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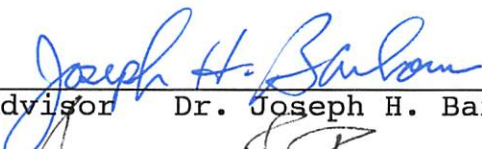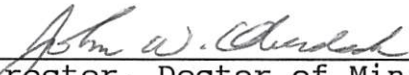
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Applying Strategic Planning Toward the Development of an Effective and Joyful Ministry Team in the Local Church

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APPLYING STRATEGIC PLANNING TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN
EFFECTIVE AND JOYFUL MINISTRY TEAM
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

This study chronicles the activities of the ministry team of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School with respect to the implementation of the strategic planning process. The greatest benefit of strategic planning for the congregation and its ministry team is focus. The stage is set to be proactive rather than reactive in an ever changing environment. The future no longer brings fear, but challenges faith. The past becomes a rich heritage, marked by God's grace; serving as fertile ground for roots of faith in a faithful God who will also guide and provide in the years to come.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR MINISTRY TEAMS

The Challenge of the Church's Ministry

The Church is the people of God "called out" and "set apart" for the will of God. While we are "the called out one", we are also the "sent one" back into the world to call others out by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the administration of the Sacraments. God, the Holy Spirit, promises to work His saving grace in the hearts and lives of people through these Means of Grace, namely, the Word and Sacraments. People are brought to saving faith in the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus, by the effective power of the Holy Spirit and made citizens of God's eternal kingdom.

Jesus summarized the mission of the Church when He commissioned the eleven disciples prior to His ascension: "Make disciples of all nations by going, by baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19). This great commission thrusts the Church of all time to action in faithful obedience to her Lord. Those first disciples were a ministry team, called together by Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and sent on a mission into the world. Only the names and the context of ministry have changed today.

It is that context of ministry that precipitates this Major Applied Project on strategic planning and its application

to team ministry. The Church in western culture ministers in what Loren Mead calls a post Christian era[1]. At the same time, to a greater or lesser extent, the Church has become institutional rather than missional, reactive rather than proactive, passive rather than aggressive when it comes to carrying out the mission of the Lord, "to seek and save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10).

In recent decades of United States history, rural areas have declined in population where many of our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations thrived in ministry.[2] In the meantime, urban and suburban communities have exploded with growth. Under the blessing of God, many congregations, in my observation during 12 years of ministry, have responded to this enlarged mission field of the urban sprawl with the inherent challenges of a large parish. Hence, the relatively recent rise of team ministry in the context of the local church with its various definitions, dimensions, dreams and downfalls.

Efforts to clarify issues relative to the church's needs per team ministry have been made. Our own Concordia system of colleges and universities have sought to provide various degreed programs such as Director of Christian Education with specialties in youth, music, or adult education, along with Director of

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[1]Loren B. Mead, _The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier_. (The Alban Institute, Inc.), p 63.

[2]Lyle E. Schaller, _It's a Different World_ (Abingdon Press), pp. 45,46

Christian Outreach, Deaconess, Lay Ministry and Parish Assistant.
However, