom are oriented to the question of *power*, of right or authority, its "checks and balances."[37]

The question addressed by each theologian, whether it be Walther, Bohlmann, Martinson, Harrisville or Nagel, is the same. It is a question that reflects an on-going power struggle between clergy and laity, between the office of the public ministry and the universal priesthood.

Harrisville would have the church resolve the question of power by advocating power through the acknowledgement of powerlessness, strength through weakness, what has already been described as the paradox of power in the church. He notes,

> This is why all discussion of imbalance between the two as symptom of the crisis in ministry or as the crisis itself--why all talk of achieving balance between them as alleviating the symptom or the crisis--is irrelevant. It is irrelevant because it assumes that the Word requires deciding for or against its conquest, when in

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[37]Harrisville, 18-19.

> reality the only decision left to the church is whether or not it will submit to the conquest and shape its existence to it, or be overtaken by it, trampled by it, and for one more time! The Word makes its way, and as ineluctably [inevitably] as destiny.[38]

When one answers the question, "Who owns the church?", with Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, the question of expectations, roles and rules is also answered. For since Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, it must belong to Him. If we are called into fellowship with Him to make the church reality, we must, then, be subject to Him as the Lord of His church. And if the public ministry comes from Christ Jesus, through the congregation, pastors and other professional church workers are then subject first to their Lord, and secondly to His people. When church and ministry are properly understood, it is the Word of God that determines expectations, roles and rules for the ministry of the church.

In considering the relationship between the church and ministry, a healthy beginning is made when we learn to see each other as the gift of the risen Lord to each other that we are. The church was created by God to serve the Lord, his pastors and other professional church workers; the ministry and its auxiliary offices[39] were created by God to serve the Lord and his church.

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[38]Harrisville, 80.

[39]*Walther on the Church,* 103.

The question is not who is over whom, but how can each serve the Lord who created both, and preserves both. Lest it be missed, the motive for the joyful response of God's people to the call to be involved in ministry, whether the ministry of the laity or the office of the public ministry, is the faithful response of God's people to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The point was made much better by Ernst Kaesemann, as quoted by Harrisville:

> Where . . . God's lordship in this time cannot be separated from the crucified Christ, all churches and believers are at best signs and instruments of the end-time broken in, of that fulfillment in which God alone will rule the world, his rivals and enemies destroyed. Of this end they should surely be signs and instruments, if God himself is not to be blasphemed as unworthy of belief. . . . When God comes to us, none goes away empty, none may be exempt from service. Each owes the common Lord a witness.[40]

The Holy Spirit as the Owner of the Church

At another point, the Confessions define the origin of the Church in a slightly different manner. In the meaning to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, the Small Catechism notes, "I believe that I cannot, by my own reason or effort, believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel" (Tappert, SC, Creed, III, 6, 345).

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[40]Harrisville, 81-82, citing Ernst Kaesemann, "Die endzeitliche Koenigsherrschaft Gottes", in *Kirchliche Konflikte*, (n.d.: n.p., 1982), 223.

The Lutheran Confessions speak of the Holy Spirit as the originator of the Church. Without the Spirit of God creating faith in the heart of sinful man, there would be no church and if there were no church, there would be no ministry. Luther wrote in his Large Catechism,

> Where [the Holy Spirit] does not cause the Word to be preached and does not awaken understanding in the heart, all is lost. This was the case under the papacy, where faith was entirely shoved under the bench and no one recognized Christ as the Lord, or the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier. That is, no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that he won for us this treasure without our works and merits and made us acceptable to the Father. What was lacking here? There was no Holy Spirit present to reveal this truth and have it preached. . . . Therefore there was no Christian Church (Tappert, LC, Creed, III, 43-44, 416).

The point is well taken: the church and its ministry are found in the Holy Spirit, working through the gospel of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

All this is important to note, for it will give confidence to all who are part of the holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Since the Holy Spirit originates the church, it is also the Holy Spirit who preserves the church. That is why we confess with Luther, "In the same way [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" (Tappert, SC, Creed, III, 6, 345). That is why Walther could write with conviction,

> Wherever, therefore, along with the divine Word, Holy Baptism is administered, there the gates of the church are invisibly opened; there people will be found who believe and are saved; there the Lord is graciously present; there we have an infallible mark of the

> church's existence; there we must joyfully exclaim: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it."[41]

Finally, the Holy Spirit as originator of the church, calls the church into existence to be a "family," a "fellowship," a "community." Pragman notes in *Traditions of Ministry*

> It would be a mistake to understand the universal priesthood and Luther's view of it in an individualistic way. The priesthood is not synonymous with religious individualism. The priesthood can be properly understood and appreciated only in the context of the community of God's people, the *communio sanctorum*. The individual Christian possesses the universal priesthood not in isolation but only as a member of the congregation of God's people. To see the universal priesthood as something that can be separated from the wider Christian community would constitute a failure to understand Luther's teaching on the universal priesthood of believer.[42]

The Church: Christ's Gift for Ministry

Without the church there can be no ministry, for the ministry was established by divine mandate to serve the church. However, those who serve in the office of the public ministry, in other ministerial roles, and in lay leadership positions within the congregation, come out of the spiritual priesthood. The ministry is essential for the church to exist, but at the same time, the church is essential for the office of the public ministry to exist. Herman Sasse notes

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[41]*Walther on the Church,* 35.

[42]James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 17.

> It is therefore in fact impossible in the New Testament to separate ministry and congregation. What is said to the congregation is also said to the ministry and vice versa. The office does not stand above the congregation, but always in it.[43]

In the Lutheran Confessions, congregation is often synonymous with the church. The symbols offer a broad definition of the church. In Article VIII of the Augustana, the church is defined as "the assembly of all believers [saints in the Latin version]" (Tappert, 33, AC VII, 1, 32). The church, properly speaking, is those who find their righteousness in Christ Jesus. The church is made up of people who, because they are at the same time saint and sinner, find their holiness only in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Though not yet perfect, because of the old Adam who clings so tenaciously, those who are "the Church" are seem through the grace of God as perfect in Jesus.

This people is described by Peter as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9). From that verse, the Christian Church has derived the concept of "the priesthood of all believers," or the "spiritual priesthood."

The concept of a priesthood is deeply rooted in the Old Testament. The book of Leviticus speaks of a specific office of priest, the Aaronic priesthood, which would be responsible for maintaining the tabernacle, offering sacri-

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[43]Sasse, 78.

fices on behalf of the people of Israel, and interpreting the law of Moses in a public manner. The book of Numbers speaks of the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. This priesthood was to oversee those who cared for the sanctuary. Those in the priesthood were to be given honor and respect. Failure to do so could mean death (Deu 17:12).

In creating the priestly office, the Lord gave the members of the priesthood a specific assignment: "You, your sons and your father's family are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood" (Num 18:1). The similarity between the "official" priesthood of the Old Testament and the office of the public ministry should not be overlooked too quickly. It indicates the necessity of an office responsible for the oversight of the spiritual activities that enable the people of God (the universal priesthood) to relate to their God.

While having the specific meaning through the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood, the concept of priest also had a general usage. The Lord, speaking through Moses, said: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exo 19:5-6). All of Israel was intended to be priests of God; but at the same time God

mandated the creation of a special order of priests to give oversight to the public functions of God's people.

Clearly, though God intended that Israel be "a kingdom of priests," he established a specific office for those who served in the priesthood on behalf of God's people. Those individuals were selected on the basis of ancestry, by virtue of being from the house of Aaron and Levi.

History shows, however, that the priesthood became corrupt. Those holding the office did not remain faithful to the covenant God had given them, and led the people they were to serve into idolatry. Therefore, the prophet Hosea sounded the alarm,

> My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me; they exchanged their Glory for something disgraceful" (Hos 4:6-7).

The hope of Israel was that the priesthood would be restored in fullness with the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah prophesied,

> And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. . . . I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isa 61:6, 10).

In the New Testament, the priesthood was still in existence and held in high esteem. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest. The Sanhedrin was composed

of priests, Pharisees and Sadducees. Those who were of the priesthood continued to offer sacrifices and prayers on behalf of the people. For that reason, when Jesus healed a leper, he instructed him to "go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them" (Mat 8:4).

But yet the author of the Letter to the Hebrews notes the inadequacy of this priesthood.

> If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? (Heb 7:11).

The author then notes, "Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Heb 7:26). And then concludes, "We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb 8:1). The "holy, blameless, pure" priest "set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens" is, of course, Jesus.

It is because Jesus is our great high priest that Peter could write, "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1Pe 2:5). Jesus has fulfilled the hope of the ancient people of Israel. By taking the frailty of sinful humanity upon himself, he has completely cleansed humanity of sin and imperfection, thereby opening the priesthood to

all believers, as Peter notes, "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" (1Pe 2:9).

The priesthood of believers exists because of the ultimate sacrifice of "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). For that same reason, Paul could encourage the Roman Christians to "present your bodies as a *living sacrifice* [italics mine], holy and acceptable to God" (Rom 12:1).

Wherever the Christian Church is found, there, too, the priesthood of all believers will be found. Luther pointed to baptism as the place where one becomes a priest. From that perspective, the perspective of baptism, all Christians, whether clergy or laity, have the same status before God.

The Expectation of the Priesthood of All Believers

While all Christians are priests before God, God does not have the same expectation or, using Luther's word, the same office, for all priests. That raises the fundamental questions being raised in this paper. That is, "What is the relationship between the office of the public ministry and the priesthood of all believers?" " How are the two offices similar? How are they different?" While both the office of the public ministry and the priesthood of all

believers serve the Lord Jesus Christ through the one church and one ministry, the priesthood of all believers is not the office of the public ministry.

Compared with the wealth of information regarding the office of the public ministry, little scholarly study has been done to understand the church's expectations of the priesthood of all believers. And what has been written, i.e., Oscar E. Feucht's *Everyone a Minister*, is critiqued to the point that its usefulness is debatable.

The result is confusion. While we believe, with Martin Luther, that God has called all Christians to be part of this spiritual priesthood, we do not have a very clear understanding of what the priesthood is to do. As a case in point, I refer to Kurt Marquart's debate on the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the public ministry in his *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics*. Marquart goes into great detail to describe what the spiritual priesthood is not (it is not the same as the office of the public ministry), but does little to describe what the priesthood is.[44]

Obviously much can be said regarding the expectations of the priesthood of all believers. However, in reading the theological debate one can be left with the impression that the fundamental theological concern is to

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[44]Marquart, Kurt. *The Church*, Volume IX, *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics*, (n.p.: Ft. Wayne Seminary Press, 1990), note especially pages 103-111.

protect the office of the public ministry from the intrusion of the priesthood of all believers into its private domain of "saving souls."

Yet, it must be confessed, God created the royal priesthood. In the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, God confers this priesthood on all his children. The scriptures affirm that it is an important function within the church. But, if one were to ask the average "person in the pew" what it means to be part of the priesthood, that is, to be a servant of Jesus Christ, could they answer the question? Does the church have adequate expectations of the spiritual priest to allow the office to function effectively? Does the lack of definition lead to some of the systemic disorder within the Christian Church? If so, to what degree?

What is needed is to affirm the spiritual priesthood is a gift from God. God himself has instituted the universal priesthood with specific expectations. Those expectations are to be honored by the church, if it is to be faithful to its Lord.

What, then, is the expectation of the royal priesthood? Without a doubt, the most important expectation is what Peter wrote in the *sedes docrina*: "That you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness" (1Pe 2:9), that is, proclaim the gospel. The gospel is always the work of the church and its ministry. God calls his people to faith so that we might proclaim Jesus

Christ as Lord in the home and the church; while at work and while at play. The *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* notes, "For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel exists" (Tappert, Tri., 67, 331.)

A second expectation of the priesthood of all believers that is closely connected, but not the same as the first is to call men to serve in the office of the public ministry. Again, the *Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope* notes, "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" (Tappert, Tri., 67, 331). That the priesthood is to call pastors is certainly consistent with scripture. The pattern was first set with the calling of the deacons who were chosen by "the body of the disciples" at the urging of the apostles (Acts 6:3).

In his address "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" (1520), Luther approved of a third expectation. Pragman reports Luther's point in this way: "Because all Christians are priests and of the spiritual estate, they have the authority to test and judge in matters of faith."[45] Again, this is compatible with the testimony of scripture. The Epistle to the Galatians was written as an encouragement for the Galatians to judge doctrine so they would not be led to believe in a false Gospel. Ephesians 4

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[45]Pragman, 14.

contains the words, "Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15).

This aspect of the expectation is reinforced when newly elected officers are installed in a congregation. The rite for the "Installation of Elected Parish Officers" found in the *Lutheran Book of Worship,* gives the following charge for parish leaders:

> You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith reflect him in whose name we gather.
>
> You are to work together with other members to see that the worship and work of Christ are done in this congregation, and that God's will is done in this community and in the whole world.
>
> You are to be diligent in your specific area of serving, that the one Lord who empowers you is glorified.
>
> You are to be examples of faith active in love, to help maintain the life and harmony of this congregation.[46]

This charge authorizes the elected leaders of the congregation to oversee the congregation's ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Arthur Carl Piepkorn notes a fourth expectation of the priesthood of all believers. He wrote, quoting from the *Smalcald Articles,* "The imparting of the grace of God is not the responsibility only of the sacred ministry; the Gospel gives us counsel and aid against sin through the mutual

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[46]*Occasional Services: A Companion to "Lutheran Book of Worship"* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 134.

conversation and consolation of the brethren."[47] To the Galatians, Paul wrote, "If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. . . . Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:1, 2).

Finally, David Luecke notes a fifth expectation. "God gave church leaders to get [sic] fellow members into place for the work of service to build fellowship in the body of Christ."[48] The biblical authorization for such an assertion is found in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, as Paul encourages the members of the church in Corinth to use their gifts for the building of Christ's body.

In summary, the expectations God has of the priesthood of all believers is to proclaim the Gospel, call pastors, judge doctrine, provide others with Christian comfort and consolation, and encourage one another to do works of service. To this, responsibilities such as pray, encourage, equip and teach can be added.

Theologians recognize specific expectations God assigns to the spiritual priesthood. At the same time they recognize the boundaries placed on the priesthood. The boundaries are helpful. Boundaries "define the limits of

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[47]Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "What the Symbols Have to Say About the Church," in *Concordia Theological Monthly* (October 1955): 19.

[48]David S. Luecke, *New Designs for Church Leadership* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 144.

the system (Beavers, 1977). . . . How the boundaries are drawn will determine to some extent how the life of a local church is conducted."[49]

The boundaries drawn for the holy priesthood are two- fold: first, by the gifts and abilities of an individual; second, by the distinctions the scriptures give between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the public ministry.

Paul addresses the first boundary in 1 Corinthians 12. The apostle compares the church to a living organism, the human body. He notes that just as the body is composed of many members, and not all members have the same function, so it is with the body of Christ. Just as with the human body, when all parts are in proper working order, the body is healthy, so it is with the body of Christ. It is important for each member of the body of Christ to recognize what his expectation is within the body so the body will function properly.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul alluded to the church as the body of Christ and concluded, "When each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love" (Eph 4:16). This boundary is healthy to recognize. Paul explained the boundary limitation in 1 Corinthians 12 with an analogy to the human body: "The eye cannot say to

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[49]Clarence Hibbs, "A Systems Theory View of the Church," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 2 (Summer 1983): 27.

the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1Co 12:22).

In a similar way, we can affirm each other in the boundaries that limit each person's area of service. No single individual can do all that must be done for effective ministry. By recognizing and using the various spiritual gifts God has given to the body, the congregation can offer a healthy, complimentary ministry of Word and Sacrament.

The second limitation suggests different expected outcomes between the spiritual priesthood and the office of the public ministry. For instance, Martin Chemnitz acknowledged the priesthood of all believers, but also recognized that being part of the priesthood of all believers does not give every priest the right to publicly exercise the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Pragman, reflecting on Chemnitz' theology, notes, "The pastoral office of the ministry has been instituted by God, and the church has been commanded to call fit individuals to serve in that office."[50] Quoting once again from Ephesians 4, "It was [Jesus] who gave *some* to be apostles, *some* to be prophets, *some* to be evangelists, and *some* to be pastors and teachers [emphasis mine]" (Eph 4:11), and from Titus 1, "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" (Titus 1:5).

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[50]Pragman, 49.

At the same time, the church at-large recognizes the legitimacy of those not specifically called to serve in the office of the public ministry to fulfill one or more of the functions of a pastor. One example is in the case of the need for an emergency baptism. In the absence of a pastor, any Christian may baptize without concern for over stepping a boundary.

Walther notes that the priesthood of all believers is not the same as the office of the public ministry: "The holy ministry of the Word or pastoral office is an office distinct from the priestly office which all believers have".[51] However, that does not mean the office of the public ministry is unrelated to the priesthood. First, as already noted, those who hold the office are called out of the priesthood, and remain part of the priesthood of all believers. Secondly, while all Christians are not in the office, the office still "belongs to all who are Christians by right and command."[52] The CTCR makes the same point in its document on the ministry.

> Ministry in the church is ultimately the ministry of Christ. All members of the body of Christ are involved in it. The members of the priesthood of believers are not merely recipients of ministerial service. *The ministry belongs to Christ and to the church.*[53]

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[51]*Walther on the Church,* 73.

[52]Pragman, 16.

[53]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* 42.

Expectations of the Office of the Public Ministry

The office of the public ministry is essential for the priesthood of all believers. The office of the public ministry is God's gift to the spiritual priesthood for the benefit of all of God's people. Loehe wrote in his *Gesammelte Werke*, "Not the office originates from the congregation, but it is more accurate to say, the congregation originates from the office."[54] Pragman said much the same in *Traditions of Ministry*: "The authority of the ministry comes not from or through the universal priesthood but from and through the call to ministry which the pastor has from God alone."[55]

Yet, a pastor does not in any way give up his belonging to the priesthood of all believers. He is always a priest. He is always part of God's people. He is not above them, as the "final word and authority" in all matters of church and doctrine, for the right and duty to judge doctrine also belongs to the royal priesthood; nor is he under them, as an inferior who is subordinate to a superior, and therefore held hostage to the whims and fancies of the priesthood of all believers. Sasse summarizes the relationship of the office of the public ministry to the priesthood of all believers very well when he wrote,

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[54]Sunderberg, 85.

[55]Pragman, 20.

> When the holy ministry is received and instituted as given by the Lord, not over the congregation but in the congregation, then it becomes very large and can be received and rejoiced in as the great gift it is.[56]

A pastor is part of the spiritual priesthood, who has been called by God through a local congregation to be the public steward of the congregation's ministry of Word and Sacrament. The relationship between the office of the public ministry and the priesthood of all believers will avoid conflict if Kurt Marquart's comment is borne in mind:

> The church is Christ's, the ministry is his gift to her, and so part of her. . . . It is pointless to ask, therefore: "Is it the church or the ministry doing this?"--as though two separate entities were acting. It is, rather, Christ's church which baptizes, confesses, teaches, consecrates, prays, serves and does everything else, including the appointment of ministers.[57]

With that thought, the debate or conflict of "we versus them" is broken. The pastor of a congregation is a member of the priesthood, he is part of the body of Christ. Therefore he is one of the "us" of the holy catholic and apostolic church. Paul put it this way, "No man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church" (Eph 5:29).

Having said that, it is important to recognize that what is expected of a pastor is different from what is expected of other members of the spiritual priesthood. C.F.W. Walther wrote,

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[56]Sasse, 81-82.

[57]Marquart, 149.

> Although Holy Scripture attests that all believing Christians are priests (1Pe 2:9; Rev 1:6, 5:10), it at the same time teaches very expressly that in the church there is an office to teach, feed, and rule, etc., which Christians by virtue of their general calling as Christians do not possess.[58]

The difference comes in a variety of ways.

A pastor is different, first, because he is "set apart" by God and God's people for a particular function. He speaks as a representative of the Lord and God's peoples in the public proclamation of the Word of God. As one who is set apart, he is a "holy man." However, not as holiness is generally understood, that is, a bit lower than God, but holy as understood with the concept of being set aside for God's purposes. In his book *Traditions of Ministry*, James Pragman notes,

> The authority of the ministry comes not from or through the universal priesthood but from and through the call to ministry which the pastor has from God alone.[59]

Second, he is different because he is a public figure. He publicly administers God's gifts of his Holy Word and Sacraments. He publicly proclaims the word of absolution "as though from Christ Himself." While the public ministry of the church is the concern of the universal priesthood, it is not appropriate, nor practical, for each individual in the priesthood of all believers to dictate to the pastor what should and should not be done. One who

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[58]*Walther on the Church*, 73.

[59]Pragman, 20.

holds the office of the public ministry has the responsibility of remaining faithful to God and the Word of God which established it. God and His Word determines the expectation of the Pastor. Sasse noted,

> When the holy ministry is received and instituted as given by the Lord, not over the congregation but in the congregation, then it becomes very large and can be received and rejoiced in as the great gift it is.[60]

As the public steward of the means of grace, set aside by God for that task, the pastor is to ensure that the Word of God is properly and correctly taught and preached.

Third, as a public figure, he is to stand out in front of God's people providing direction, correction and leadership. Like Moses of the Old Testament, he leads his people to the "promised land," to heaven through the forgiveness of sins won in the Lord Jesus Christ. Whitehead and Whitehead note, "[Religious leaders] often serve a symbolic function. They stand in for 'something else' or 'something more.'"[61] Gary Yeast frequently counsels individuals he identifies as "community objects," or "celebrants".[62] Those individuals, he notes, are given higher expectations than others in the community, and as a result,

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[60]Sasse, 81-82.

[61]Whitehead and Whitehead, 77.

[62]Gary Yeast's use of the word "celebrant" should not be understood within a theological, but public context, as one who stands before the public in a public role. Yeast includes elected officials, public servants, teachers, as well as pastors, in the category of "celebrant" or "community object."

live under different roles and rules as compared with the community at-large. Whitehead and Whitehead noted pastors "function as lightning rods, drawing the emotional energy that surrounds people's experiences of God."[63]

As one who serves the symbolic function of being the celebrant, not only liturgically, but also systemically, of the congregation, a pastor has two expectations. First, he is responsible for the public ministry of Word and Sacrament. But he is also responsible for guiding the members of the congregation in developing their own skills for ministry in the community in which they live and work (Ephesians 4:12).

Pastor and Pastors

The dynamic of the office of the public ministry is complicated when a congregation has more than one pastor. It is of utmost importance that pastoral associates develop a partnership in ministry for the benefit of the whole. However, the development of that partnership can be fraught with difficulty, especially if the distinctions between pastors, that is, their respective boundaries, are not clearly defined.

When a congregation has two or more pastors, one should be called to be Senior Pastor. The other pastor or pastors should be called to be Associate or Assistant Pas-

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[63]Whitehead and Whitehead, 78.

tor(s). While all are pastors, and therefore are called by God through the congregation into the office of the public ministry, they are not the same, therefore they are not equal.

Pastors in a shared ministry are partners, but not clones of one another. The definition of partnership offered by Whitehead and Whitehead, particularly as it relates to their reflection on the absence of equality between partners, is worth repeating:

> Partnership . . . is an experience of shared power. In this communal process, we explicitly reject domination of one by the other. Being partners does not mean that we bring the same thing to our relationship or that each of us contributes equally. . . . Equality stresses sameness, while partnership delights in diversity. Partners recognize that their differences often expand and enrich their relationship. Equality, as a quantitative image, hints that we should be keeping score. But measuring our respective contributions more often defeats than strengthens partnership.
>
> More than on strict equality, partnership depends on mutuality. The giving and the receiving go both ways. In a mutual relationship, each party brings something of value; each receives something of worth. Partnership thrives when we recognize and respect this mutual exchange of gifts.[64]

One of the classic pieces of literature from the twentieth century is George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. This satirical novel on social structures makes an insightful comment regarding the social and political relationships. *Animal Farm* is a parody on communism. The animals of the Orwellian farm determined to enforce their equality. As the revolt of the barn yard animals began, their slogan was,

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[64]Whitehead and Whitehead, 8.

"All animals are equal." As the novel progressed, the social structures evolved so that the slogan became, "All *pigs* are equal," therefore placing pigs in a position of superiority on the farm. The novel closed with the slogan, "All pigs are equal, but some pigs are more equal than others."

Reflecting on the need for one person to have authority or primary leadership in the church, Mitchell notes,

> The only pure teams or co-pastorates I have seen work well . . . are those in which each member has authority at some *particular time*, and even those are very few and far between. *To do away with all authority in a system throws out the baby with the bath water.* And, as George Orwell's *Animal Farm* reminds us, an authoritarian stance invariably comes in the back door when authority has been thrown out the front. I say "invariable" because I have never seen it happen any other way. In the long run, the best solution to the problems of authoritarianism and hierarchy is not to attempt to destroy all authority, but to define it and place it within structures and limits [emphasis mine].[65]

Reflecting on church and ministry in this context, it is accurate and appropriate to note that equality, when defined as "sameness" is a myth. Paul is clear in his description of the church as the body of Christ.

> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (1Co 12:4-7).

The Spirit delights in the diversity found within the church. That diversity is to be celebrated as the

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[65]Kenneth R. Mitchell, *Multiple Staff Ministries* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988), 152.

Spirit's way of "manifesting" his presence in the body of Christ. In a healthy church, with clearly defined and recognized boundaries, those manifestations of the Spirit will be recognized as the source of the body's strength, and therefore utilized as God intends. However, in doing so, the healthy congregation recognizes that, by virtue of the multiple manifestations of the Spirit, those who make up the body of Christ are not "equal," but are partners in a shared ministry.

Within a large congregation, it is inevitable that there will be the need for ranking of pastors, that is, calling pastors with particular expectations in mind. This has been recognized by the church for millennia. David Luecke notes,

> In the earliest church the bishop was probably the head elder or leader for a local church, in a capacity not much different from that of the senior pastor of a typical [large] congregation today.[66]

Martin Chemnitz, in the Age of Orthodoxy, maintained "this ministry [of the bishops] does indeed have power, divinely bestowed (2 Corinthians 10:4-6; 13:2-4), but circumscribed with certain duties and limitations."[67]

The Age of Orthodoxy advocated the ranking of clergy for the following reasons:

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[66]Luecke, 20.

[67]Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II, Ninth Topic, "Concerning Holy Orders," trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 677-78; quoted in Walther on the Church, 80.

> They developed for the sake of good order in the church (1 Cor. 14:40). Second, as the church grew and developed, the needs of the people of God became more pressing; in order to meet them ministers had to be differentiated so that all needs of the people could be met (Act 6:1-6). Finally, certain ministers had gifts that other ministers lacked. This diversity of gifts led to the development of ranking on the basis of those gifts (Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:5-31; 1 Tim. 3:12-13).[68]

Finally, the CTCR notes, *"The church may rank those who hold various offices, but the distinctions within the offices are by human authority."*[69] The commission goes on to note,

> Every position in the church is one of service, of Christ-exaltation and self-abasement. However, it is useful for the church to arrange for various rankings and orders of supervision also among its pastors, teachers, and others. The distinction between pastors and holders of auxiliary offices is not merely a human distinction. It is not a ranking but a distinction of offices. Within the various offices (e.g., pastorate, teaching office) rankings may be made by human authority. There may, for example, be "senior pastors" and "assistant pastors," or principals and teachers. The nomenclature adopted by the church from time to time may indicate such rankings. Uniformity of terminology is highly desirable.
>
> Rankings that are made by human right should be made for the sake of the work and not merely to elevate individuals. The fact that some members of the church are called by God to be "overseers" does not make them a special caste. Moreover, it must be noted that where there is oversight, there is also submission. However, in the New Testament "submission" is not a term indicating inferiority. The Greek word *hypotagee* refers to order and not to inferiority.[70]

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[68]Brochmand, *Universae Theologiae Systema, II, 345 ("De Ministerio Ecclesiastico," Cap. I, 7),* quoted in Pragman, 80.

[69]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature, 28.*

[70]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature,* 28-29.

It is of utmost importance to underscore that the ranking of clergy, or for that matter, the ranking of any kind of pastoral staff, is not to be construed as "power over against" another, but rather simply for the sake of good order. Roland Martinson frames the reason for ranking clergy and staff effectively:

> The ordained ministry is the office of the ministry of the gospel, shared by people of many faces, who faithfully discharge a common core of tasks in rhythms governed by grace. The office's only authority is the gospel. It exists in the church for the sake of the gospel. Its work flows out of the gospel. Its pace is established by the gospel. To argue that pastors are ministers of the gospel is to place first things first; it identifies a pastor's true authority; it provides for flexibility and diversity in the penultimates; it defines 'do-able' tasks. It shapes a humane, grace-filled calling.[71]

The relationship between a Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor can be a difficult matter, in that, given an unfavorable mix of personalities, power struggles can develop. The Senior Pastor is, by definition, the head of the pastoral staff.[72] Applying the immortal words of the late President Harry S. Truman to the office of Senior Pastor, "The buck stops here." He has general responsibility to give oversight to those who serve in ministry with him. Yet, he does serve in partnership with the Associate Pastor, and/or others who are part of the staff. While it is not

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[71]Martinson, 193.

[72]Walter E. Wiest and Elwyn A. Smith, *Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 131.

systemically healthy for a Senior Pastor to be "authoritarian," it is important that the boundaries between the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor and other staff be affirmed and recognized. In other words, it is important to recognize the need for the Senior Pastor to be authoritative. As such, it is helpful to understand what it means to be an associate, whether Associate Pastor, or associate in ministry.

The word "associate" has a number of synonyms, such as "colleague, coworker, partner, and comrade." But "associate" has other synonyms as well, that seem to be contradictory--words such as "adjunct, secondary and subordinate." Clearly a Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor, while sharing the joys and challenges of ministry, are not the same or equal to each other. They are different in expectations and functions. Kenneth Mitchell notes, "good systems consultants . . . remember to affirm the authority of those who ordinarily have it in a system."[73] However, he goes on to state, while the Associate Pastor needs authority,

> Such authority may be less than that of the [senior] pastor; in fact, if it is equal to or greater than the [senior] pastor's, the system is already in trouble. But the system is also in trouble if the authority of an associate pastor is nonexistent or if people do not recognize it.[74]

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[73]Mitchell, 121.

[74]Mitchell, 121.

Mitchell makes a strong argument for clearly defined expectations, rules and rituals within a multiple staff congregation. He notes first, that they are boundary maintaining devices that delineate the uniqueness of a group or individual, so that its boundaries are clear[75]; it ensures that specialized tasks will be completed by specific individuals on a regular basis[76]; and it ensures good functioning, clarity of expectations enables everyone involved to know "who does what".[77] Such a concept of shared power almost "invariably creates chances for everyone in a congregation to 'own' its mission and its ministry."[78]

Developing a Partnership of Joy

Luecke offers eight suggestions for developing a partnership of joy. Each is significant in that it points both the professional and lay leader beyond self, to others and to God.

1. Keep the partnership spiritually based.
2. In partnership, keep your sights set high and beyond yourselves.
3. Exercise partnership by encouraging each other.
4. Exercise partnership by comforting each other.
5. Work hard to settle disagreements.
6. Pastors, show the leaders your care for them.
7. Leaders, care for your pastor and show it.

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[75]Mitchell, 49.

[76]Mitchell, 50.

[77]Mitchell, 55.

[78]Mitchell, 24.

8. Salute each other regularly and often.[79]

Luecke's point is simply this. It takes hard work to grow in understanding of the expectation relationship between professional church workers, and between the workers and lay leaders. We tend to assume too much about the way expectations, roles and rules are understood; and assume too little about what is needed to communicate mutual needs and expectations.

To assist a multiple staff in functioning with competence, Mitchell suggests the following principles of effective ministry be followed:

1. The staff has clearly defined goals
2. The staff recognizes that the relationships it maintains within itself are models for the relationships in the congregation
3. The staff provides for the regular exercise by one or more of its members of all the necessary leadership functions
4. The staff has a broad consensus concerning the nature and purpose of the church and its ministry
5. Provision is made for authority, responsibility and accountability[80]

The relationship between any congregation and its workers, whether lay or professional, volunteer or paid, would be far healthier if careful, intentional conversation were to take place to clarify expectations. This can be illustrated with a personal story.

The question of expectations is largely relative to the size and traditions of a congregation being served. The

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[79]Luecke, 164-173.

[80]Mitchell, 135.

larger the congregation, the more proactive[81] the professional staff must be with regard to leadership; the smaller the congregation, the more the pastor should defer to the guidance of the lay leaders.

A newly ordained pastor was called to serve a middle size congregation in a small, rural central Illinois community. The average tenure for a pastor was 3.5 years over the congregation's 75 year history. When developing a vision for the future, an influential lay leader pulled the young pastor aside one day and made an significant comment. "Pastor, you need to listen to us (meaning the long-standing members of the congregation). Remember, you will only be here a short period of time. We will remain behind, and will have to live with the changes you make." His point: the laity have a greater investment in the congregation than the pastor. Let us be the primary leaders. The congregation's expectation of its pastor in that situation is to encourage the lay leaders to be the initiating leaders, and to support them in that role.

The congregation evaluated in this study is one of the larger congregations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The average tenure of the pastors during the past 85

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[81]In recent years, the word, "proactive" has become a well-used, but rarely well-defined term. Proactive, with it's prefix "pro" refers to the intentionality of action. That is, taking action by one's own decision, rather than by the necessity of circumstances. To be proactive is to act on one's own accord, rather than by force.

years is about 25 years. At the same time, the congregation's constitution is written in such a way that there could potentially be a 100% turn over of lay leadership on the Church Council in any given year. In 1994, for instance, there was a 75% turn over in Church Council membership. In this congregation, the statement made by the middle sized congregation's lay leader must be turned around. The lay leaders must recognize that they will be in designated leadership positions for a limited period of time. The staff, however, will have to live with changes made long after the lay leader leaves office. Therefore, the pastors and staff of the congregation must be permitted to be initiating leaders, while being encouraged and supported by the lay leaders. Unlike the smaller congregation, the larger parish has a need for a strong pastoral staff with clearly defined boundaries to define areas of responsibility, and working relationships with other staff members and lay leaders.

Given the complexity of ministry in a large congregation, clear boundaries must be established and maintained between the various levels or offices of service. The Senior Pastor must have responsibility for keeping the "big picture in mind." At the same time, he must be willing to delegate the nuts and bolts of developing short-term and long-term ministry to the pastoral staff and the committees they work with.

The staff must have clearly open and clearly defined channels of communication. Personal opinions and judgements must be encouraged, even if the opinions and judgements are not in agreement with the opinion and judgment of others on staff. Opinions and judgments must always be treated with respect.

Finally, on the staff level, the staff must have a healthy trust that each staff member has the good of the congregation and ministry as a whole at heart. Trust means there are no unspoken "personal agendas" that torpedo the agenda of the pastoral staff or the congregation as a whole.

On another level, it is important to affirm and reaffirm that the members of a pastoral staff are called, contracted, or hired to serve our Lord by serving the people of God. The staff must always be ready to be held accountable to the Lord by being accountable to the congregational leadership. The staff must be willing to solicit the ideas, support, contrary opinions and assistance of the priesthood of all believers.

A collaborative ministry recognizes and delights in the tremendous diversity of gifts, talents and abilities on every level of congregational life. It recognizes the talents and abilities found among those who have the highest levels of influence, as well as those who have the lowest levels of influence.

The question of expectations is finally resolved with a simple affirmation. That is, the professional staff and the lay leaders of a congregation work together most effectively when, using their unique spiritual gifts, spiritual maturity and spiritual insight, they work collaboratively to proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. That foundational affirmation begins the process of sharpening expectations for all who are part of the congregation and its ministry.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHURCH AND MINISTRY FROM A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

When the church is described, it is most often defined with organizational or institutional language. As such, it is defined as an association of people that does not have power in and of itself. The church is understood as a benign entity that does not breathe life. One only needs to think of the expression "the institutional church" to conjure up pictures of either lifeless buildings and facilities, or a harmless, innocuous collection of people.

Increasing interest is being given to understanding the church as an organism, or organic unit. There are good reasons for this. An organism is alive, not lifeless; it is ordered, not chaotic; it is systematic, not random. Organisms breathe life. Organisms are able to reproduce. Organisms can think, act, feel and interrelate.

The church is an organism. The church is also a system. Therefore, the church functions organically and systemically.

The discipline of understanding the church according to systems theory is a relatively recent phenomena. A cursory look at the bibliography indicates the youthfulness of this way of thinking of church and ministry: the earli-

est date is 1983. Systems thinking draws heavily on social science disciplines, particularly computer and management sciences, and psychology. Edwin Friedman suggests systems theory had its origin in the 1950's in response to the introduction of computers, and the blizzard of data computers generate. Since the 1950's, life has become increasingly complex. This brought about the need to organize and understand life and relationships in new ways. Friedman notes,

> Systems thinking began in response to this dimension of the information problem. It deals with data in a new way. It focuses less on content and more on the *process* that governs the data; less on the cause-and-effect connections that link bits of information and more on the principles of organization that give data meaning. One of the most important ramifications of this approach for individuals who must organize and make sense out of a great deal of information (such as members of the clergy) is that it no longer becomes necessary to "know all about something" in order to comprehend it; the approach also helps establish new criteria for what information is important.[1]

By understanding the church as a system, as the following definitions illustrate, attention is focused on the interrelatedness of the church both as an organizational system and as an emotional system.

Defining Systems Theory

The church is described systemically in a number of ways, depending upon which part of parish life is being

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[1]Edwin Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: The Guilford Press, 19850, 15.

considered. In this section of this chapter, a variety of definitions of church as a system will be offered, along with a description of the expertise of each individual who offers the definition.

Kenneth R. Mitchell is a member of the Presbyterian Church, a family therapist and pastoral counsellor. His interest in understanding the church systemically lies in the area of staff relationships in multiple staff ministries. In his book, *Multiple Staff Ministries,* he defines systems theory as:

> a set of shared underlying convictions about a system as an organic being in its own right, the importance of boundaries, roles, rules and rituals in its life, and the difficulty of changing an individual in a system without changing the system as a whole.[2]

Paul Dietterich and Inagrace Dietterich are ordained ministers in the Methodist church. Paul Dietterich is the Director of the Center for Parish Development, and Inagrace Dietterich is a Professor of Systematic Theology and a consultant for the Center for Parish Development. Their professional interest in the church as system leads them to view the church as a complex organizational system. They define the church as a system in this way:

> A *system* is a set of interrelated and interdependent elements. . . . A shift in one part of a church system shifts the relationships among all the other parts. Everything actually is related to everything else in such a way that a change in any one thing produces a

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[2]Mitchell, 27.

> change in everything else--an overwhelming realization.[3]

R. Paul Stevens, Academic Dean of Regent College, Vancouver, and Associate Professor of Lay Theology and Empowerment, and Phil Collins, the Principal of Carey Theological College, on the campus of the University of British Columbia, concentrate their energies on understanding a systems approach to congregational leadership. They contend

> Systems theory expounds the ancient principle that the whole is more than the sum of its parts.
> Systems thinkers use the term *wholism* to describe the family or the social organism as something more than the sum of the members.
> In the same way, systems pastors work with the whole church, not merely with collections of individuals. The basic unit of the church is not the individual but the church as a whole.[4]

Peter Steinke, a pastor in the Lutheran Missouri-Synod Synod and the Director of the Interfaith Pastoral Counseling Center in Barrington, Illinois, is interested in exploring the church as an emotional system. Steinke notes:

> *System Theory* is a way of conceptualizing reality. It organizes our thinking from a specific vantage point. System thinking considers the *interrelatedness* of the parts. Instead of seeing isolated, unrelated parts, we look at the whole.[5]

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[3]Paul M. Dietterich and Inagrace T. Dietterich, *A Systems Model of the Church in Ministry and Mission: A General Diagnostic Model for Church Organizational Behavior: Applying a Congruence Perspective,* Readings in Church Transformation (Chicago: The Center for Parish Development, 1989), 11.

[4]R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership* (n.p.: The Alban Institute, 1993), xvii-xviii.

[5]Steinke, 3.

Later, he adds,

> System thinking deepens our understanding of life. We see it as a rich complexity of interdependent parts. Basically, a system is a set of forces and events that interact, such as a weather system or the solar system. To think systemically is to look at the ongoing, vital interaction of the connected parts.[6]

One example of thinking systemically is found in the relationship of the human body to disease. When one has the flu, he will say, "I'm sick." Even though the flu affects only a part of the body directly, for instance, the respiratory system, the illness is felt by the entire body. What affects one part of the body, impacts the whole body.

Systems thinking works with the understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Former President Reagan was thinking systemically with his theory of trickle down economics. When economics is considered systemically, the conclusion can be drawn that if the wealthiest, most affluent segments of society are growing more prosperous, the rest of society will benefit as a result. Applying this concept to the church, the following can be stated: When the church, the body of Christ, is defined as a system, and the office of the public ministry is defined as one of the component parts of the system, what effects the office of the public ministry (whether the "something" is good or bad), the congregation it exists to serve will eventually be effected in the same way. At the same time,

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[6]Steinke, 4.

what effects the priesthood of all believers will impact the office entrusted with the public proclamation of Word and Sacrament.

The scriptures use a systems model to describe the church. In 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, Paul described the church as "the body of Christ." In both letters he speaks of the interrelationship of each member of the body to other members. In 1 Corinthians 12, he concludes his discussion of the interconnection of each member of the church with the words, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1Co 12:26-27). In Romans 12 he explains, "For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (Rom 12:4-5).

A helpful truth to keep in mind is, "Where two or more are gathered together, there an argument will begin." That is as true within the academic community as it is in any other community. A debate is beginning to surface asking what it means to consider the church systemically. The various authors quoted here illustrate the nature of the debate. Mitchell applies systems theory primarily to staff relationships; Dietterich and Dietterich look at the church as a complex organizational system; Stevens and Collins

explore a systems approach to congregational leadership, giving particular attention to the relationship between a congregational staff and lay leadership; Friedman looks at the church as a set of complex forces originating simultaneously in one's family of origin and the historical patterns of the congregational system; and Steinke defines the church as an emotional system. While it is certainly correct to recognize the validity of each of these points of view, each proponent of a particular view point is likely to press his own conviction as the best way to consider the church systemically.

This remainder of this study will focus primarily on just two of these theoretical arguments, that is, how the church is simultaneously a complex organizational system and an interrelated emotional system. It is healthy to recognize the Church as *simultaneously* an organizational system and an emotional system, and to acknowledge how the organizational and emotional forces impact church life as a whole. Having said that, the project will demonstrate that the primary driving force for the church is found within the congregation's emotional system.

Understanding the Office of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of all Believers Systemically

The church and the office of the public ministry are inseparably bound. Neither can be understood apart from the other. When church and ministry, the priesthood of all

believers and the office of the public ministry, are separated from each other, conflict will be generated. The appearance will be given of either the pastor or lay leader trying to rise up over against the other.

It is advantageous to consider the church as a system for a number of reasons. First, the parts of the system can focus on the emotional processes of people relating to people rather than symptomatic content of those emotions.

Second, thinking shifts from looking to an endpoint in a linear chain of cause and effect, or a multiple causation of a particular stress, to seeing that what occurs organizationally within the congregation is systemic; that is, the stressor is seen as a symptom of the real problem found within the congregational system.[7] Note Figure 1 on page 95 for a diagram showing the distinction between linear causation, multiple causation and systems thinking.

Third, traditional linear and co-causal thinking identifies a problem area, also described as the *identified patient,* and tries to "fix" the problem by fixing the person or program. Whether the problem is identified as a person or program makes little difference. The belief is the organic distress can be resolved by fixing the problematic person or program. Systems thinking works with the concept that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The theory conjectures that stressors can be identified and

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[7]Friedman, 15.

Figure 1

Linear Causation, Multiple Causation and Systems Thinking

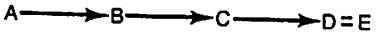

FIGURE 1-2. Linear causation.

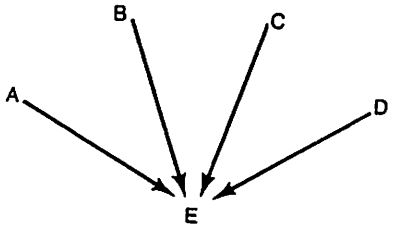

FIGURE 1-3. Multiple causation.

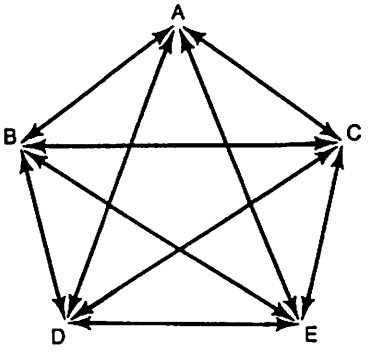

FIGURE 1-4. Systems thinking.

remedied either by modifying foundational structure, or by working toward improving the emotional climate of the congregation as a whole. Friedman notes,

> Family therapy [application of systems theory to a family of origin] . . . tends to treat crisis as an opportunity for bringing change to the entire emotional system, with the result that everyone, not just the *identified patient,* personally benefits and grows."[8]

Fourth, predictions can be made as to how a given part of the congregational system is likely to function in a given situation, not by analyzing its nature but by observing its position in the system.[9]

In other words, the stresses and strains of the shared life of parish ministry can be anticipated and dealt with in an up-front, non-confrontational manner. The application of systems theory to the ministry of the church can have a similar impact on the church's emotional system. Steinke notes,

> System thinking deepens our understanding of life. We see it as a rich complexity of interdependent parts. . . . To think systemically is to look at the ongoing, vital interaction of the connected parts.[10]

When church and ministry are considered systemically, they are considered as component parts, interconnected in such a way that one cannot be tinkered with without influencing the other.

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[8]Friedman, 23.

[9]Friedman, 18.

[10]Steinke, 4.

Systemic Power

When the church is viewed systemically, power is found at several levels. Without any merit to order, the levels can be described as the staff; the elected leadership; the unelected, but influential, leadership; the alligators; and those who feel disenfranchised, often described as inactive members.

Each of these groups impact a congregation and its ministry in a positive, negative or mixed way. In an unhealthy congregational system, fear and distrust are found within and between each level. It is as if Paul's words are parodied within the church: "The eye says to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' or the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Co 12:21).

These words describe what is called a "closed system" in systemic language. The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy define closed and open systems in this way

> A closed family system is organized to preserve the status quo and resist change, though these patterns are relative to the family's role in a larger ecology (Von Bertalanffy, 1974). [An open system is] a term borrowed from physics, which refers to the fact that systems are always, to some degree, open to the flow of matter and energy. As used by family therapists, the terms "open system" and "closed system" are metaphors which refer to the extent to which a family [or congregational system] is "open" to new information and, hence, susceptible to change (Dell, 1985).[11]

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[11]Foley and Everett, eds., 2-3.

Laurel Burton quotes Larry Constantine in *Pastoral Paradigms: Christian Ministry in a Pluralistic Culture.* Constantine wrote,

> The more closed a system, the more dedicated to stability, the more likely it is to block or deny communication that challenges the paradigm or calls the regime into question.[12]

In other words, a closed system fosters stagnation and decline. A closed system does not work toward health, but toward death.

Two actual lakes, which are geographically connected to each other, are good examples of the difference between a closed and an open system. Both lakes have the same source. The first lake has an open water system. That is, rain and run off enter the lake in natural processes and the lake water is free to drain into a river, creating a natural, ongoing cleansing process. As a result, it is fresh water, teaming with life and able to give life.

The other lake is closed. Its water is made up principally of the same water that comes from the first lake. The water from the first lake makes its way south by a river channel. As the water flows toward the second lake, additional water joins the stream through precipitation and tributaries. Eventually the river empties into the second lake.

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[12]Larry Constantine, *Family Paradigms,* (New York: Guilford Press, 1986), 102-103; quoted in Laurel Arthur Burton, *Pastoral Paradigms: Christian Ministry in a Pluralistic Culture* (n.p.: Alban Institute, 1988), 22.

The second lake cannot support life. It does not have any fish or water fowl. The water cannot be used for bathing, drinking or cleaning. The water is an irritant. It is a putrid, stagnant pool.

The difference between the two is in the "openness" and the "closedness" of each. The first lake is the Sea of Galilee. The geography of the region allows water in and out, the river is the Jordan River, which terminates in the Dead Sea, which only allows water in. It does not have any provision for allowing water to leave, except by evaporation.

The implications for the church are obvious. A healthy congregational system has an open, free-flowing system of communication. Questions are encouraged and debate is welcomed. Dissenters are treated with respect. All members of the system are important. All are seen as needed to make congregational life healthy and functional. Systemically, an open system is diagramed with communication loops, as illustrated in Figure 2, found on page 100.

Figure 2

A Systems Model of the Church in Ministry and Mission

The *Systems Model of the Church in Ministry and Mission*, developed by the Center for Parish Development, diagrams an open congregational system. The key items to note are the *input system*, where ministry is shaped; the *organizational system*, the way the congregation processes ministry ideas; the *output system*, which effects how the congregation performs; and the *feedback system*, that is, how the congregation processes the results and evaluates the effectiveness of the ministry of the congregation.

An open congregational system will have each of these elements, operating in a continuous loop. Each part is dependent on the other. If any "system" is shutdown or devalued, systemic distress will develop. Systemic distress will, in turn, generate conflict. The conflict may be visible, and therefore known, or invisible, and therefore unknown to the team leader. Whether the conflict is open or hidden is a symptom of congregational health.

The concern of a healthy congregational system is framed in the concept of "power to". Michael and Deborah Jinkins describe this as "how the power of leadership can help people become more successful, to accomplish the things that they think are important, to experience a greater sense

of efficacy."[13] This underscores the need for clear, open communication within the congregation. As Jinkins and Jinkins note, "almost always, any aspect of a group's life kept hidden has the most power."[14]

This is why Friedman's concept of eliminating systemic distress by modifying the structure becomes so important. It is through the structure, polity, or organizational system of a congregation that people are empowered or disempowered for ministry.

In a healthy congregational system power is shared. Shared power is described here as collaborative leadership. Shared power is defined by the Center for Parish Development as:

> Each lay and clergy church leader [bringing] his or her best powers of prayerful discernment to bear upon this [theological] task--even while at the same time she or he is engaged in the day-to-day administration of the church.[15]

Later they comment,

> Experience and research evidence suggest, however, that a highly effective organization is not a collection of individual people and individual positions. It is instead a pyramid of work groups, each group having responsibilities and functions that are fairly common

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[13]Michael Jinkins and Deborah Bradshaw Jinkins, *Power and Change in Parish Ministry: Reflections on the Cure of Souls* (n.p.: The Alban Institute, 1991), 58.

[14]Mitchell, 59

[15]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation*, Readings in Church Transformation, (Chicago: The Center for Parish Development, 1987), 4.

> among members and somewhat different from members of other work groups.[16]

While the word collaboration is not used, Daniel Biles certainly has the concept in mind in his work, *Pursuing Excellence in Ministry*, especially in his chapter, "The Foundations of Excellence: Commitment, Ownership, and Leadership". Biles notes,

> Our understanding of the priesthood of all believers to which we are called in baptism makes the front line of Christian ministry in the world the work of the laity. It is their witness to Christ. Pastors need to make sure the church's mission of teaching and preaching the Gospel stays on track. But it is the laity who are the main force in carrying out Christian witness in the world day to day and building up the Body of Christ. When pastors recognize this, trust the laity for the gifts they bring to do their work and then get out of their way so they can do it, lo and behold things get done. Good things happen.[17]

Defining the Church Organizationally

The church can be diagramed organizationally with four leadership patterns. The first is hierarchical, with a traditional top-down, pyramid structure. The second is a one-on-one competitive model, with workers vying for the "boss'" attention. The third is a one-on-one consultative structure, with the team head acting as a "servant leader." The fourth diagrams the church as a complex system of multiple overlapping work groups, with the team head serving

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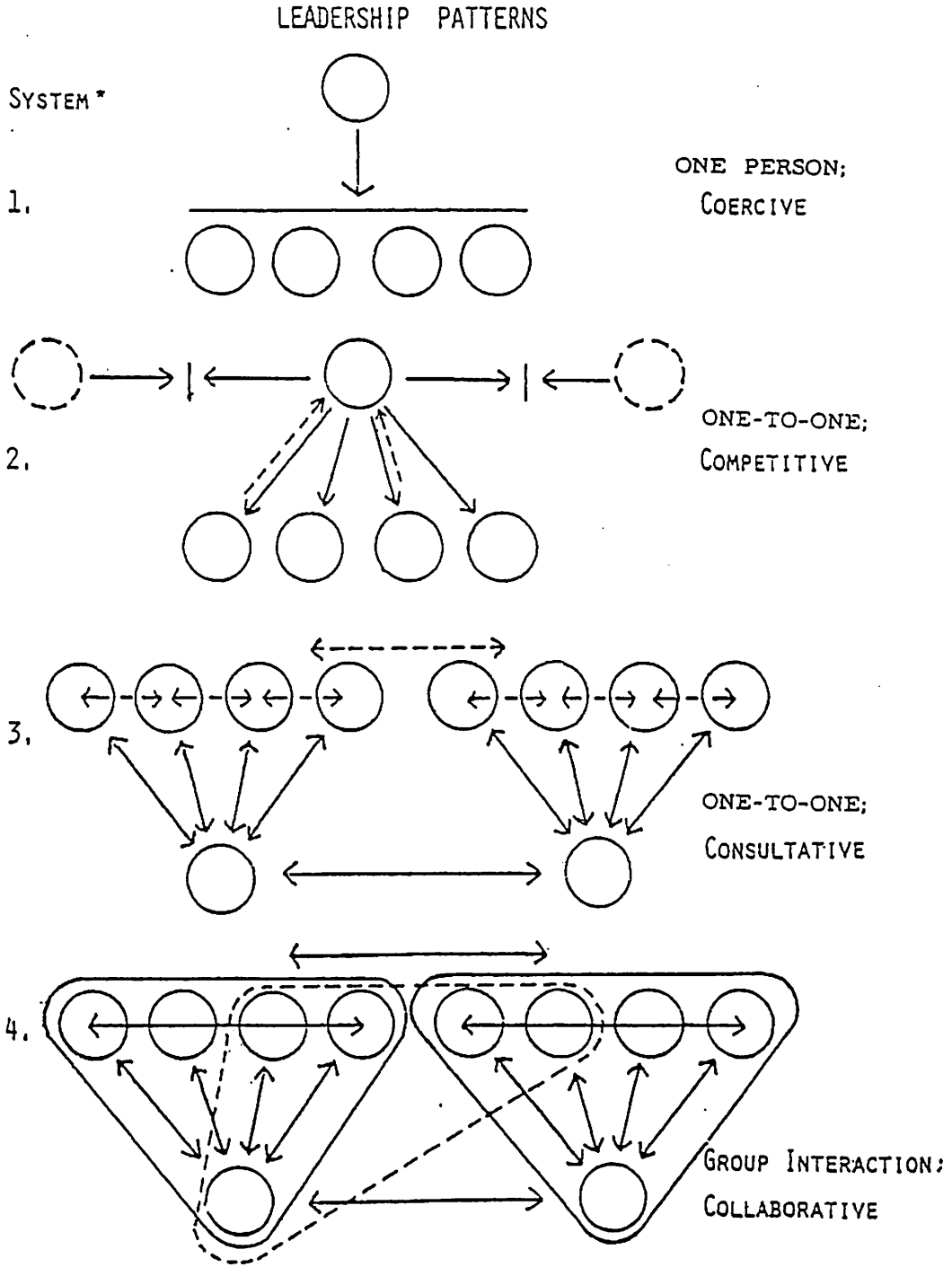
[16]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation*, 5.

[17]Daniel V. Biles, Pursuing Excellence in Ministry, with a Foreword by Celia Allison Hahn (n.p.: An Alban Institute Publication, 1988), 52.

Figure 3

Organizational Diagrams of the Church



as a facilitator for a group decision making process. The diagram also shows an openness to input from all levels of decision making. The four leadership patterns are illustrated in Figure 3, on page 104.

As shown, the four patterns have unique characteristics. These patterns have been studied, identified and evaluated by the late Rensis Likert and Jane Likert, who were social scientists at the University of Michigan. Likert and Likert have identified these models as "Systems 1, 2, 3, 4."

A "System 1" congregation is identified as "a one-person **coercive**" model. The team leader, congregational head, or the most influential member of the group is authoritarian. The system is hierarchical, with the information flow coming from the top down, and allowing for minimal input from lower levels of influence. Subordinates are viewed as just that: subordinate to the head of the team, and no more. A "System 1" congregation is a fear-laden organization. This system of ministry management may be characterized by an *"Herr Pastor"* mentality of ministry or a congregational leadership that is coercive and intimidating.

A "System 2" congregation follows a "one-on-one **competitive**" model. The work of team members is closely monitored and supervised by the team leader. Work is assigned on a one-to-one basis, according to the talents and abilities of individual team members. The team leader makes the

decisions for the group, and passes the decision down to the lower levels of influence. Input from other team members may be used in making the decision, but normally only on a one-on-one basis, rarely, if ever, as a total working team. As a result, "System 2" congregations are conflict-laden with each team member, leader or parishioner vying for the time and energy of the organizational head, whether the pastor, chairman of the congregation or some other influential member of the congregation. This model of ministry is found most frequently in Christian churches, with the pastor at the top, and the pastoral staff and church membership having lower levels of influence.

A "System 3" congregation is identified as "one-to-one **consultative**". The leader deals with group members individually in a collegial and consultative manner. He/she encourages each group member to become an accomplished specialist in his or her own area of work and respects the wisdom the team member communicates. Frequent, open and candid communication between the team leader and individual team members differentiates "System 3" from "System 2" management style. However, the information flow is primarily one-on-one, rather than in a group format. A "System 3" congregation is generally quite healthy, with minimal conflict, and, when conflict occurs, is resolved more easily within the working team.

"Systems 1, 2 and 3" are to greater or lesser degrees "closed systems", with "System 1" being the most closed and "System 3" being the least closed. Free, open communication at all levels is not always intentionally encouraged, and may even be intentionally discouraged. The potential of developing a true team-spirit is blocked by the lack of open communication and overt or covert discouragement of cooperation by the head to team members and among the team members themselves.

A "System 4" congregation is identified as a "group interactive-**collaborative**" model. "System 4" encourages an "open communication" system. Information flows freely at all levels of influence. Lower levels of influence have as much freedom of expression as upper levels of influence. The deliberate two-way exchange of ideas becomes a team building experience for the entire work group. Decisions are made as a team, not apart from the group and then reported to the group. The leader does not conceal relevant information from the group. He/she trusts the wisdom of the group and acts accordingly. As a result, both the team leader and members operate with a high degree of trust and mutual respect.[18]

The model adopted by a congregation has a direct influence on how ministry is achieved. As the hierarchical

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[18]The description of each of the four systems identified by Likert are from *Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 24-25.

model illustrates, the organizational movement is top down, with little or no intentional interaction or mutual accountability between the component parts, with the exception of the heads of the team. It illustrates a closed communication system that will breed mistrust, encourage rivalry for the Senior Pastor's attention, and create feelings of insignificance among those in the lower levels of influence. In addition, the role of the Associate Pastor is minimized. His area of responsibility is limited to his specific calling. Organizationally, he is excluded from the rest of the staff, thereby having little or no influence on other staff members. In this situation, the Associate Pastor would feel like an appendix: that is, he's there, but having no recognizable function.

At the same time, the Associate Pastor could argue that he does not belong on the same organizational level as other staff members, such as the Parish Administrator or Day School Principal. He is, after all, one called into the office of the public ministry, the highest office in the Christian Church. It could be argued that he should either be on the same level as the Senior Pastor, or hold an organizational position immediately below the Senior Pastor. But that only fosters the impression of a closed system, where there are "higher-ups" who have the control, and

underlings who are controlled by those who "really own power."

Looking at the opposite end of the spectrum, when the church structure is diagramed collaboratively, with intentionally shared power, it takes on a different form. Conspicuous by its absence is the typical vertical ordering of a hierarchical system.

This organizational model illustrates the interrelationship between each member of the staff and the position they represent or hold. The model demonstrates a willingness to be vulnerable, an acceptance of positive and negative feedback and an openness to new ideas from lower levels of influence. All who are on the staff have a vested interest in the development of ministry. Each, while having specific expectations, roles and rules within the structure, are embraced as full partners in ministry.

The collaborative model has a number of unique working relationships and definitions as to how each part of the system functions. Dietterich and Dietterich describe how the church organization functions as a complex organizational system. They note the basic foundation of the church in this model "consists of a network of multiple overlapping work groups held together by linking persons."[19] The work group is the basic component through which the congregation accomplishes its mission. However, the typical congregation

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[19]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 5.

is made up of a number of work groups, each being responsible for a specific aspect of congregational ministry. A key to the effectiveness of the entire congregation is the degree to which each working group works cooperatively, or overlap, with other work groups. Dietterich and Dietterich note,

> Because the church organization is made up of multiple leadership groups, the major place to focus developmental efforts is upon these many different leadership groups. The more faithful and effective each leadership group is in carrying out its particular part of the church's ministry and mission, the more faithful and effective the church as a whole will be.[20]

They maintain the crucial link between working groups is found in "linking persons."

> Linking persons are the individuals who hold membership simultaneously on two or more church leadership groups.
>
> Linking persons are the connectors of these leadership groups with each other. Linking persons are therefore essential to church organizational functioning. If they do their linking job well, the church organization will function smoothly and effectively. If they fail to do their linking job well, the church organization will falter and be less effective.[21]

Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation notes that linking persons have specific functions to aid organizational functioning. They function as a channel of information between the groups in which they participate. Because they are familiar with the dynamics of multiple groups, the linking person is responsible to help coordinate

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[20]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 9.

[21]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 10.

the way and the speed at which the groups to which he or she belongs to work toward avoiding competition, jealousy and suspicion. In addition, the linking person is expected to help each linked group influence the other groups to which it is linked. It is also the linking person's responsibility to understand and interpret to others the conditions each team has identified as important, non-negotiable conditions, but which other teams may be ignoring. Finally, the linking persons are responsible for reminding both, or all, linked teams of the motivational forces that hold the church organization together. These motivational forces are identified as loyalty to Christ, commitment to the overall goals of the church, the virtue of fair play, mutual trust and respect, caring for and respecting the opinions and feelings of others, concern for high standards of performance in carrying out the work of the church, and faithfulness to biblical and theological traditions.[22]

Dietterich and Dietterich carefully point out that

> Linking persons are not the same as representatives. A representative, as most commonly understood in modern society, is a person duly elected or otherwise authorized to act or speak for others: an agent, or instructed delegate, who seeks to influence action of a political body on behalf of his or her constituents. Rather than seeking what is best for the whole, a representative is supposed to seek special advantage for those being represented--for only one part of the whole.[23]

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[22]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 10-11.

[23]*Organizational Concepts for Church Transformation,* 12.

The danger of thinking in terms of representation of a particular group is it fosters thoughts of "win/loose," "stronger/weaker," "we/they," in short, forces that divide rather than unite. As noted above, the goal of a linking person is to link separate, but interrelated work groups to achieve common goals and objectives. Therefore thoughts of "win/lose," "stronger/weaker," "we/they" are alien to a collaborative organizational structure.

There is strength in thinking of church and ministry according to the models proposed by the theory of the church as a complex organizational system. The theory is consistent with the witness of scripture, it affirms the relationship between the priesthood of all believers and the office of the public ministry, and it allows those who are part of the system to have a voice in congregational affairs.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHURCH AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM

Introducing the Center for Development

The Center for Parish Development (CPD) in Chicago has been actively pioneering the concept of the church as a complex organizational system since 1968. The CPD was founded in 1968 by a coalition of leaders from more than twenty denominational regional bodies, national agencies and theological seminaries to help congregations address issues and concerns related to church transformation. The director of the agency is Dr. Paul Dietterich, a Methodist clergyman and theologian.

The CPD is primarily a research agency which is committed to four purposes:

1. To develop theological foundations to guide the transformation of the church's mission and witness in this new era in history;
2. To contribute to a theory and practice of planned church transformation;
3. To apply systems theory and practice to church life and work;
4. To contribute to the field of practical theology.[1]

The CPD works with a two-pronged approach to fulfill its mission. First, they are engaged in an on-going process

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[1]"Introducing the Center for Parish Development," The Center for Parish Development, 2.

of developing a strategy for mission and ministry within the Christian church. Second, they work with an alliance of systems theory developed by management sciences and Christian theology of church and ministry.

The theoretical underpinning of the CPD's understanding of church management is found in understanding the church to be an organizational system. The CPD defines an organizational system as any network of people and/or working groups that require deliberate lines of communication, accountability and strategic plan for effective working relationships. The CPD identifies the church as a complex organizational system.

> According to this model, the church is understood as a complex network of interrelated and interdependent forces, factors, and elements, that act upon each other in ways that turn 'inputs' into 'outputs' and definite results in ministry and mission are (or in some cases are not) achieved. Change in one part of the system will result in changes in other parts of the system.[2]

As a complex system always involved in change, the goal of those involved in church management and leadership is to develop a organizational pattern that creates the least amount of stress, anxiety and resistance in the congregational system. The stresses, anxiety and resistance that naturally accompanies change, can leave the church in an unhealthy homeostatic, that is, with a rigid or tradition-driven, condition. This is a condition that not only resists change, but fights any change with vigorous tenaci-

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[2]Dietterich and Dietterich, 10.

ty. In such a congregation, any kind of change, no matter how healthy and necessary, is viewed with suspicion.

The CPD has developed a tool to help congregations change within their own comfort level. The basic resource for any proposed change is the core leadership and key working groups of the congregation. The change process is guided with the use of Likert surveys that are interpreted through a working team group process.

Survey-Guided Team Development

The CPD works with two basic assumptions. First, the church is in continual change. Second, change can be either positive or negative, depending on the view an organization has toward itself and the organization's need to change. The CPD carefully notes that change is not optional; change will occur either by accident or intention. That being the case, it is far healthier for a church to change intentionally. To assist the congregation or church organizational system in the process of intentional change, the CPD developed and utilizes a "Survey-Guided Team Development" tool. The process enables a congregation or church agency to change with the least degree of stress, anxiety and resistance possible.

The Survey-Guided Team Development process was developed in consultation with Likert and Likert at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. Beginning in the late 1940's, the Institute for Social

Research began to do extensive research in the area of planned change in organizational systems. Academic institutions, industries and not-for-profit organizations were studied by the Institute. Through their research, patterns or systems of management were identified, which they classified as "System 1, 2, 3, 4".

In 1974, the CPD invited the Rensis Likert Associates to adapt their resources for church organizations. Their collaborative work resulted in the "Likert Profile of a Church". Initial and ongoing research has found that the characteristics of "Systems 1, 2, 3 and 4" organizations identified in industry and not-for-profit organizations can also be found in congregations. More significantly, continued research demonstrates that congregational health can be directly attributed to the preferred system of the congregation. In other words, System 1 congregations have specific characteristics that distinguished them from System 4 congregations. System 1 congregations are more unhealthy and resistant to change than are System 4 congregations.

Survey-Guided Team Development Assumptions

The Survey-Guided Team Development process of organizational growth acknowledges that a well motivated organization can move from one level to the next, while an unmotivated organization will not only resist the upward movement, but will probably move down from one level to the next. The

goal of the Survey-Guided Team Development process is to assist team members, and the organizations with which they are associated, to move up the systemic levels.

The Survey-Guided Team Development process is based on a number of assumptions. First, change does not have to be a negative experience. It can be viewed as a positive, healthy movement from one state to another. This perspective on change is implied when it is spoken of as "development."

Second, the concept of change as development addresses growth. "[Development] is a deliberate movement from the way things **are** to the way things **might be**"[3]. As a result, the Survey-Guided Team Development process focuses on the future, rather than on the past; on how things can be done, rather than on how things have been or are being done.

Third, developmental change is seen as a deliberate, intentional process directed toward specific goal(s) determined by the system itself. Survey guided development does not rely on 'outside experts' to define problems and solutions. Rather, it is a process whereby those who make up the church organization are empowered to be their own experts. That is, to generate their own visions of a desir-

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[3]Paul M. Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II, A Manual for Consultants: A Resource for Enhancing the Quality of Church Life and Work* (Chicago: The Center for Parish Development, 1987), 2.

able future and develop ways and means of moving toward that future.

Fourth, the areas of church life requiring change can be identified through a standardized survey and guided-development process which provides accurate and useful information about how each organizational team **actually** functions, how it might **ideally** function and what steps might be taken to make the actual functioning more like the ideal functioning.

Fifth, a consultant is utilized to help this creative process take place in a systematic way. It is difficult for the team leader and team members to remain objective in giving and receiving feedback. The consultant is present to prevent the process from being focused on personality issues or personal differences. In other words, to help maintain objectivity.

The CPD notes the objective of the survey guided team development process:

> [is] to help persons identify the present strengths of the church organization in order to build on these, and the present weaknesses or shortcomings so that remedial or corrective actions can be taken.[4]

Survey-Guided Team Development Process

The Survey-Guided Team Development Process must not be entered lightly. First, it is a powerful change force that can be either highly beneficial to the church organiza-

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[4]Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II*, 2.

tion, or catastrophic in its consequences if used improperly. If a congregation is not aware of this, the negative consequences will be compounded by the lack of warning.

Second, it is not a quick fix process. Those who enter a survey guided change process must be willing to make a minimum commit of two years for minimum effect and as many as three or more years for maximum effect. Some working teams have been involved in the survey guided development process for a decade or more.

Third, it is an expensive process. A larger church organization should budget between $6,000 and $10,000 a year for the greatest benefit to the church organization.

Fourth, it is time and energy consuming. Change never comes easily. An organization experiencing proactive change must be willing to expend the time and energy required to experience maximum results. The survey guided development process requires one-half hour of time per team to complete surveys, and a two to three day retreat for each leadership team working through the process. As a result, it is best that the church organization's core leadership determine which group or groups should be included in the process. At a minimum an average Sunday worshipping congregation, pastoral staff and Church Council should be included in the full process. Other working teams can be added as deemed necessary as the process is followed.

Fifth, the congregation must be willing to experience detailed analysis by an outside consultant. The individual the church organization invites to serve as a consultant must be trained and licensed by the CPD to use the process. The individual should also be impartial. For instance, the Senior Pastor or another team member can be trained to consult the congregation in every area except the area(s) where he or she is identified as the team leader. When the Senior Pastor or other congregational member trained to be a "Survey guided Development" consultant is caught in an emotional bind with the church organization, an outside consultant should be utilized.

Sixth, the survey-guided development process assumes organizational change is leader-centered. That is, the CPD recognizes change within the congregational system is either encouraged or discouraged by the team leader(s). Therefore, the team leader(s) must give full support to the process for greatest effectiveness.

A congregation desiring to participate in the survey guided development process should anticipate the following:

1. Be ready for a **complex procedure.**
2. Accept a clear **contract** (see Appendix C for a sample contract).
3. Each working team and team leader included in the development process must be willing to complete one or more **surveys.** In addition, the congregation

should have opportunity to complete a survey.[5] The working teams members complete Form C7-TM, the head of the team completes Form C7-TH and the congregation completes Form CC5--Revised. (See Appendix D, E and F for samples of the three *Profile of a Church* forms).

4. **Scoring** of the surveys will be done by the Center for Parish Development.
5. **Feedback sessions with the team leader** by the consultant.
6. The team leader, in consultation with the consultant, will **design a feedback and problem-solving meeting.**
7. The working team will gather for an extended (two and one half days are recommended) **problem-solving and planning retreat.**

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[5]The survey focuses on six behaviors: 1. The degree of supportive relationships in which persons affirm each others' sense of self-worth and importance; 2. The degree of receptivity team members show to each others' ideas and the ease of sharing ideas related to carrying out the church's work; 3. The level of performance expected to successfully do the work of the church; 4. The degree of deliberate attention given to building up the teams in the church organization into cohesive, high-trust working units; 5. The degree to which the leader and all team members share work-related information with each other to facilitate the work of the church organization at a high level; and 6. The degree of shared influence and acceptance of divergent points of view permitted to be considered within the group to come to a consensus.

8. During the retreat, **reflection and planning sessions** will be held between the team leader and consultant to work out bugs.
9. **Following the retreat,** the consultant and team leader may choose to meet together in the next two or three months to accelerate the development process.
10. The consultant should be prepared to offer the team leader **additional coaching** on a regular basis during the entire survey guided development process.
11. The consultant should be prepared to offer **individual members of the working team personal training** with regard to some aspect of their work as a team.[6]

Survey-Guided Team Development is a powerful organization development process that requires trained consultant with a special measure of sensitivity, objectivity and knowledge of systems management theory, and a church organization willing to grow and mature in their effectiveness in working as a team. With proper guidance and care, the process can increase the effectiveness and health of not only the working team, but the entire organization.

The CPD has developed a "road map" to guide a working team through the feedback and problem solving process.

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[6]The eleven points are adaptations of Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II,* 50-53.

This road map helps team members keep track of their development progress:

1. The process begins with an explanation of the objectives of survey-guided development and some guidelines for the process.
2. The working team's computerized profile data is examined.
3. The team will select and prioritize the indexes to be processed by the team.
4. The team will identify specific problems for the group to solve and share important information with each other about these problems, completing one or more "Problem Identification Worksheets" (see Appendix G).
5. The team will be guided through a process of analyzing one problem at a time, completing one or more "Problem Analysis Worksheets" (see Appendix H).
6. The team will learn to clarify "essential conditions" which must be meet if the team is to support the change, and will use some worksheets to help the team take this important step (see Appendix I).
7. The team will learn to set goals for the team by first clarifying "wishes," and then turning "wish-

es" into "how to" goals for the team to learn (see Appendix J).

8. The team will then generate several alternative solutions to the first problem they have chosen, repeating this process for successive problems (see Appendix K).
9. The team will gather facts, weigh alternative solutions to the first problem they have chosen, repeating this process for successive problems.
10. The team will plan specific action steps to be taken.
11. The team will assign responsibilities for implementing their planned action steps (see Appendix L).[7]

The over arching objectives of survey-guided development are "to improve the capability of the church and its constituent work groups or teams to accomplish their tasks of ministry and mission; and to improve the capability of the leader to provide help to the group."[8] These eleven steps facilitate that process. However, the process is neither fool-proof nor easy.

Proactive Change, not Reactive Change

One of the buzz-words used in church management literature is the importance of leadership being "proac-

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[7]Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II,* 69.

[8]Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II,* 70.

tive." As it is currently understood, an organization is healthy if it is proactive; an organization is unhealthy if it is reactive. The CPD agrees, offering their rationale through this definition of proactive behavior:

> Proactive behavior is that which *originates from within oneself*, which *is self-determining*, in which *each person takes responsibility* for his or her own behavior and in which persons' lives become more *intentional and focused* [emphasis mine].[9]

From this definition, Dietterich and his colleagues have identified four personality characteristics that contribute to proactive behavioral change:

1. a healthy understanding of self;
2. a clear understanding of what one wants;
3. a desire to act on one's wants;
4. a supportive organizational climate, particularly supportive leadership.[10]

It is important to note at this point that these personality characteristics are governed by an individual's emotional health. These factors will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 6.

One of the implications of the CPD's understanding of proactivity is that not every church organization or leadership team can be proactive, therefore not every church organization or leadership team will benefit from a survey guided development approach. Congregations must be willing

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[9]Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II*, 11.

[10]Dietterich, *Survey-Guided Development II*, 11-12.

to embark on a process of guided team development for change to occur. A congregation is like an individual in need of change: a therapeutic process will only be as successful as the patient cooperates with the therapist. In a similar way, a congregation will benefit from the development process only to the degree that the members of the system cooperate with each other and the survey-guided development consultant.

Survey-Guided Team Development: A Tool for Proactive Change

The survey process itself can be an indicator of the potential of organizational change. Figure 4, on page 126, is the Likert Church Profile Index of the congregation evaluated in this study. The survey was completed on a Sunday morning in late September of 1993. That morning, approximately 950 adults and children, members and visitors were in attendance. From those who attended, 671 surveys were completed.

This survey shows a congregation that is relatively healthy. It sees itself as a solid "System 3" (consultative) organization, that would like to move close to a "System 4" (collaborative) leadership pattern.

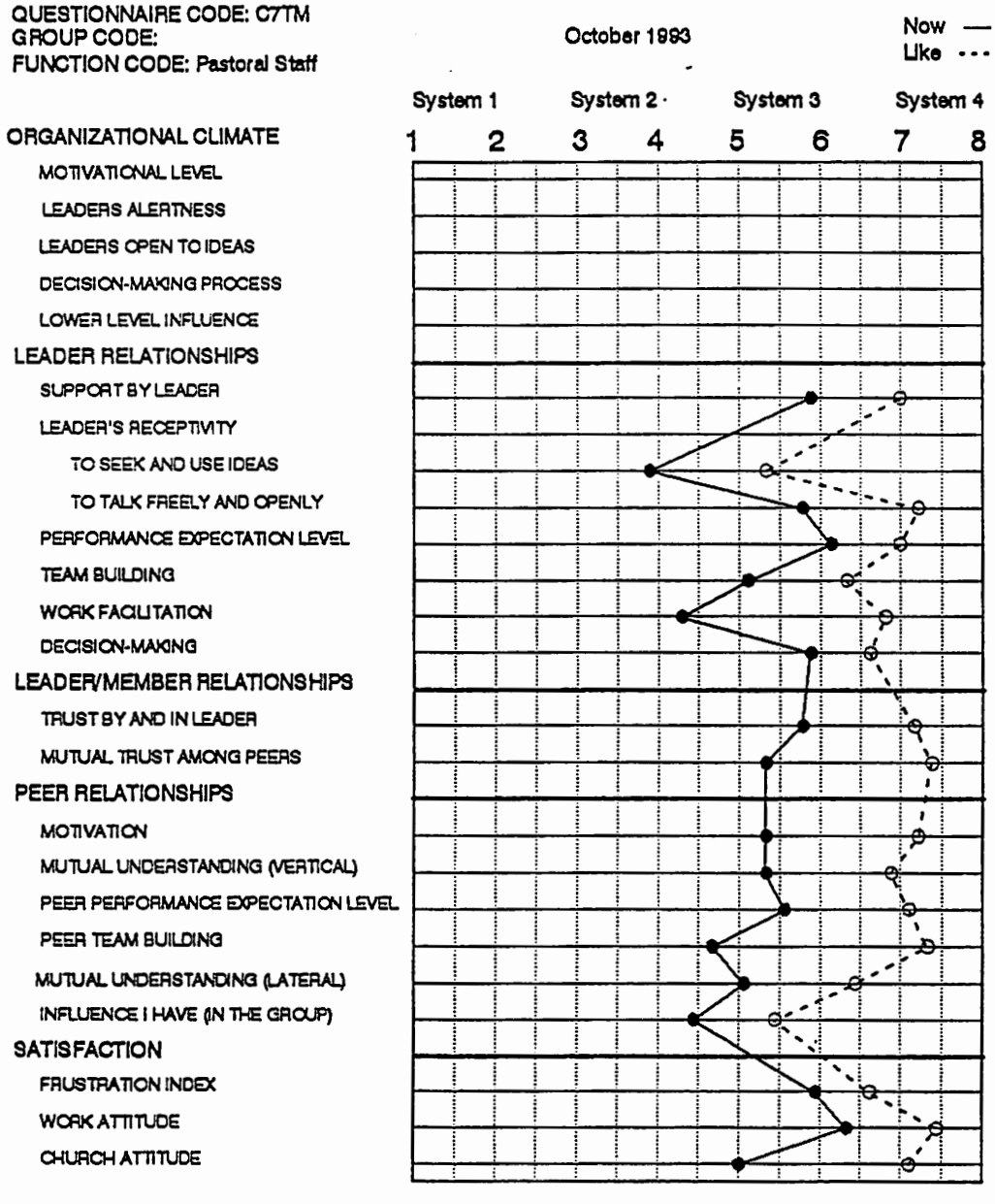
At the same time, the difference between how the congregation views itself "Now," (the solid line) as opposed to how it would "Like" to be (the broken line) is also healthy. Any difference between the "Now" and "Like" that

Figure 4

Likert Church Profile Index

LIKERT CHURCH PROFILE INDEXES

QUESTIONNAIRE CODE: C7TM
GROUP CODE:
FUNCTION CODE: Pastoral Staff



the Center for Parish Development

is less than one full point on the eight point scale, indicates the congregation is homeostatic, that is, comfortable enough where it is at to resist change. Paradoxically, if the difference between the "Now" and "Like" becomes too great, the tension in the congregation may be so great that the very change the congregation desires blocks congregational growth.

As Figure 4 indicates, the difference between the "Now" and "Like" scales in this congregation is between one and two full points. The most significant differences are found in "Leaders Open to Ideas" and "Decision Making Process". That means the congregation is most interested in seeing church leaders grow in their ability to "hear and respond appropriately to good ideas irrespective of the source,"[11] and wish to see the "authority to make decisions . . . delegated to the lowest level in the church organization where information relevant to each decision is available."[12] In other words, while wanting to have greater input in the decision making process, the congregation also wants less responsibility in making the actual decisions. The level of trust in the congregational leadership is sufficient that they will defer the decision-making responsibility to the lowest appropriate level of responsibility, as long as the congregation is kept informed.

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[11]Dietterich, 58.

[12]Dietterich, 58.

At the same time, the likelihood of organizational change is dependent upon the emotional health of the individuals making up the working team(s). Individuals with identifiable personality disorders, particularly team members who are conceited, egotistical, oppositional or significantly impaired by a personality disorder, will not be an asset in a survey guided process. Such individuals will fight any notion of corporate change. The rule of thumb in those instances is to recognize that an organization will not be able to grow very much beyond the limitations of its psychologically weakest member. When any one of the four characteristics of a proactive personality are absent in one or more of the significant team members, and when a significant member of the working team shows psychological dysfunction, the degree to which the church organization will move up on the systemic scale is reduced.

The Likert Church Profile Index of the pastoral staff of this congregation, Figure 5, page 129, is a case in point. The inconsistent difference between the "Now" and "Like" scales shows anxiety within the team within the area of peer relationships. The distance is indicative of emotional forces that are generating team conflict.

Figure 5

Clustered Index Table: C7-TM

GROUP CODE:
FUNCTION: Pastoral Staff

		DATE: October 1993 Mean	Stdv	N
LEADER RELATIONSHIPS				
Support by Leader (5,17,18,19)	N	5.88	1.93	8
	L	7.00	1.10	9
Leader's Receptivity				
To Seek and Use Ideas (20)	N	3.89	1.10	9
	L	5.33	1.63	9
To Talk Freely and Openly (12)	N	5.78	2.10	9
	L	7.22	1.03	9
Performance Expectation Level (27)	N	6.13	1.36	8
	L	7.00	0.94	9
Team Building (21)	N	5.11	1.45	9
	L	6.33	0.67	9
Work Facilitation (22,23)	N	4.29	1.49	9
	L	6.82	1.34	9
Decision-Making (25)	N	5.88	1.76	8
	L	6.63	1.80	8
LEADER/MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS				
Trust By and In Leader (7,9)	N	5.78	1.90	9
	L	7.17	1.07	9
Mutual Trust Among Peers (8,10)	N	5.33	1.15	9
	L	7.38	0.78	8
PEER RELATIONSHIPS				
Motivation (6)	N	5.33	2.16	9
	L	7.22	0.92	9
Mutual Vert Understanding (13,14,15)	N	5.33	1.61	9
	L	6.89	1.13	9
Peer Performance Expectation Level (28)	N	5.56	1.50	9
	L	7.11	0.74	9
Peer Team Building (24)	N	4.67	1.25	9
	L	7.33	0.82	9
Mutual Lateral Understanding (4,16)	N	5.06	1.61	9
	L	6.44	1.17	9
Influence I have (2)	N	4.44	1.50	9
	L	5.44	1.07	9
SATISFACTION				
Frustration Index (25,26)	N	5.94	1.75	8
	L	6.63	1.80	8
Work Attitude (11)	N	6.33	1.33	9
	L	7.44	0.83	9
Church Attitude (3)	N	5.00	0.94	9
	L	7.11	0.87	9

The source of the conflict may be identified by the Percentage Distribution Table found in Figure 6 on page 131. Looking at the "N" scale, with particular attention being given to the "1-2" column, there is evidence of dissatisfaction on the part of one member of the team. The likelihood of a number of individuals giving a random "1-2" response is minimal. This response distribution usually reflects the thinking of a single individual.

This scale is an indication of a power struggle within the pastoral staff between the Senior Pastor (the team leader on the Likert survey) and the Associate Pastor. That power struggle has been confirmed through the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and consultation with congregational, circuit and district officials. While obviously both individuals contribute to the power struggle, numerous community professionals have identified the Associate Pastor as the conflicted one, who is trying to undermine the integrity of the Senior Pastor so he might have that leadership position.

As a result of these dynamics, the ability of the congregation to change through the pastoral leadership is diminished. Trust, respect and professional boundaries must be established if the congregation is going to change in a healthy manner.

Figure 6

Percentage Distribution: C7-TM

GROUP:
FUNCTION: Pastoral Staff DATE: October 1993

NBR		1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	Min	Max	Mean	Stdv	Number
1 INFL HEAD ON TEAM	N	0.0	22.2	44.4	33.3	4	8	6.00	1.41	9
	L	0.0	11.1	33.3	55.6	4	8	6.44	1.26	9
2 INFL U HAVE ON TEA	N	11.1	55.6	22.2	11.1	2	7	4.44	1.50	9
	L	0.0	22.2	55.6	22.2	4	7	5.44	1.07	9
3 MBRS WORK ATTS	N	0.0	22.2	77.8	0.0	3	6	5.00	0.94	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	6	8	7.11	0.87	9
4 PEERS KNOW WRK PRG	N	0.0	44.4	33.3	22.2	3	7	4.78	1.55	9
	L	0.0	0.0	44.4	55.6	5	8	6.67	0.94	9
5 INTRACTN U + HEAD	N	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3	2	8	5.56	2.11	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	8	6.89	1.20	9
6 EXT UR EXCIT-WORK	N	22.2	11.1	33.3	33.3	2	8	5.33	2.16	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	6	8	7.22	0.92	9
7 UR CONF-TRUST HEAD	N	11.1	11.1	44.4	33.3	1	8	5.44	2.06	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	8	7.33	1.05	9
8 UR CONF-TRUST MBRS	N	0.0	22.2	77.8	0.0	3	6	5.11	0.99	9
	L	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5	6	8	7.50	0.71	8
9 HEAD CONF-TRUST U	N	11.1	0.0	33.3	55.6	2	8	6.11	1.66	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	8	7.00	1.05	9
10 MBRS CONF-TRUST U	N	0.0	22.2	55.6	22.2	3	7	5.56	1.26	9
	L	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	6	8	7.25	0.83	8
11 UR ATT-PRES WRK GR	N	0.0	11.1	55.6	33.3	4	8	6.33	1.33	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	6	8	7.44	0.83	9
12 U-HEAD TAKL FREE	N	11.1	11.1	33.3	44.4	2	8	5.78	2.10	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	8	7.22	1.03	9
13 DIR FLOW OF INFO	N	0.0	33.3	44.4	22.2	3	7	5.00	1.56	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	6	8	7.11	0.87	9
14 EXT HEAD KNO UR PR	N	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3	2	8	5.44	1.89	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	8	6.89	1.37	9
15 EXT U KNO HEAD PRO	N	0.0	22.2	55.6	22.2	3	7	5.56	1.26	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	8	6.67	1.05	9
16 U KNO OTH MBRS PRO	N	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3	2	7	5.33	1.63	9
	L	0.0	11.1	44.4	44.4	4	8	6.22	1.31	9
17 EXT HEAD FRND-SUPT	N	0.0	11.1	44.4	44.4	3	8	6.22	1.75	9
	L	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	5	8	7.22	1.13	9
18 EXT HEAD INT-UR SU	N	0.0	22.2	22.2	55.6	3	8	6.22	1.75	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	8	7.11	0.99	9
19 HEAD TRYS HELP TEA	N	0.0	37.5	37.5	25.0	3	8	5.38	1.73	8
	L	0.0	0.0	37.5	62.5	5	8	6.75	0.97	8
20 HEAD SEEKS UR IDEA	N	11.1	66.7	22.2	0.0	2	6	3.89	1.10	9
	L	11.1	22.2	33.3	33.3	2	7	5.33	1.63	9
21 HEAD USES GP MTGS	N	0.0	33.3	44.4	22.2	3	7	5.11	1.45	9
	L	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	5	7	6.33	0.67	9
22 HEAD PLANS-SETS PR	N	0.0	44.4	44.4	11.1	3	7	4.56	1.17	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	6	8	7.22	0.79	9
23 HEAD GIVES USE INF	N	37.5	25.0	37.5	0.0	2	6	4.00	1.73	8
	L	0.0	12.5	37.5	50.0	3	8	6.38	1.65	8
24 U & OTH ENCOURGING	N	11.1	33.3	55.6	0.0	2	6	4.67	1.25	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	6	8	7.33	0.82	9
25 HEAD INVOLS U IN D	N	12.5	0.0	37.5	50.0	2	8	5.88	1.76	8
	L	12.5	0.0	0.0	87.5	2	8	6.63	1.80	8
26 HEAD SHOULD INVO U	N	12.5	0.0	37.5	50.0	2	8	6.00	1.73	8
	L	12.5	0.0	0.0	87.5	2	8	6.63	1.80	8
27 HEAD EXPECTS EXCEL	N	0.0	12.5	50.0	37.5	4	8	6.13	1.36	8
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	5	8	7.00	0.94	9
28 MBRS EXPECT EXCELL	N	0.0	33.3	44.4	22.2	3	8	5.56	1.50	9
	L	0.0	0.0	22.2	77.8	6	8	7.11	0.74	9

CHAPTER SIX

THE CHURCH AS AN EMOTIONAL SYSTEM

One aspect of church management and leadership often overlooked is the consideration of the church as an emotional system. The concept is as significant as is its oversight. Being made up of people with their own unique personalities, needs and expectations, the church is a complex emotional system. The church is influenced by the relationships shared between the various members of the congregation, boards and staff. At the same time, the church is influenced by its own internal emotional history, which will impact how the congregation functions in times of stress. The willingness or reluctance of a congregation to pay attention to its emotional status can have a long-term impact on ministry. A congregation will not be able to develop, grow or change beyond the limits imposed on it through its systemic emotional health.

The Difficulty of Recognizing Congregational Anxiety

One of the reasons the church does not recognize the impact of the church as an emotional system is simply due to a lack of awareness. Congregations are not typically described organically, therefore we do not consider the emo-

tional characteristics of a congregation. Second, being "church" individuals have the assumption that the people of God will be different, and therefore not be forced to contend with the dark side of human relationships.

Steinke offers a helpful reminder, courtesy of Thomas Aquinas: "*Gratia non tollit naturam*" -- "grace does not abolish nature."[1] He also notes,

> As long as people gather and interact, emotional process occur. . . . Emotional systems are inherently anxious. The downside, therefore, is the intense anxiety distracts the congregation from its purpose, sets people at odds with each other, and builds walls against outsiders.[2]

He then voices the warning,

> The presence of anxiety in the church is a given. That's life. Ignoring its alarm or treating it lightly is not a sign of faith, much less wisdom. If anything, it is foolishness, perhaps even a signal of 'little faith'. . . . It is the premise of this book that we need to pay attention to and work through the presence of anxious forces in the church rather than to be surprised and rendered helpless by them, or retreat from their distressing influence, or, worse yet, protect those who spread their disease among others.[3]

A truism is often voiced, "Where two or more Lutherans gather together, there an offering shall be taken." To that statement, another might well be added: "And then they shall fight about how it will be used." The reason for the addition is clear to anyone who has served in the church

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[1]Steinke, x.

[2]Steinke, ix.

[3]Steinke, x-xi.

for any length of time, in any capacity: conflict is inevitable in parish ministry.

There are reasons for the reality of conflict in the church. First, the members of a congregation have an enormous emotional, financial and relational interest in the well being of "their" church. Furthermore, the longer they have belonged, and the more involved they have been, the greater sense of loyalty they have toward it, and the greater emotional investment they have made in the interest of "their" church.

Third, the loyalty of members is not limited only to the congregation, but frequently extends to the national church body and it's auxiliary organizations. The greater the member's emotional investment in these organizations, the greater the emotional stress placed on the local congregation, particularly if the impression is given that this favored organization is being overlooked.

Fourth, congregations are made up of people who have their own opinions about what should and should not be done; what is and what is not proper. Given the large number of opinions, a high expenditure of emotional energy is inevitable.

Fifth, some members of the congregation live with the conviction that God has called them to be conflictual, and they try their level best to be faithful to their calling as self-apointed guardians of the congregation. This is

done most frequently at the expense of the pastor(s), significant lay leaders or others in positions of responsibility.

It is important and healthy for congregational life to recognize the church as an emotional system. The acknowledgment of the congregation's emotional processes will ultimately serve, rather than corrupt,[4] the goals and objectives of the church: sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is a further difficulty one can expect to find while trying to understand the church as an emotional system. Emotions, unlike organizations, are largely invisible, often beyond our awareness. Steinke comments that "their invisibility [of emotional forces] increases when we ourselves are involved in them."[5] In other words, individuals generally have difficulty recognizing their own emotional processes. When actively involved in a congregation, individuals will also have difficulty recognizing how their own emotional processes are affected by the emotional processes at work within the congregational system.

When a congregation is understood as an emotional system, careful attention must be given to the emotional interaction of one part of the system with other parts. Steinke notes the need to recognize the "circles of influence" found within a system. Dietterich notes the effect

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[4]Steinke, xi.

[5]Steinke, xi.

"linking persons" have on a congregational system. Both expressions refer to the same thing. When part of an emotional system, each individual member influences the other members in either a positive or negative way. That mutual influence, in turn, affects the whole relational system of the congregation.

The key to understanding the church as an emotional system, is recognizing the anxious forces found within a church family. Noting the reality of anxious forces, Steinke offers a word of sympathy and a word of warning. First, he notes that all relationships are anxious. Wherever two or more people are gathered together, there anxiety will be experienced. Therefore, no one should be surprised by the anxious forces found within a congregation. But he then notes,

> Anxiety can be infectious. We can give it to others or catch it from them. . . . What precisely triggers anxiety is unique to each system. Common activators are significant changes and losses. They upset the stable patterns and balance of the system."[6]

Steinke describes anxiety as the primary emotional dynamic at work within any relationship system. Because of the heavy emphasis he places on the physiological origins of anxiety, it is necessary to describe Steinke's views on what anxiety is, what causes anxiety, and how anxiety is simultaneously a blessing and a curse.

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[6]Steinke, 13.

Physiological Roots of Anxiety

Steinke defines anxiety by pointing to its linguistic roots: *angere*, a Latin root that is shared by the English words anxiety, anger and anguish.

> [*Angere*] is translated "to choke" or "to give pain by pushing together." The noun form of the verb is *angustus*, meaning "narrow". Anxiety is emotional pain. It constricts and limits life. At the center of its painfulness is uncertainty. . . . It has no definite focus.[7]

The physiological roots of anxiety are explained by neurologist Paul MacLean as the "triune-brain theory" (see Figure 7, page 139).

> At the base of the brain, where the central nervous system connects with the brain stem, is the reptilian brain. Above it lies the mammalian brain, sometimes called the limbic system. The largest brain area, the third layer, is the neocortex or cerebral hemispheres. Each brain has its own function, though the three function as one.[8]

MacLean identifies the reptilian brain, where survival processes originate, as the point where anxious responses are formed. The reptilian brain is regulated by autonomic processes, the same processes that cause the heart to beat, the digestive system to work and the lungs to inhale and exhale without conscious effort.

The middle level of the brain, the mammalian brain, governs emotional responses such as shock, repugnance,

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[7]Steinke, 14.

[8]Steinke, 15.

sorrow and rejoicing. It regulates playing, nurturing, bonding and flocking.

Creativity is governed by the third tier of the brain, the neocortex or cerebral hemispheres. Here concepts, symbols and insights are processed. This is the part of the brain associated with voluntary movements. It is the part of the brain that is able to learn new ways to grow in knowledge and develop coping skills.

Figure 7

The Triune Brain

thinking cap (neo-cortex)	Analyze, reflect, symbolize, observe, create
house of emotion (mammalian)	Love, hate, bond, play
automatic pilot (reptilian)	Survive, act without thinking

Anxiety is an automatic, reptilian, response of an individual to external stimuli. Anxiety causes people to experience what Friedman calls "reptilian regression."[9] Anxious people become reactive. Automatic processes take charge: impulse overwhelms intention instinct sweeps aside imagination, reflexive behavior closes off reflective thought, defensive postures block out defined positions, and emotional reactivity limits clearly determined direction. When experiencing intense anxiety, the anxious person becomes impulsive (mammalian). Therefore he or she lacks what

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[9]Steinke, 17-18.

is most needed: the ability to be creative, which is governed by the neo-cortex.

Systemic Effects of Acute and Chronic Anxiety

A paradox of anxiety is that it can be either positive and beneficial to an individual or system, or negative and detrimental to an individual or system. On the one hand anxiety can be healthy, allowing an individual or system to change. At the same time, anxiety can be unhealthy, creating excessive anxiety that causes an individual or system to "dig in" and resist changes needed for systemic health. The difference in the response is found in the type of anxiety being experienced, and how the anxiety is processed by the system.

Systems theory suggests lasting change cannot be successfully completed until two things occur within the system. First, the system must recognize the need to change. This is identified by Gary Yeast as "the battle for the agenda." The second is for the system to act on the needed change, what Yeast calls "the battle for initiative."

The system determines the need to change, the system determines whether or not it will change and the system determines whether or not the change will be permanent. Whether or not that will happen depends in large measure to the motivating forces at work with in the system, also known as anxiety to change.

Acute Anxiety

Anxiety comes in two forms: acute and chronic. Acute anxiety is generated by a specific incident. In the church family, acute anxiety comes from any number of sources: budget problems, overcrowding, an increase or decrease of membership, the loss of a much loved (or even greatly disliked) pastor, and so forth. In other words, acute anxiety is situational, and therefore transitory.

When the event has been processed, the congregation will return to their "new normal" condition, however their "new normal" might be understood. After the crisis passes, the congregation cannot go back to the way it was before. They may try; but it is impossible to do so. In that respect, anxiety is often what a congregation needs to move past status quo (homeostasis) to the quest of new beginnings, which is why the changed system lives with their "new normal". Acute anxiety is a force that prompts and motivates such change.

Chronic Anxiety

Chronic anxiety, on the other hand, is habitual. A chronically anxious individual or system has a difficult time accepting and returning to their "new normal," if, indeed, normal can even be defined for a chronically anxious system.

Chronic anxiety is different from acute anxiety in a number of ways. Acute anxiety has a specific beginning and

ending point. Being habitual, chronic anxiety does not have an identifiable root cause. Anxiety is simply the congregation's way of life. While there is a particular beginning point for the chronic anxiety, that beginning point cannot be identified without a careful scrutiny of the congregation's history. At some point in time, the system got stuck in its anxious state. Not remembering how it became anxious, it is unable to extricate itself from the anxiety.

Acute anxiety is often healthy, in that it encourages a congregation to strive for a higher, more mature level of functioning. Chronic anxiety, on the other hand, is painful. It can lead to power struggles that may result in groups splintering off periodically, or the family remaining intact but submissive to a small but manipulative, authoritarian power group. In other chronically anxious church families, leadership changes rapidly; change is always resisted; change agents, particularly those who are identified as the most vulnerable and responsible, are punished. Chronic anxiety may also show up in thoughtless obedience as well as mindless outbursts.[10]

Chronically anxious people are identifiable through a number of personal characteristics. Steinke offers the following characteristics of chronically anxious people: The chronically anxious individual keeps his or her focus on others; are easily hurt and see themselves as victims. They

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[10]Steinke, 20.

frequently resort to either/or, yes/no, black/white thinking. Having little capacity for discernment, the chronically anxious reduce everything to all or nothing. They over focus on others and their weaknesses. They blame and criticize. They are willful, insisting on having their own way in every matter. Chronically anxious individuals are the members apt to conduct 'search and destroy missions', imposing their will on others by force, if necessary. Chronically anxious people have a low threshold for pain.[11] That is why they are anxious in the first place. The chronically anxious want to have their pain relieved, and their burdens lifted. However, the root cause of their discomfort cannot be determined without scrutiny. Having a low pain threshold, they cannot bear the scrutiny required to be relieved of their symptoms. In the words of Linda Ellerby, "And so it goes." Chronic anxiety creates what is described in computer jargon as an infinite loop.

A computer software program is in an infinite loop when the program operates properly until it reaches a certain point. At that point, the program goes back to the beginning of the task. If left on its own, the software would never get past the point of dysfunction, therefore the term, an infinite loop. In that respect, chronic anxiety is an internal, systemic problem that cannot be fixed without fixing the whole "program" that is working improperly.

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[11]Steinke, 21-22.

A chronically anxious person lives life in an infinite loop of anxiety, which he or she projects onto others. Chronic anxiety does not affect the chronically anxious alone, but all with whom he or she is significantly involved. As a result, a large part of his or her life is rendered "out of order." Life is miserable not only for the anxious person, but everyone associated with him or her.

Steinke describes the effect of this unhealthy anxiety on the entire emotional system in this way:

> When intense anxiety explodes into reactive behaviors and is mutually reinforced, a vicious circle forms. A person becomes anxious. Feeling insecure, the person reacts. In the face of the initial person's anxious reactivity, a second person becomes anxious and reactive. If anxious reactivity continues to be fed in both directions, it is reinforced and maintained. The individuals become unbending (Rigidity) . . . Once inflexible, people polarize. But polarity itself is anxiety-producing. The vicious circle is in place: anxiety >>>> reactivity >>>> rigidity >>>> polarity >>>> more anxiety. As long as there is a mutual "charge," the circuitry operates.[12]

The loop becomes infinite.

In that respect, anxiety is detrimental to parish life. Chronic anxiety leaves the congregational system "stuck" in place.

> Anxiety makes transparent what is not alike. . . It magnifies differences. . . . *If [anxiety] reaches a certain intensity, it prevents the very change it provokes. What is stimulus becomes restraint. We "lose our head" or "cool," as we say, essentially our awareness and composure; we are too reactive to be responsive.* [13]

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[12]Steinke, 22-23.

[13]Steinke, 13-14.

When chronic anxiety is present, and ignored, the system cannot change because the blocking forces are too powerful to overcome. Generally, a congregation cannot become any healthier than its least healthy significant member, whether that be a pastor, lay leader, or a powerful person outside the congregation's life and ministry.

However, awareness of chronic anxiety is not enough to "fix" the problem. When those who are part of a relationship system become aware of the anxiety-generating forces it faces, the problem will remain unfixed until "someone frees [the system] from the loop or *someone else from outside the emotional circle intervenes* into the feedback pattern (emphasis mine)."[14] Refusal to deal with the anxiety by pretending the problem does not exist only reinforces what Steinke calls "the malignant process." He goes on to note, "VICIOUS CIRCLES CAN ONLY BE DISABLED THROUGH EXPOSURE. They are enabled by secrecy and avoidance."[15]

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[14]Steinke, 24.

[15]Steinke, 24.

Self-Differentiation and Anxiety

The goal in working within an emotional system is to remain in control of one's emotions and ability to respond appropriately, while trying to promote healthy systemic change. To avoid becoming overly involved in the emotional dynamics at work within a congregation, Steinke recommends that those who are part of a congregational structure "differentiate"[16] themselves from the anxious forces at work. Steinke notes, "The ideal of self-differentiation is to define self to others, stay in touch with them and, even though there is tension between the two positions, manage whatever anxiety arises."[17] The goal is to walk the emotional tightrope of one's own emotional experience, while recognizing the emotional reactivity of the chronically anxious other.

As noted previously, neurologist Paul MacLean links one's anxious response with the "reptilian brain," where reactive forces are at work. Feeling threatened by the anxiety forces at work, an individual or system becomes defensive. Being defensive, the individual or system has difficulty finding and using either the emotional resources

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[16]The *Family Therapy Glossary* defines differentiation of self as "that part of the self that is non-negotiable under pressure from the relationship system to which one belongs. It characterizes each member's relative degree of autonomy and independence from others in the system (Bowen, 1978)", 7.

[17]Steinke, 29.

of the limbic system, or the creative powers of the neocortex. If one is able to use his emotional forces, he can show sympathy and concern for the chronically anxious person or system. If the individual or system gains control of of their creative powers, a variety of alternative actions can be discovered and utilized, besides reactivity. Steinke notes,

> When we as individuals are anxious, we cannot distance ourselves enough from the threat to be objective and even-minded. For instance, if we are 'at odds' with someone, chances are we will not 'play even.'
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> Stories are shaded; information is withheld. Complaints are vague. The faults of others are exaggerated. When emotionality sweeps over the Thinking Cap, our view is blunted.
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> Anxious systems also fail to get a clear view of things. Embedded in their dread, they lose a sense of proportion. They have little awareness of what is happening and how it is being mutually maintained. Emotionality cramps the broader view.[18]

When developing a collaborative community, it is imperative that the anxious forces at work within the system be identified. The identification of anxious forces allows the community become more healthy, faithful, and effective. That can happen, and does happen, in a healthy, purposeful community. However, Steinke notes, "Under the spell of automatic processes, the same individuals behave as if they possess neither good sense nor judgment".[19]

Steinke calls attention to Aldous Huxley's novel, *The Devils of Loudon,* to describe the "herd-poison" often

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[18]Steinke, 43-44.

[19]Steinke, 45.

found in anxious systems. The novel recounts the mass hysteria in the Ursuline convent in the town of Loudon. The members of the convent believe they are possessed, and accuse a village priest of cursing them. The priest is eventually executed. Steinke notes,

> Huxley sees the story as more than a piece of history in the village of Loudon. It is a parable of an anxious system: people escaping consciousness and searching for bogus stability. In a healthy, purposeful community, men and women have a certain capacity for thought and discrimination. Under the spell of automatic processes, the same individuals behave as if they possess neither good sense nor judgment.[20]

Steinke quotes Huxley to demonstrate the effect of anxiety on the thinking of a congregational system:

> "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." In the midst of two or three hundred, the divine presence becomes more problematical. When the numbers run into the thousands, the likelihood of God being there, in the consciousness of each individual, declines almost to the vanishing point. For such is the nature of an excited crowd (and every crowd is automatically self-excited) that, where two or three thousand are gathered together, there is an absence not merely of deity, but even of common humanity (*The Devils of Loudon*, 317).[21]

Steinke then adds the sobering note, "Intoxicated by its own excited togetherness, the crowd cannot focus outside itself. In a stupor, God is hardly the focal point."[22]

Family systems pioneer, Murray Bowen, makes much the same point, noting how the size of a system impacts the

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[20]Steinke, 45.

[21]Steinke, 45.

[22]Steinke, 45.

functioning of that system. The basic relational system is a dyad, that is, two people involved in relationship with each other. If the world were made up exclusively of dyads, we would function much more effectively, for each person would be responsible only for himself or herself and the other.

Of course the world is not made up of dyads, but rather of triads (groups of three), of quads (groups of four), and so on. Complicating matters further, the triads are not only other people, but organizations, causes or convictions. Bowen points out that "human behavior is always a function of triadic relationships."[23] These triads may result in emotional triangles, "the process which occurs when a third person is introduced into a dyadic relationship to balance either excessive intimacy or distance and provide stability in the system."[24] Awareness of emotional triangles are critical for understanding how an anxious system functions. The triangles create the emotional coalitions through which church fights are won and lost.

Therefore, the emotional dynamics we experience in the shared life of the church are incredibly complex. Bowen makes the point that "in a nuclear family of two parents and two children there are four triangles. With the addition of

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[23]Nichols and Schwartz, 523.

[24]Foley and Everett, eds, 25.

just one more child, the number of triangles jumps to ten!"[25] Imagine, then, the complex emotional reactivity found in a congregation of 30, 300 or 3,000!

If Bowen's comments regarding the nuclear family is juxtaposed on the church, the concern Huxley voices becomes very real. The tens, hundred and thousands that compose the congregational emotional system creates relational dynamics that are quite challenging, particularly when chronic anxiety is present, that is, when the congregational system is in distress. For each of those tens, hundreds or thousands of people represent a potential triangle. Steinke notes,

> Triangles always develop to bind anxiety. The less flexible the system the more the burden is shifted to the same person, same functioning position, or the same location. Moreover, triangles oppose change. They maintain reactivity. Without resilience, therefore, the system stays tied up in its own emotional knots. The triangles interlock. Like "the buck," anxiety is passed around. Instead of recognizing how anxiety is being mutually reinforced, the system searches for a cause or a culprit. Individuals shift the burden from here to there and back to here. They become focused on weaknesses, diagnosis, and troublemakers. The overall relationship patterns are lost to awareness. Chronically anxious people will always find a problem to which they will react. Therefore, conflict with chronically anxious individuals is inevitable.[26]

Identifying and Responding to Emotional Reactivity

As already noted in Chapter 5, the Survey-Guided Team Development process can help identify the anxious

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[25]Michael E. Kerr, "Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self," *The Atlantic Monthly,* 262 (September 1988): 57.

[26]Steinke, 51.

forces at work within a congregation and the organizational forces that generate emotional triangles. Note the comments on the Likert Church Profile Indices found on pages 126-131.

Defining Self In Relation
Emotional Reactivity

The goal in working with an emotionally blocked congregation is to get "unstuck". Steinke suggests an additional process that will help a motivated congregation change from emotional reactivity to creative flexibility. The key to the process is for the principal leaders of the congregation to learn how to differentiate one's self from others and the emotional dynamics at work within the system. Self-differentiation is achieved by

- -- defining yourself and staying in touch with others
- -- being responsible for yourself and responsive to others
- -- maintaining your integrity and well-being without intruding on that of others
- -- allowing the enhancement of the other's integrity and well-being without feeling abandoned, inferior, or less of a self
- -- having an "I" and entering a relationship with another "I" without losing yourself or diminishing the self of the other.[27]

When an individual is well defined, that is self-defined in relationship to others, rather than against each others, the next step in becoming emotionally healthy can then be taken: developing the ability to express one's own wants and desires, rather than the needs and desires of others.

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[27]Steinke, 11.

In a personal interview, Steinke noted an individual who is well differentiated will say "'hell with my church, hell with my job, hell with my wife and hell with my family. I do not need any of these to be me'. But, at the same time, the well differentiated person will say, 'I want my church, my job, my wife and my family.'"[28] Needs are imposed from the outside; they are reactive forces. Wants are from the inside. Wants are self-determined.

Steinke has developed ten questions designed to help individuals define themselves in relationship to others within a congregation:

1. What would it look like if you were happy, satisfied?
2. What is weakening your resources and strength?
3. Write a sentence to describe your problem. Then redefine your problem in another sentence without reference to a *single* issue or person.
4. Who are the most motivated people in the congregation
5. Where's your plan? What's your vision?
6. What would it take to have a pastor stay here ten years, twenty years? [If these questions are asked of a pastor, perhaps this question could be phrased, "What would it take to have you stay here ten years, twenty years?"]
7. What would be your own signs of a healthy congregation?
8. Can you imagine this congregation in five years being alive, thriving, etc.? How would you know it happened?
9. How would you be willing to invest yourself in the process of creating the image you defined above?
10. How do you understand what is happening here theologically or biblically?[29]

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[28]Peter Steinke, personal interview by author, Waukeshau, Wisconsin, 1 February 1994.

[29]Steinke, 54.

Using the feedback provided with the ten questions, the leader(s) are encouraged to make specific changes, as opposed to vague or general changes. Generalities keep the congregation stuck in its emotional reactivity. Specifics shift thinking from the emotional reactivity of the "reptilian brain" to the analytical, creative powers of the neocortex.

Confronting the Emotionally Reactive Person

Unfortunately, nobody can offer any guarantees that the process of emotional self-differentiation will work easily, quickly or one hundred percent of the time. Emotional forces can be very rigid. Individuals may not have the personal maturity to accept the challenge to change. Individual personality issues may keep a person stuck in a life-long infinite loop that blocks any change or flexibility. Friedman, quoted by Steinke, identifies these individuals as reactors. They are "the least mature, least motivated, least self-regulating, but most recalcitrant people."[30]

Furthermore, Steinke notes, "reactors have the greatest difficulty in controlling their anxiety. They let it 'fly.' Moveover, reactors thrive when others are passive or permissive toward their reactivity."[31] Sometimes people in church leadership positions are "too nice" for the health

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[30]Steinke, 59.

[31]Steinke, 59.

of the congregational system. Steinke notes a frequent comment of Friedman in his lectures on the family processes of the church:

> Actually religious institutions are the worst offenders at encouraging immaturity and irresponsibility. In church after church, some member is passively-aggressively holding the whole system hostage, and no one wants to fire him or force her to leave because it wouldn't be "the Christian thing to do." It has nothing to do with Christianity. Synagogues also tolerate abusers because it wouldn't be the Christian thing to do.[32]

Friedman's point might be summarized as, "It's not always 'nice' to be 'nice'." Jesus directed his disciples "to be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves" (Mat 10:16).

There are times when it is necessary for the church and congregational leaders to practice "tough love" with difficult leaders, whether they be part of the professional staff, or the elected leadership. The biblical evidence for such action is manifold: Nathan's encounter with David (2Sa 12:1-7), the prophets' denunciations of the corrupt religious authorities and civic leaders in ancient Israel (i.e., Isa 1), Jesus' strong words of judgment spoken against the pharisees (Mat 23), Paul's public and direct confrontation of Peter for his duplicity in his dealing with Gentile Christians (Gal 2:11-14), just to name a few.

Sometimes it is necessary to deal firmly, but lovingly, with congregational leaders who are taking the congregational system hostage. In fact, failure to confront

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[32]Steinke, 59.

the individual who is enabling congregational conflict can quickly become a breach of one's call or responsibility. When an individual is part of a collaborative team he or she accepts responsibility for other team members, and is at the same time accountable to the other team members and the congregation for the stewardship of the office entrusted to him or her. The stewardship of one's official responsibilities includes Galatians 6:1a -- "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently."

Being firm does not give permission to be brutal. It is tempting to play hard ball with hostage takers, to counterattack. Hard ball and brutality, unfortunately, do not change the reactive individual. In fact, the hostage taker becomes more entrenched in his or her position, and reacts with increased venom. Someone once said, "Remember, if you get into a pissing contest with a skunk, everyone will come out smelling badly." Paul ends his encouragement to restore the offender with the word, "gently."

The dilemma of working with the hostage taker is accentuated by the reactor's low threshold for pain. Steinke notes,

> They are automatically geared and careless about boundaries. They cannot maintain their own boundaries through self-definition; they are unable to respect the boundaries of others. Anxious, they are preoccupied with self-preservation. When others make adjustments in

> their functioning to relieve the reactors' distress, they reinforce the reactors' low toleration of pain.[33]

Rather than being overly responsible or reactive to the hostage taker, the best response is to focus on one's own emotional needs and respond accordingly. The response is two fold: first, to one's own need; and only then the need of the brother or sister in Christ.

The initial response is to approach questions of boundaries, boundary violations and emotional reactivity with Christ-like humility. Self-examination allows an individual to discern if he or she is the overly reactive one--if he or she is the one who has violated the relational boundary. Jesus said it well:

> "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Luke 6:41-42).

Paul concludes his encouragement to confront one found to be in sin with the words, "But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal 6:1).

Steinke reflects the thinking of Jesus and Paul in a practical manner when he notes,

> Relationship systems can be renewed and made whole. But the wholeness emerges only when we go beyond our initial hypersensitivity and make use of our second level of response responding discriminately, consciously, and objectively. Without such clarity we have lit-

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[33]Steinke, 60.

> tle sense of direction. We neither manage our own response nor stimulate the response of others.[34]

When one is confident that he or she is not being emotionally reactive, then the needs of the other may be addressed. But the response must keep three personal issues in focus: first, *Why do I want to challenge this individual?* second, *How do I challenge this person?* and third, *What is my goal, or intended outcome, in this confrontation?*

Jesus' ministry was largely one of confrontation and assisting others to experience spiritual and emotional wholeness. St. Matthew reports, "When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mat 9:36).

Jesus challenged others out of a sense of deep compassion. His goal was not to strengthen himself, to build a "power base" or prove himself superior to the "weaklings" of Judean society. The Greek word for compassion is *splagxnon*, literally, a "gut reaction." He felt for these people in need, and responded with empathy.

The answer to the question "Why?" is a desire to show Christ-like compassion. Chronically anxious and reactive people are no healthier than "harassed and helpless" people. A mentor in ministry, Pastor Henry Simon, once advised, "Doing nothing while dealing with difficult people

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[34]Steinke, 63.

would be a violation of the pastoral ethic. One has no choice. One must confront, if he is going to be faithful to his call."[35]

The second question, "How do I confront this individual?" can also be answered with the wisdom of the Word of God: "speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Eph 4:15). The key are the expressions are, "speaking the truth," "in love," "we will . . . grow up into . . . Christ."

When confronting a chronically anxious individual, it is extremely important that one has his/her facts straight. Approaching anxious people will have an effect on one's own anxiety. As noted earlier,

> When we as individuals are anxious, we cannot distance ourselves enough from the threat to be objective and even-minded. For instance, if we are 'at odds' with someone, chances are we will not 'play even.'
>
> Stories are shaded; information is withheld. Complaints are vague. The faults of others are exaggerated. When emotionality sweeps over the Thinking Cap, our view is blunted.[36]

Therefore it is important to make sure one is speaking with truth and integrity when confronting another.

There is a second reason for "speaking the truth." That is, the emotionally reactive person does not wish to have his or her weakness exposed. An emotionally reactive, person will respond with viper-speed to anything perceived

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[35]Henry Simon, personal conversation with author, Wausau, Wisconsin, 7 January 1994.

[36]Steinke, 43-44.

as untruthful or inaccurate. Making sure one is speaking truthfully avoids the unfavorable task of splitting hairs and explaining inconsistencies.

The second phrase is to speak the truth "in love." When facing an emotionally reactive situation, the natural response is to become emotionally reactive. "Feelings become overpowering. Thinking is narrowly focused. The whole brain concentrates on self-defense alone."[37] An individual is hard pressed to be defensive and loving at the same time. One cancels out the other. Defensiveness has to do with self-justification and ego strength. Love (*agape*) has to do with self-denial and weakness.

In confronting the emotionally reactive person, it is good to keep the paradox of Christian power in perspective: We are strongest when we are weakest. The Apostle Paul learned that lesson in his ministry. When confronted with the tormenting thorn in the flesh (might it not have been a reactive Corinthian?) he finally heard Jesus say, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." To which Paul responded, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2Co 12:9).

One of the reasons Paul wrote Second Corinthians was to address an ongoing power struggle he experienced with a segment of that congregation. This antagonistic group of

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[37]Steinke, 39.

reactionaries questioned his apostolic authority, the legitimacy of his preaching of the Gospel, and his credibility as a missionary. The letter clearly shows the anxiety the dispute generated in his personal life and public ministry. Eventually God helped him learn a valuable lesson any Christian leader can benefit from. It is, the same lesson he learned from "the thorn in his flesh": "If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness" (2 C 11:30). Later in the same letter, Paul applied the human weakness to divine strength for all of God's people: "For to be sure, [Jesus] was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you" (2Co 13:4).

The children's song, "Jesus Loves Me" has the same message of strength found in weakness: "We are weak, but He is strong." Strength is found in Jesus, particularly in the cross which he bore for the sins of the whole world.

Another reason for responding in love is rooted in the emotionally reactive person's attitude toward the sting of criticism. Strong-willed, chronically anxious people cannot be confronted in human strength without having their emotional reactivity reinforced.[38] However, by approaching

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[38]A helpful book on a related topic is M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil,* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983). Peck offers the thesis that human evil can be "cured" only though divine love (note particularly pages 263-269). Attention is drawn to this work because Steinke's description of chronically anxious individuals closely resembles Peck's description of people of the lie,

the chronically anxious individual in the weakness of the Gospel, the Spirit of God may be able to do what we, in the weakness of the flesh, cannot accomplish.

The third phrase "[that] we will . . . grow up into . . . Christ" (Gal 4:15) answers, in part, the third question: "What is the goal or intended outcome?" The intended outcome is spiritual growth.

Jesus had the same goal in mind when he encouraged disciple to confront disciple in any wrong. "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over" (Mt 18:15). Emotional reactivity and chronic anxiety may not, in themselves, be sins. However, they do lead to sin. They disrupt group life. They stifle the *esprit de corps* necessary for effective team functioning. Having a "lone ranger" mentality, an emotionally reactive and chronically anxious person will work toward personal agendas, rather than the desires of the whole group.

The goal of confrontation is to bring the brother or sister back into the fold, to help him or her function as an effective part of the team, so that all will benefit by the mutual sharing of gifts for ministry. With out the conflict, there can be no group healing, or group strength. Emotional reactivity leads to conflict and pain for all who touch the reactive person's life. Unless the emotional

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that is, evil people.

reactivity of the system is brought under the control of law and Gospel, all will suffer, and ultimately the ministry itself will suffer the consequences of an unhealthy congregational system.

In other words, when a chronically anxious individual is found within a ministerial team, that team cannot become collaborative. When chronic anxiety drives a congregational system, the system will be reactive and will be unable to process healthy change. This reactivity will rule the roost, and the partnership of the gospel is blocked by the emotional reactivity of the "weak link" on the team.

Collaborative leadership is not a destination, it is a journey to a destination to which one never truly arrives. Further, collaborative leadership is developed simultaneously through a group team-building process, and one-on-one ministry. If a congregation is to expect progress in moving toward a collaborative ministry, both thoughts must be kept in mind.

Like anything spiritually related, true collaboration will not be found on this side of heaven. There will be the occasional euphoric experience of successfully working collaboratively, but there will also be the discouraging reality that it is very hard work to build a collaborative team. For collaborative leadership is built on ministry to on person at a time, with each individual on the team, including the head of staff, being the starting point.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reflections

As noted in the introduction, the goal of this Major Applied Project was to define the organizational and emotional dynamics found in a congregation that promote and inhibit the development of collaborative leadership. The following reflections will describe what enhances collaborative leadership and what restrains the development of this style of ministry.

I. Collaborative ministry does not occur by accident.

Pastors who have experience with premarital counseling are aware of the "rose colored glasses" phenomena. When a couple decides to marry, they often fantasize that they are in love, and nothing in all of creation can possibly separate them from each other. An astute pastor will recognize this unrealistic expectation, and gently try to bring it to the couple's attention. For the day will come when reality meets illusion. The word of warning can help to diminish the shock of reality.

When a pastor and congregation embark on the process of building a collaborative ministry, the same "rose

colored glasses" phenomena must be kept in mind. Any or all in the congregational system can easily be misled into a number of unrealistic expectations.

The first unrealistic expectation has to do with the presupposition that the common faith experience of pastor and people will keep them from experiencing conflict. The presupposition can be set in a logical sequence: since a congregation is made up of Christians who love the Lord, and; since these Christians are committed to working together in Christian love, and; since the congregation has called one or more pastors to guide the people of God in their shared ministry, who also love the Lord and are committed to working in Christian love and; since the pastor(s) and people have a common goal of proclaiming Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; therefore, it should be easy to create a collaborative pastoral staff, and a collaborative congregational management style, to share the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately that is not at all true. We must always keep in mind that pastor, like the people they serve, are *simil justus et peccatur,* that is, Christians are at the same time saint and sinner. Personal agendas, personal weaknesses, personality issues, power struggles, and severe personality disorders[1] can all interfere with the goal of

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[1]A comment Bowen has often made is good to keep in mind when working toward collaborative ministry: "There is a little schizophrenia in all of us" (Kerr, 40). The emotional-

working collaboratively. For collaboration to be encouraged, each of these issues, and any other forces which block growth in partnership, must be resolved. Unfinished business will always impede organizational and emotional growth.

A second unrealistic expectation is that at some point in the future, the congregation can boldly announce, we are now collaborative! The process of building a collaborative ministry is difficult because it is never finished. Collaborative ministry is not a destination, but rather a life-long journey. When one has that in mind, the frustrations inherent in working with others is reduced by the recognition of reality.

A third unrealistic expectation is that with hard work, the "perfect staff," the "perfect collaborative leadership team" can be pulled together. Of course there is no such thing.

One of the basic tenets of systems theory that addresses this assumption is the principle that when one part of the system changes, the whole system changes. Whenever there is a change in the pastoral staff or congregation by attrition, addition or a significant life event (i.e., a birth, death, illness, just to name a few), the whole congregational system changes.

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ly healthy person is the one who willingly admits to being "a little bit crazy" once in a while. The one to be wary of is the individual who steadfastly maintains his or her complete sanity in all times and places.

Sometimes the system will regress to a less mature functioning position, making it less collaborative and more conflicted. At other times the system will adapt to the change and move to a more mature functioning position. But the reality is, once the changes in leadership have taken place, have been processed by the congregation, and the congregation has adapted to its "new normal," the system as a whole may be less healthy than it was before the move toward collaboration began. The reason: the personality dynamics of the individuals involved may be so strong and resistant to collaboration, that the very group that wants to be more cooperative blocks the partnership of the gospel.

Unresolved trauma that has occur in a congregational system sometime in the past, can put the whole system in an unhealthy homeostatic (rigid) condition. Steinke defines this condition as chronic anxiety. To get past this "stuck position," outside intervention may be needed for the benefit of the whole. Being stuck, the congregation, particularly those who are reactive, will fight the intervention and fight to maintain the safety of homeostasis--that is, "how things have always been done."

II. Collaborative ministry is enhanced when authority and responsibility are clearly defined. Conversely, collaborative ministry is blocked by a lack of clear definition of who has authority to do what in the church.

Collaborative ministry is inseparably linked to clearly defined boundaries. Boundaries are "abstract divid-

ers between or among systems or subsystems."[2] Boundaries are important for building a strong collaborative community. They define what a person is called, contracted, hired, elected or appointed to do. Boundaries set the limitations of an individual's position, and identifies who he or she is responsible to in the managerial or organizational structure of the congregation.

Clearly defined boundaries are critical for effective team functioning. Healthy boundaries do not inhibit ministry, but rather gives freedom for ministry. Boundaries are not intended to restrict what is done, but enhance what is done by permitting the ministry of Word and Sacrament to be accomplished more effectively. They defines how an individual is to function in his or her particular role, following the rules of the congregation to meet the expectations of his or her supervisor or the congregation as a whole.

Constitutions, by-laws, ministry descriptions and the like are boundary-defining documents. They need to be written clearly, communicated effectively and followed as closely as possible.

Boundaries also need to be flexible. For instance, when necessary, the Senior Pastor of a congregation must be able and willing to delegate his responsibility to others, and when necessary, resume those responsibilities.

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[2]Foley and Everett, eds., 1.

The congregation studied in this project experienced an incident similar to this. The Senior Pastor and his wife were experiencing marital and general relationship difficulties. Both were anxious and depressed, making it very difficult to function normally. To care for himself, his wife and family, the Senior Pastor found it necessary to delegate a number of his responsibilities to the congregation's new Associate Pastor.

Several months later, the Senior Pastor was feeling healthy enough to resume normal duties. In a meeting with the Associate Pastor, the Senior Pastor explained that he sensed they had reversed their roles for the previous months, thanked the Associate Pastor for pinch hitting, and explained he was ready to resume his responsibilities as Senior Pastor.

Not realizing that boundaries had changed in the first place, the Associate Pastor felt the Senior Pastor's comments were a personal attack. The Associate Pastor then became emotionally reactive and withdrew into a defensive position.

In retrospect, the Senior Pastor realized that boundaries were not clearly established before boundaries were adjusted. When the Senior Pastor tried to return to the original boundaries, the Associate Pastor felt the Senior Pastor was critical of his integrity and call.

Clearly defined, communicated, understood and accepted boundaries are indispensable for effective collaborative ministry. The CTCR notes,

> Inadequate definitions of terms tend to lead to a drift into practices that create confusion in the church and that may even contradict sound doctrine. The result is confusion in the minds of both the lay members of the church and of those who work professionally in the church in various capacities.[3]

III. It is important to carefully define terminology, including terms that might be assumed to be generally understood.

When the Associate Pastor was considering the call to serve the congregation in this study, he asked the Senior Pastor what their relationship would be: "Will we be 'partners,' or will I be the 'flunky' of the Senior Pastor?" The Senior Pastor replied, with all honesty, that his goal was for *all* staff members to be in partnership.

Later the Senior Pastor learned what the Associate Pastor meant by partner. The new pastor defined a partner as an equal. In his mind, the Senior Pastor is the same as the Associate Pastor, and vice versa.

The Associate Pastor's contention of equality with the Senior Pastor is a boundary question, a boundary violation, and exhibits a lack of self-differentiation, self-definition. The Associate Pastor, without realizing it, wanted to be enmeshed with the Senior Pastor. He could not understand how he could be involved in ministry while re-

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[3]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 5.

maining separate from the Senior Pastor in role and function.

Whitehead and Whitehead's helpful definition of partnership is worth repeating:

> Partnership, both in the gospel and in contemporary life, is an experience of shared power. In this communal process, we explicitly reject domination of one by the other. Being partners does not mean that we bring the same thing to our relationship or that each of us contributes equally . . . Equality stresses sameness, while partnership delights in diversity. Partners recognize that their differences often expand and enrich their relationship. Equality, as a quantitative image, hints that we should be keeping score. But measuring our respective contributions more often defeats than strengthens partnership.
>
> More than on strict equality, partnership depends on mutuality. The giving and the receiving go both ways. In a mutual relationship, each party brings something of value; each receives something of worth. Partnership thrives when we recognize and respect this mutual exchange of gifts.[4]

Particular positions in the pastoral staff should be carefully discussed and defined by the congregation, or the search committee, before positions are filled. Those who are called or invited to join the staff should, in turn, be helped to understand and accept the limits of their position, as defined by the congregation, not by those who hold the position.

Those who work in partnership should be prepared to frequently ask the good Lutheran questions, "What does this mean?" and "How is this done?" When clarifying questions are asked, assumptions are less likely to be made that

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[4]Whitehead and Whitehead, 8.

make those who are in the partnership look foolish. From a broader perspective, the comment made by the CTCR is worth repeating: "Uniformity of terminology is highly desirable."[5]

IV. Focus on process, not content.

One of the paradigms of systems thinking is the need to focus on process, not content; on why things occur as they do, rather than on what occurs. A focus on process may require the use of standardized instruments to demonstrate process and help those in leadership see how they either encourage collaborative ministry, or block team ministry.

One such resource is the survey-guided development process of the Center for Parish Development. This instrument is very effective in demonstrating congregational health, revealing the enabling and blocking forces in a congregational structure, and pointing out whether or not the organizational system is ready to embark on a process of planned change.

However, even if the congregation is not ready to experience a planned change process, the survey-guided process can still be helpful. For instance, the Likert Indexes can give the leadership an indication of where the stress or anxiety is found within the working teams of the

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[5]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature,* 28.

congregation. It can help uncover power struggles, misunderstandings, and lack of leadership initiative. At the same time, the survey-guided feedback process can bring those anxious feelings to the surface where they can be dealt with in an open, caring manner.

When exploring the emotional processes at work within a congregation, the questions drafted by Steinke are helpful. As the author of the questions notes, "the questions are directed toward resources not damages, strength not weakness, imagination not reaction, and challenge not answers."[6]

V. Conflict in the church is not pretty.

Conflict in the church is emotionally, physically and spiritually exhausting. Conflict in the church is not fair. Sides are drawn, positions are protected, and intentions are questioned. Conflict in the church is not easily resolved, particularly where reactive anxiety reinforces naivete.

The body of this paper noted Steinke's comment,

> When we as individuals are anxious, we cannot distance ourselves enough from the threat to be objective and even-minded. For instance, if we are "at odds" with someone, chances are we will not "play even."
>
> Stories are shaded; information is withheld. Complaints are vague. The faults of others are exaggerated. When emotionality sweeps over the Thinking Cap, our view is blunted.

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[6]Steinke, 54.

> Anxious systems also fail to get a clear view of things. Embedded in their dread, they lose a sense of proportion. They have little awareness of what is happening and how it is being mutually maintained. Emotionality cramps the broader view.[7]

That is precisely what happened in the congregation explored for this project. Anxiety prevented the Senior Pastor from seeing how his emotional reactivity was clouding his objectivity. He needed to see "more of the forest and fewer of the trees," or, to use systems language, "focus on process, not content." The Senior Pastor needed to back away from the emotionally charged issues with which he was dealing, and look more objectively at the situation.

Other staff members were affected as well. There were staff members who were in an emotional triangle with the Senior Pastor; and other staff members emotionally enmeshed with the Associate Pastor. All, including those who claimed neutrality, experienced increased anxiety and distress.

The sides having been drawn, made individual staff members feel personally attacked by either the Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor. Homicidal and suicidal thoughts became common themes in conversation, particularly with regard to the Associate Pastor's relationship with the staff.

Some of the staff became emotionally triangled with the Senior Pastor. With time, time they realized the

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[7]Steinke, 43-44.

"strength" of their alliance was also their greatest weakness. Being emotionally fused, they were unable to define themselves as individuals in the staff conflict.

These fused staff members met with a therapist to share their mutual distress. The first lesson he suggested they learn is the importance of remaining separate, but connected. The therapist noted their emotional connectedness caused them to loose sense of self and made it hard for them to take advantage of their own coping resources. By differentiating themselves from each other and their mutual anxiety, they would soon discover that they do not need others to be whole. God has made us whole in who we are.

Second, the staff members were advised to deal only with objective, verifiable facts when speaking with the Associate Pastor. Feelings are subjective. Feelings are arguable. Feelings lead to emotional reactivity. Facts are facts, especially when they can be verified. When dealing only with objective facts, an individual is more likely to remain emotionally detached and therefore less likely to become defensive.

Third, the therapist advised the staff members to never challenge the Associate Pastor in private; rely only on public settings, where witnesses would be present. While appearing to violate the reconciliation process found in Matthew 18, the therapist reminded the three that they had already been through Matthew 18 on several occasions. The

results of those actions were always the same -- defensiveness, retaliation and defiance. One on one conversation did not resolve any problems, instead one-on-one conversation increased conflict. The therapist advised that the second step of Matthew 18 be taken when confronting the Associate Pastor.

Fourth, the therapist suggested that the Associate Pastor not be protected any longer. Evidence suggests that the Associate Pastor is dangerous to himself, his colleagues and the congregation.

The verbal clue the Associate Pastor offers to betray his emotional vulnerability is how he describes himself to others: "What you see is what you get;" "I'm really a very easy person to understand;" "I have nothing hidden." Those self-descriptive statements are psychological lies. They signal deeply hidden emotional pain. Nobody is so transparent and open that he or she can be read like a book. The defensiveness the Associate Pastor exhibits when questioned about his childhood, previous experiences with ministry and basic family relationships exposes an individual who is not emotionally aware of himself or his effect on his environment.

Recognizing the emotional instability of the Associate Pastor, the pastoral staff works hard to keep the emotional reactivity under control. The problem is being protected as a secret. The therapist suggested the secret

no longer be tolerated. Allow the Associate Pastor's reactivity to be exposed to the light, and see what would come of it.

Finally, he recommended that the staff members not take the Associate Pastor so seriously. He encouraged them to continue to use humor, including irreverent humor, to maintain emotional separation. He noted the macabre humor about homicide and suicide already being used were coping mechanisms to cover emotional pain. He considered the humor to be appropriate, given the context of the humor.

VI. Recognize that "Its not always nice to be nice."

Friedman's comment on the church's inclination to encourage the immature and irresponsible is important to note once more:

> Actually religious institutions are the worst offenders at encouraging immaturity and irresponsibility. In church after church, some member is passively-aggressively holding the whole system hostage, and no one wants to fire him or force her to leave because it wouldn't be "the Christian thing to do." It has nothing to do with Christianity. Synagogues also tolerate abusers because it wouldn't be the Christian thing to do.[8]

Sometimes we are nice because we fear emotional reactivity from the one who is bringing discord to the body. Anxious, reactive people are not pleasant to work with in the best of circumstances. When their emotional reactivity

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[8]Steinke, 59.

is brought to the light, which is the very thing they fear the most, they become even more brutish.

Emotionally reactive people control many church families. Friedman identifies these individuals as the "least mature, least motivated, least self-regulating, but most recalcitrant people."[9] In other words, they are individuals who do not have clearly defined boundaries for their own life, and have no respect for the boundaries of others.

In the name of "Christian love" we permit such people to keep the congregation hostage to their childish temper tantrums. The emotionally reactive insist on getting their own way either by strength of will or by intimidation. Rather than confront such divisive behavior, the abused passively ignore their destructive behavior, with the wishful thinking that their Christ-like example of love will tame the beast.

Our goal in ministry should always be to encourage one another to grow into Christ-likeness, not to reinforce unhealthy behavior. The goal of the ministry of Word and Sacrament is to restore relationships, not to reinforce arrogant, argumentative and abrasive behavior.

It is not always nice to be nice. Being nice can be dangerous and damaging for not only the one in need of amendment of life, but all who live and work with him or her, which might mean the entire congregation. That is not

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[9]Steinke, 59.

to say love is not needed. Love is still the key to an effective ministry of Word and Sacrament. But love must be defined as Christ-likeness.

It is helpful to keep in mind how Jesus responded to the emotionally reactive scribes and pharisees. He did not coddle to their dysfunction, but rather pointed it out. Matthew reminds us of Jesus' reaction to the vanity of the scribes and Pharisees: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Mat 23:13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27 and 29). Jesus charged them with: Enforcing laws and regulations they could not keep themselves (23:2-4); shutting the kingdom of heaven against others (23:13); proselytizing children of hell, by making others behave as irresponsibly as they (23:15); "straining a gnat [of the law violated by others] and swallowing a camel [in their own lawless behavior]" (23:24), among other wrongs.

In other words, being Christ-like does not mean being a door mat. Being Christ-like does include defining one's self in relationship to others; it means establishing personal and professional boundaries, and sticking to them; and it means challenging those who violate your integrity as a human being and as a child of God.

Being Christ-like also means showing the compassion of the Gospel when there is true repentance and amendment of life. Sometimes, we do meet individuals who are unable to repent and amend their lives. Their personal pain

is so great, they cannot bear the scrutiny of the law and dismiss their boundariless lives as just "who they are." In those cases, the demon[10] must be identified, named and declared unacceptable.

Effects on the Context of Ministry

I. The pastoral staff and key lay leaders grew defensive and distanced.

When this study was undertaken, the staff, lay leadership and congregation appeared to be fairly functional. Conflict was minimal, and when it occurred, was quickly defused.

As the results of the subject matter contained in this Project were shared with key leaders, particularly the significant power issues, the lay leaders and staff grew defensive and distant. Triangles emerged that intensified defensiveness and conflict. The intentions of the Senior Pastor came under increased scrutiny from the Associate

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[10]Steinke, 63. One might also find Peck's comments in *People of the Lie* helpful. "To name something correctly gives us a certain amount of power over it. Through its name we identify it" [Peck, *People of the Lie,* 120]. Later, he notes,

> Thus far I have been speaking of the necessity for the accurate naming of evil from the standpoint of the evil themselves: that we might better appreciate the nature of their affliction, come to know how to contain it, and, I hope, eventually even cure it. But there is another vital reason to correctly name evil: *the healing of its victims* [emphasis mine] [Peck, *People of the Lie,* 129-130].

Pastor and the lay leadership. As a result, trust dissolved.

This is attributable to a number of factors. When a relationship system becomes aware of the anxiety-generating forces it faces, the problem will remain unfixed until "someone frees themselves from the loop [anxious loop] or someone else from outside the emotional circle intervenes into the feedback pattern."[11] The refusal of the system to use emotional strengths and resources to deal with the anxiety, and pretend the problems do not exist only reinforces what Steinke calls "the malignant process."[12]

The Senior Pastor of this congregation recognized the anxious forces within the pastoral staff. He brought those forces to light through the congregational structure, relying primarily on the board of Elders, and synodical structure, relying on the Circuit Counsellor and District President. The Elders became reactive, and tried to shift the burden to the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor, in turn, became reactive, blocking the ability of the congregational and synodical structures to resolve the problem.

Two things occurred simultaneously. First, the board of Elders could not acknowledge the fact that one or both of their pastors could be imperfect enough to experience unhealthy conflict and possibly one or more personal-

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[11]Steinke, 24.

[12]Steinke, 79-80.

ity disorders. Second, the emotional reactivity of all involved created a vicious circle of chronic anxiety that paralyzed the process of conflict resolution.

The emotional reactivity was muted with an enforced truce drawn between the pastors, under the veiled threat of being forced to accept a call elsewhere, if the power struggle was not resolved. While there is no longer any visible sparring between the two, the conflict is still present, only hidden. This, paradoxically, only intensifies the conflict rather than resolving it.

II. The anxiety of "secrets" becoming known.

It became clear that the congregation maintains secrets, due, in part, to a lack of action on the part of the pastoral and lay leadership. According to the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists, a secret is

> Based on actual or perceived events, or arising from fantasies, beliefs and attitudes which may be held privately by one family member, shared by others, or collusively subscribed to all members and passed from generation to generation in the form of myths.[13]

However, Nathan Ackerman notes, "what are thought to be family secrets generally turn out to be known by all family members but are simply not spoken of."[14]

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[13]Foley and Everett, eds., 11.

[14]Michael P. Nichols and Richard C. Schwartz, *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*, with a Foreword by Carlos Sluzki, M.D. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991), 55.

The reaction of the Elders and District mediators to the conflict between the pastors made it clear that such behavior was not acceptable. The "rule" established was "Pastors do not fight." The logic behind the rule is, "If the members of the congregation find out about this power struggle, we could loose everything we have worked for, for so long."

The problem of secrets is two fold. First, some know what is being withheld from public knowledge, others do not. Those who know, are not sure who knows and who does not know. In attempting to keep the secret hidden, conversation, communication and interaction in impeded. The congregation's leadership turns into a "closed system" to protect the secret. The secret, which is intended to protect the congregational system, actually brings the system greater harm.

Secondly, secrets usually involve a significant issue that should be known for the good of the whole, such as abuse of office or endangerment of others. Secrets breed suspicion and betray trust. They should not be tolerated.

The congregation described here has a history of secrets and cover up of staff dysfunction. In the past twenty years, a case of adultery between two parish school teachers was kept in the dark closet of confidentiality, lest the ministry of the congregation be tarnished. Rather than acknowledging and resolving the sin, the individuals

involved were permitted to resign quietly, and spare the congregation the anxiety of the scandal. The situation was not spoken of then, nor is it to be spoken of now.

Several years ago, a pastor voluntarily resigned after allegations of sexual misconduct were brought to the attention of the board of Elders and the District President. This, too, was kept secret, lest the ministry be disgraced.

More recently, a staff member physically abused a student in the day school. At first the decision was made to handle the situation in a "Christian manner" through confession and absolution, rather than follow state statutes. The impression was given that it is more expedient to protect the image of the office of the public ministry than to protect the safety and learning environment of the students. Only when the responsible supervisory staff member was informed that he and the congregation could be found liable in the civil court for not reporting the incident, were the proper authorities contacted.

Unfortunately, the secret is worse than the actual disorder. The tension is buried like a festering wound. It must be drained for the pastoral team and congregation to function effectively. This particular congregation has a highly developed malignancy in the pastoral office that has been allowed to fester far too long. The disease of anxiety and the denial of its existence has become an overwhelming problem. Attempts on the part of staff and concerned mem-

bers to expose the malignancy to light of day are met with resistance, hostility and denial.

As a result of these and other secrets, the congregation lacks trust in the pastoral office. Having a consistent history of "doing nothing," or giving the perception of "doing nothing", the public ministry is side stepped when matters involving staff are raised. Since the boards and church council have been party to keeping the secrets, they are not looked upon for leadership either.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. As a national church body, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod needs to be more intentional in defining power and authority in church and ministry.

The Missouri Synod does not define power and authority in the church very well. The impression is given that nobody really has any authority to do anything decisively. The Parish Administrator of the congregation studied is not from a Missouri Synod background. He comes from, and is active in, a church body that is historically hierarchical. In his denominational polity, lines and levels of accountability are clearly defined.

As an outsider looking in at the Missouri Synod, he notices that those with positions of authority--from the Synodical President to a congregational president--who exercise their authority decisively, are accused of being authoritarian. But at the same time, when the same leaders fail to act appropriately, they are accused of being negli-

gent in their ministry. It is a situation that creates a double bind: one message is disqualified by a second message.[15]

Mitchell, tells a story of situation that parallels the situation in the congregation included in this study, and describes how authority can be defined for the benefit of all involved. Mitchell's story is as follows:

> The scene is a staff meeting. It's a large staff: four ordained ministers, two educational specialists, a minister of music (not ordained), and a business manager. Several assignments were made at the previous staff meeting. The pastor, a quiet, casual man with a slight regional drawl that accents his friendly and accommodating style, has just called for reports on how the assignments have been handled. He turns first to a minister appointed to the staff by the bishop the previous spring.
>
> "Well, Howard, how about your report?"
>
> "I don't have one."
>
> "Y'don't? How come?"
>
> "I don't owe you a report. I'm not answerable to you. The bishop appointed me to this pastoral charge, and I'm only accountable to the bishop. I'm one of the pastors here, not your flunky. I answer to the bishop."
>
> "I see. Thank you. Would you all kindly excuse me a moment?"
>
> The pastor turns to the telephone and dials a number.
>
> "Hello. This is Pastor Black. Is Bishop White in the office? . . . Thank you . . . Good morning, Bishop. Arthur Black here. I'm sitting in a staff meeting, and Howard Brown--you remember him--has just been telling me that since you appointed him to this pastoral charge, he is answerable to you and not to me. I'm going to hand the telephone over to him now, and I wonder if you'd be so kind as to tell him where you are going to appoint him next.

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[15]Foley and Everett, eds., 7.

> Pastor Black hands the telephone to a flushed Pastor Brown, and what Brown hears results in his abrupt departure.[16]

Obviously there is a power struggle in place within the staff. One pastor is trying to assert himself over the other. With the associate pastor's abrupt departure, one might conclude that the authoritarian pastor was Pastor Black. Mitchell has a different view of the situation. He noted,

> It may be surprising to read that it is the rebellious Howard Brown rather than Pastor Arthur Jones who is really the authoritarian personality in this instance. Studies of authoritarian personalities, however, make it clear that this is the case.[17]

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has, what I perceive to be a systemic fear of authority and authoritarianism. Leaders are afraid to lead, and when leadership is shown, they are accused of acting beyond the boundaries of what is expected of them.

A significant contribution that could be made to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with a follow up study. The goal of this study would be to determine what historical events and personalities have influenced the leadership style of the Missouri Synod. As a result of the study, a determination could be made whether or not the Synod has a fear of authority, and, if there is a fear of authority, how it might be overcome.

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[16]Mitchell, 14-15.

[17]Mitchell, 155.

An impression I have gained through this study is that Missouri Synod pastors and lay leaders are discouraged from functioning effectively, and resolving conflict. Through genograms, interviews and a thorough study of historical documentation, the sources of our bondage to an anti-authoritarian structure might be uncovered. Through this process, healthy change in synodical polity may take place, allowing the Missouri Synod to function in a more healthy manner in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. When questions of power and authority are viewed systemically, it is important to note that no organization functions effectively for very long without legitimate power and authority. If power and authority are not given formally, it is seized informally, usually one who has little self-differentiation, and is, therefore, emotionally unhealthy. If this individual has a personal axe to grind, the result will be chronic anxiety and chronic conflict. If the system does not intentionally define who does and does not have power and authority, and set limits on both, the system, to maintain homeostasis, will permit one or more individuals to take power and authority by force or coercion.[18]

Collaborative leadership cannot be maintained without clear boundaries. Boundaries define who is authorized to do what on behalf of the congregation in specific

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[18]Might this be the cause for such publications as *Christian News,* and efforts, such as, Doctrinal Concerns Programs within the synod?

matters. Without boundaries, there cannot be any collaboration.

II. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod needs a clear definition of the Office of the Public Ministry, particularly when two or more pastors are called to the public ministry.

This recommendation is closely linked with the first. The lack of definition of what it means to serve in team ministry as pastors, professional church workers and contracted support personnel leads to power struggles and conflict.

The Missouri Synod defines the office of the public ministry is the highest office in the church. What does that mean for the individuals and the congregation when two or three individuals hold "the highest office" in the church? Looking at the question as process, it can mean contention for who is the highest of the highest. Unfortunately, we do not clearly differentiate between "office" and "person."

I have come across models of ministry within Missouri Synod congregations that effectively address the question of what it means to be pastors in team ministry. For instance, Trinity, Roselle, Illinois, has a multiple pastor team ministry. That is to say, the congregation is served by more than one "called and ordained servant of the Word." However, the congregation has clearly differentiated the function of those who have been called to serve the

congregation. While the congregation has more than one person serving in the office of the public ministry, the congregation intentionally has only one "pastor". All other "pastors" are assistants to *the* pastor.

Trinity, Roselle's organizational structure sounds much more like the structure of the Episcopal church, where the Rector (the Senior Pastor) has the final authority in all ecclesiastical matters. While he may have Curates (Associate Pastors) serving with him, the Rector has the "public office" that speaks for and represents the congregation-at-large.

The CTCR seems to add to the confusion with their statement,

> We may speak of various "ministries" in and of the church, but we must be careful to distinguish them properly. An office is not defined solely by what one who holds it does (function) but by the duties, responsibility, and accountability assigned to it. *The pastoral office is unique in that all the functions of the church's ministry belong to it* [emphasis mine].[19]

Later, the CTCR clarifies their meaning in a very helpful manner. They note,

> Every position in the church is one of service, of Christ-exaltation and self-abasement. However, it is useful for the church to arrange for various rankings and orders of supervision also among its pastors, teachers, and others. The distinction between pastors and holders of auxiliary offices is not merely a human distinction. It is not a ranking but a distinction of offices. Within the various offices (e.g., pastorate, teaching office) rankings may be made by human authori-

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[19]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature*, 19.

> ty. There may, for example, be "senior pastors" and "assistant pastors," or principals and teachers.[20]

As I interpret the CTCR's recommendation, congregations have the liberty to call two or more individuals to the office of the public ministry, and to limit the duties given to those they call. An Associate Pastor, while belonging to the pastoral office, does not, *in himself*, have all the functions of the church's ministry. He is responsible only for those specific areas given to him in the congregation's call. In a similar manner, a Senior Pastor also belongs to the pastoral office. For the sake of effective ministry, the congregation delegates some of his functions to another, to an Assistant or Associate Pastor, while he remains "overseer" of public ministry.[21]

The key statement the CTCR makes in this regard, a statement I strongly concur with, is that "uniformity of terminology is highly desirable."[22] At present, any number of titles are given for people holding like-positions, resulting in confusion. For instance, a "Senior Pastor" is identified in other settings as the "Administrative Pastor" or "Coordinating Pastor." Lack of definition as to what each position means creates confusion over expectations,

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[20]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature*, 28.

[21]*The Ministry: Offices, Procedures and Nomenclature*, 29.

[22]*The Ministry, The Office, Procedures and Nomenclature*, 28.

roles and rules. Again, it begs the questions, "What does this mean?" and "How is this done?"

At the same time, those who are in subordinate positions within the pastoral office are identified variously as "Assistant Pastor," "Associate Pastor" and "Assistant to the Pastor." The lack of definition and uniformity in terminology creates confusion in the church as a whole, particularly among those called to serve in cooperative ministry.

III. The spiritual priesthood needs to be affirmed as a gift from God instituted, like the office of the public ministry, for the proclamation of the Gospel.

While giving lip service to the priesthood of all believers, the priestly service of God's people is neglected or devalued. That is seen in the comments made by the laity: "I want to have a visit from my *pastor,* not the Elders!" or the all-too-frequent request at family gatherings the pastor attends, "Pastor, will you pray?"

Of course there are reasons for these requests. The pastor is certainly a celebrant, or community object, and therefore is expected to carry on his public role even for one, two or three. Also, the pastor has been trained to visit, and pray, and counsel in ways the laity have not. But the laity can also be trained to visit, and pray, and counsel, and the laity might even be able to bring the

counsel of God's Word to people more effectively than the pastor.

Being stuck in comfortable behavior patterns, it is difficult to consider the possibility of living and working together in the common life of the church in a different way. Systemic change can help promote a healthier way of relating to one another as the people of God, for the good of the people of God.

IV. Recognize the need to promote healing in the staff and congregation involved in this study.

While this congregational staff functions well in the public arena, there is significant stress internally that, if it is not addressed, will result in public conflict. The particular issues needing to be addressed are rooted in the concepts of expectations, roles and rules. Boundaries between staff members need to be defined and clarified to enable the staff to work together in a more healthy, productive manner.

The issues involved are complex. The Senior Pastor and key leadership are intricately bound to the staff dysfunction to the point that they can not objectively untangle the confusing web conflict.

An outside consultant, with experience in working through systemic congregational problems, should be brought in to encouraging the healing process. To do nothing at this point would be the most unfortunate thing to do. A

malignancy is already in the body. Turning one's eyes away from its ugliness will not foster healing, but only allow the disease to spread. If this were to occur, diminished trust, confidence and competence will further erode the congregation's ability to effectively engage in its ministry of Word and Sacrament.

AN AFTERWORD

As I am completing this project, I have to ask myself, has it been worth it? The study shared in the previous pages was wrought with emotional, relational and spiritual grief. On many occasions I found myself questioning my call, my commitment, my sanity.

Yet, in spite of the struggle, the congregation reflected in this study continues to grow in the ministry of Word and Sacrament. While the staff struggles for self definition, the Word of God is still proclaimed, the Sacraments are still being administered according to Christ's instruction, and the people of God are gathering to declare praise "to him who has called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light" (1Pe 2:9).

Throughout my studies and struggles, my conversations and conflicts, I have come to appreciate all the more the words of the Apostle Paul, and the biblical wisdom of viewing ministry as a partnership.

Several weeks ago, I was reminded of the wisdom of "The Preacher" in Ecclesiastes. Wise King Solomon talked freely about the strength of two: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is

alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can on be warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him. A threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecc 4: 9-12, RSV).

When ministry is understood collaboratively, one is never alone. When ministry is understood as a "partnership in the gospel," the strength of the many will withstand the discouragement that might make one crumble if all alone.

Even in the unfortunate "partnership" that has been experienced in the congregation reviewed in this study, collaboration has still been experienced. Working teams have grown closer, as a result of deliberate attempts to grow together. Individual members of the congregation have been quick to offer counsel and support. And, though the pastoral staff does have its identifiable weaknesses, it continues to have the strength of the Spirit of the Lord.

The church is still God's. The ministry is still God's. And the strength of those who labor for the Lord is still God's. That, is, in summary, where collaborative ministry begins. The ministry of the church is God's ministry of the gospel which brings strength to the weak--the paradox of power in the church; the paradox of collaborative ministry.

APPENDIX A

Senior Pastor Ministry Description

To clearly define the form and function of the ministry of [this congregation,] the members of the congregation have chosen to establish the office of Senior Pastor. Working in cooperation with the professional and lay leadership he will shape, direct and communicate through the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the mission of the congregation.

As a Leader and Administrator the Senior Pastor's primary responsibilities will be to:

1. Serve as an initiating leader, encouraging the development of a vision for the future.
2. Encourage, support and direct the staff.
3. Oversee development of lay leadership.
4. Assist in building bridges of communication between the staff, the lay leadership and the congregation.
5. Consult and coordinate, with the other pastor(s), wedding and funeral assignments.
6. Direct Parish administration.
7. Mediate disputes, if not resolved at other levels.

As Steward of Word and Sacrament, he will:

1. Preach at least 50% of the Sunday and mid-week services.
2. Schedule officiants and assistants for all worship services.
3. Consult and plan worship themes with the Associate Pastor(s).
4. Oversee the proper use of the Sacraments.
5. Assist with Pastoral Counseling.
6. Assist with hospital and shut-in visitation, and other pastoral care responsibilities.
7. Officiate at a proportionate number of weddings and funerals.
8. Develop, initiate and direct adult education.
9. Assist with Confirmation instruction.
10. Encourage and build an attitude of Biblical steward-ship.

APPENDIX B

Associate Pastor Ministry Description

The Associate Pastor for Inreach and Outreach Ministries should have a strong interest in evangelism, have a strong people orientation, be a gifted teacher, and effective motivator. He would be willing to grow in his gifts and ability to use them in effective ministry.

As Leader and Administrator, the primary responsibilities for the Associate Pastor for Inreach and Outreach ministries will be:

1. To develop an intentional evangelism outreach program in consultation with the Evangelism ministry.
2. Develop training opportunities for evangelism outreach for the members of the congregation.
3. Develop member prospect lists.
4. Oversee the new member class.
5. Work with the Pastoral Assistant in assimilating new members.
6. Work with the Lay Ministry in providing ministry to inactive members.
7. Develop workshops for training members for ministry to inactive members.
8. Keep an accounting of inactive members.
9. Find ways to close the back door.

As a Steward of Word and Sacrament he will:

1. Preach as assigned.
2. Consult and plan worship themes with the Senior Pastor (and other Associate Pastors.)
3. Officiate at assigned sacramental rites.
4. Assist with Pastoral Counseling.
5. Assist with hospital and shut-in visitation, and other pastoral care responsibilities.
6. Officiate at a proportionate number of weddings and funerals.
7. Assist with adult education, and confirmation instruction.

APPENDIX C

Sample Center for Parish Development
Survey Guided Development Contract

TO: Members of Senior Management Team, Diocese of Oakland

FROM: Paul Dietterich

TOPIC: Introducing the Survey Guided Development Process.

I am looking forward to working with you and the other members of your team in the Survey Guided Development staff retreat presently scheduled for January 22-24, 1992.

Survey Guided Development is a very powerful organization development process. Created by Rensis Likert and Floyd Mann at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, the Survey Guided Development process makes use of a standardized organizational survey to guide the development of the organization; hence the name "survey guided development."

The purpose of survey guided development is to facilitate changes in church organizational functioning that will lead to increased organizational effectiveness. This purpose is achieved by providing accurate and useful information about how the church organization actually functions, how it might ideally function, and how to make the actual functioning more like the ideal functioning.

Less technically, the objective of survey guided development is to help persons sort out what are the strengths of the organization at present in order to build on these, and where the weaknesses or shortcomings are that need remedial or corrective action.

In the retreat itself, I will serve as a consultant with your team. You will be introduced to a theoretical framework for church organization development and internal management. You will learn to use a diagnostic vocabulary to describe organizational phenomena. You will be able to address some of the forces (feelings, behaviors) currently blocking the development of your team, while building on the forces that are enabling your team both to maintain itself and to perform at a high level.

You can expect to participate in some worship, reflection on organizational theory, and some sharing. Most of the time will be spent in one group together analyzing and addressing concerns that are revealed by the survey.

I will be available to help you and other team members learn or sharpen some of your teamwork skills and interpersonal skills, and to provide process assistance as your team delves into some of the complex and sometimes emotionally laden issues that a re blocking team effectiveness and total organizational effectiveness.

APPENDIX D

C7-TM Survey

the Center for Parish Development

5407 South University Avenue • Chicago, IL 60615
312-752-1596

PROFILE OF A CHURCH

TEAM MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

(For use by church leaders in examining working relationships.)

Form C7-TM

This questionnaire is designed to learn more about how all the persons in the church organization can best work together to fulfill the mission of the church. The aim is to use the information to make the work of the church more faithful, effective, and satisfying.

If the results are to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

The answers on the questionnaires are processed by computers which summarize the responses in statistical form so that individuals cannot be identified. To ensure COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire or answer sheet.

In the space provided below, please indicate today's date, the name of your church, and the specific church leadership team being examined. This information will not be used to identify you. It will be used only to consolidate responses from a number of individuals in similar positions.

Today's date: _____

Name of your church: _____

Church leadership team being examined (Staff, Council, Diaconate, Board, Education Committee, Worship Committee, etc.): _____

_____

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This questionnaire contains a set of alternative answers for each question. These alternative answers form a continuum from one extreme at the left end to the other extreme at the right. A series of descriptive terms is used to define, broadly, four positions along the continuum. Two numbers under each position give eight choices for each question.

2. On this questionnaire, please answer each question as you see the situation **NOW** by circling the number above the line in the category that best describes your view of the present situation. Also, please circle the number below the line that best describes how you would **LIKE** the situation to be.

For example, suppose the question were:

		Very little		Little		Considerable		A very great deal	
How much cooperative teamwork exists in the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

If you think that there is almost no cooperative teamwork in the church, you would circle number 1 above the line. If you think that cooperative teamwork exists to a very small degree, you would circle number 2 above the line. If you would LIKE to have a large amount of cooperative teamwork in the church, you would circle number 7 below the line. If you would like to have a very large amount of cooperative teamwork, you would circle number 8 below the line. If you took the extreme positions on both NOW and LIKE, your answers would look like this:

		Very little		Little		Considerable		A very great deal	
How much cooperative teamwork exists in the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

3. When questions are asked about persons in general, answer the questions as a description of the average situation or reaction you have experienced.

4. If a question is not applicable to your situation, please omit answering that question.

5. The questions begin on the following page.

1	How much influence does the head of your team have on matters in your particular church team?		Very little		Some		Quite a bit	A very great deal
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
2.	How much influence do you feel that you have on what goes on in your particular church team?		Very little		Some		Quite a bit	A very great deal
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
3.	What is the general attitude of your colleagues on your team toward their work in your team?		Dislike it		Sometimes dislike it, sometimes like it		Usually like it	Like it very much
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
4.	How well do others on your team know the problems related to your church work which you face?		Not well		Somewhat		Quite well	Very well
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
5.	What is the character and amount of interaction between you and the head of your team?		Very little interaction, usually with fear and distrust		Little interaction; each maintains distance from others		Moderate interaction, often with fair amount of confidence and trust	Extensive, friendly interaction, with high degree of confidence and trust
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
6.	How excited do you feel about your church work in your present position?		Not very excited		Somewhat excited		Quite excited	Very excited
		N	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8
		L	1 2	3 4		5 6		7 8

		Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
7. How much confidence and trust do you have in the head of your team?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. How much confidence and trust do you have in other members of your team?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. How much confidence and trust do you think the head of your team has in you?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. How much confidence and trust do you think other members of your team at your level have in you?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Dislike it		Sometimes dislike it, sometimes like it		Usually like it		Like it very much	
11. What is your attitude toward your present assignment as a place to work in the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Not free		Slightly free		Quite free		Very free	
12. How free do you feel to talk openly with the head of your team about matters related to your church work?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

13. What is the direction of the flow of information about matters concerning your church team?

	Downward from top organization levels to each successive level		Mostly downward		Down and up		Down, up and laterally	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

14. How well does the head of your team know the problems you face in your church work?

	Not well		Somewhat		Quite well		Very well	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

15. How well do you know the church work problems faced by the head of your team?

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

16. How well do you know the church work problems faced by other members of your team?

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

17. To what extent is the head of your team friendly and supportive to you?

	Very little		Little		Considerable		Very great	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

18. How much do you feel that the head of your team is interested in your success in carrying out your church work?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
19. How much does the head of your team try to help you with your church work problems?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Almost always	
20. How often does the head of your team seek and use your ideas?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

21. How often does the head of your team use group meetings to solve church work problems?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Very little		Little		Considerable		Very great	
22. To what extent does the head of your team make sure that planning and setting priorities are done well?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

23. To what extent does the head of your team give you useful information, ideas and resources to facilitate your church work?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
24. How much do you and other members of your team encourage each other to work together as a team?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Very little		Practically never involved; occasionally consulted		Usually consulted, but ordinarily not involved		Fully involved in decisions related to my work
25. To what extent does the head of your team involve you in the decisions related to your church work?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
26. To what extent should the head of your team involve you in the decisions related to your church work?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

		Low		About average		Quite high		Very high	
27. How high are the expectations of the head of your team that s/he and others will achieve excellence in their work for the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
28. How high are the expectations of the members of your team that they and others will achieve excellence in their work for the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX E

C7-TH Survey

the Center for Parish Development

5407 South University Avenue • Chicago, IL 60615
312-752-1596

PROFILE OF A CHURCH

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD OF TEAM

(For use by heads of church leadership teams in examining working relationships.)

Form C7-TH

This questionnaire is designed to learn more about how all the persons in the church organization can best work together to fulfill the mission of the church. The aim is to use the information to make the work of the church more faithful, effective, and satisfying.

If the results are to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

The answers on the questionnaires are processed by computers which summarize the responses in statistical form so that individuals cannot be identified. To ensure COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire or answer sheet.

In the space provided below, please indicate today's date, the name of your church, and the specific church leadership team being examined. This information will not be used to identify you. It will be used only to consolidate responses from a number of individuals in similar positions.

Today's date: _____

Name of your church: _____

Church leadership team being examined (Staff, Council, Diaconate, Board, Education Committee, Worship Committee, etc.): _____

_____

INSTRUCTIONS

1. This questionnaire contains a set of alternative answers for each question. These alternative answers form a continuum from one extreme at the left end to the other extreme at the right. A series of descriptive terms is used to define, broadly, four positions along the continuum. Two numbers under each position give eight choices for each question.

2. On this questionnaire, please answer each question as you see the situation **NOW** by circling the number above the line in the category that best describes your view of the present situation. Also, please circle the number below the line that best describes how you would **LIKE** the situation to be.

For example, suppose the question were:

		Very little		Little		Considerable		A very great deal	
How much cooperative teamwork exists in the church?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

If you think that there is almost no cooperative teamwork in the church, you would circle number 1 above the line. If you think that cooperative teamwork exists to a very small degree, you would circle number 2 above the line. If you would LIKE to have a large amount of cooperative teamwork in the church, you would circle number 7 below the line. If you would like to have a very large amount of cooperative teamwork, you would circle number 8 below the line. If you took the extreme positions on both NOW and LIKE, your answers would look like this:

		Very little		Little		Considerable		A very great deal	
How much cooperative teamwork exists in the church?	N	(1)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	(8)

3. When questions are asked about persons in general, answer the questions as a description of the average situation or reaction you have experienced.

4. If a question is not applicable to your situation, please omit answering that question.

5. The questions begin on the following page.

1. How much influence do you feel that the members of your team have on what goes on in this team?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

2. How much influence do you have on what goes on in your particular team?

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

3. What is the general attitude of the members of your team toward their work in your team?

	Dislike it		Sometimes dislike it, sometimes like it		Usually like it		Like it very much	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

4. What is the character and amount of interaction between you and the members of your team?

	Very little interaction, usually with fear and distrust		Little interaction; each maintains distance from other		Moderate interaction, often with fair amount of confidence and trust		Extensive, friendly interaction, with high degree of confidence and trust	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

5. How excited are the members of your team about your church work in their present positions?

	Not very excited		Somewhat		Quite excited		Very excited	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

6. How much confidence and trust do you have in the members of your team?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

7. How much confidence and trust do you think the members of your team believe you have in them?

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

8. What is your attitude toward your present assignment as a place to work in the church?

	Dislike it		Sometimes dislike it, sometimes like it		Usually like it		Like it very much	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

9. How free do you think the members of your team feel to talk freely and openly with you about matters related to their church work?

	Not free		Slightly free		Quite free		Very free	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10. What is the direction of the flow of information about matters concerning your particular church team?

	Downward from top organization levels to each successive level		Mostly downward		Down and up		Down, up and laterally	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

11. How well do the members of your team know the problems you face in your church work?

	Not well		Somewhat		Quite well		Very well	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

12. How well do you know the church work problems faced by the members of your team?

N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

13. To what extent are you friendly and supportive to the members of your team?

	Very little		Little		Considerable		Very great	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

14. How much are you interested in the success of the members of your team in carrying out their church work?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

15. How much do you try to help the members of your team with their work-related problems?		Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16. How often do you seek and use the ideas of the members of your team?		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Almost always	
	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17. How often do you use group meetings to solve church work problems?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
18. To what extent do you make sure that planning and setting of priorities are done well?		Very little		Little		Considerable		Very great	
	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
19. To what extent do you give useful information, ideas and resources to the members of your team to facilitate their church work?	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20. To what extent do you involve the members of your team in the decisions related to their church work?		Very little		Practically never involved; occasionally consulted		Usually consulted, but ordinarily not involved		Fully involved in decisions related to their work	
	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21. How high are your expectations that you and the members of your team will achieve excellence in their work for the team?		Low		About average		Quite high		Very high	
	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

22. How high are the expectations of the members of your team that they and others will achieve excellence in their work for the team?

	Low			About average		Quite high		Very high
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

23. How much do your team members encourage each other to work together as a team?

	Very little			Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

24. How much trust and confidence do your team members have in one another?

	Very little			Little		Considerable		A very great deal
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

25. How well do your team members understand the problems which their peers face in relationship to their church work situation?

	Not well			Somewhat		Quite well		Very well
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX F

CC5 Survey

the Center for Parish Development

5407 South University Avenue • Chicago, IL 60615
312-752-1596

PROFILE OF A CHURCH

Form CC5 — Revised

(For use by Lay Members in examining Local Church Climate)

This questionnaire is designed to learn more about how all the persons in the church organization can best work together to fulfill the mission of the church. The aim is to use the information to make the work of the church more faithful, effective, and satisfying.

If the results are to be helpful, it is important that you answer each question as thoughtfully and frankly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

The answers on the questionnaires are processed by computers which summarize the responses in statistical form so that individuals cannot be identified. To ensure COMPLETE CONFIDENTIALITY, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.

In the space provided below, please indicate today's date and the name of your church and answer the other four questions by filling in the appropriate circles. This information will not be used to identify you. It will be used only to consolidate responses from a number of individuals in similar positions in the church life.

TODAY'S DATE: _____

YOUR CHURCH: _____

1. Sex

   ○ Male
   ○ Female

2. Age

   ○ Under 12
   ○ 12-18
   ○ 19-24
   ○ 25-34
   ○ 35-44
   ○ 45-54
   ○ 55-64
   ○ 65+

3. Length of time in present congregation membership

   ○ Two years or less
   ○ 2-4 years
   ○ 5 or more years

4. Board or Council membership

   ○ Presently a member of Church Board or Council
   ○ Not presently a member of Church Board or Council

Please answer each question as you see the situation **NOW** by circling the number above the line in the category that best describes your view of the present situation. Also, please circle the number below the line that best describes how you would **LIKE** the situation to be.

1. Does your congregation show a real interest in the welfare and satisfaction of those who attend its services and other programs?

	A little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

2. How much do you look forward to coming to church services and other events in the church?

	A little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

3. Are there things about being part of this congregation (such as people, policies or conditions) that make you want to give your time and effort to the church?

	A few		Some		Quite a number		A great many	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

4. How much do the leaders of this church try to provide programs which help members address significant problems they are facing?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

5. Do the leaders of this church have clear-cut, reasonable goals and objectives?

	Hardly at all		A few vague ones		Fairly clear		Good, clear goals	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

6. How receptive are persons in the top level of your church's leadership to suggestions and ideas coming from members in general?

	Not receptive		Somewhat receptive		Fairly receptive		Very receptive	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

7. Do the leaders you know in your church seek out and use ideas developed by lay members?

	Hardly at all		Somewhat		Quite a bit		To a very great extent	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

8. Are decisions about church matters made at those levels where the most adequate and accurate information is available?

	Almost never		Sometimes		Usually		Almost always	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

9. Is information widely shared so that those who make decisions have access to people at all levels with know-how?

	Almost never		Sometimes		Usually		Almost always	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

10. How much influence do you feel that rank-and-file members have on what goes on in your local church?

	Very little		Some		Quite a bit		A very great deal	
N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX G

Problem Identification Worksheet

Complete one of these forms for each problem selected for processing by your group.

INDEX ITEM: _____

(Copy the item selected from the Likert Index chart.)

LIKE SCORE: ____

NOW SCORE: ____

DISCREPANCY: ____

NUMBER(S) OF SURVEY QUESTION(S) THAT PERTAIN: _____

SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR YOU HAD IN MIND WHEN SCORING THE QUESTIONNAIRE	WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU, THIS GROUP, AND/OR THE CONGREGATION

APPENDIX H

Problem Analysis Worksheet

In the spaces below, list the forces that are blocking your group from more effective work, and those that are promoting your group's effectiveness.

BLOCKING FORCES	PROMOTING FORCES

APPENDIX I

Clarifying Essential Conditions Worksheet

On the left side, list your "essential conditions" which a solution must meet if you are to be enthusiastic about it. These are your **non-negotiables.** On the right side, list the "desirable conditions" for a solution. These are your **negotiables.**

ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS (Non-Negotiables)	DESIRABLE CONDITIONS (Negotiables)

APPENDIX J

Goal Setting Worksheet

In the left hand column write your "wishes" (dreams, visions) for how you most would like this church or team to end up as a result of this process. In the right hand column, turn your "wishes" into "how to's" -- your goals for what this team must learn to do if these wishes are to be realized.

"I WISH"	"HOW TO:" GOALS FOR WHAT THE TEAM MUST LEARN

APPENDIX K

Generating Alternative Solutions Worksheet

1. In the space below, define the problem you are trying to solve. **The Problem:**
2. In the space below, list the major essential conditions which a solution must meet if people are to support it enthusiastically.
3. In the space below, jot down any brain stormed possible alternative solutions to the problem that occurred to you. Add to this list as the brainstorming process proceeds. Share these with the group as opportunities arise.

APPENDIX L

Preferred Solution, Action Steps, Assignments Worksheet

PREFERRED SOLUTION	ACTION STEPS TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION OR TARGET DATE

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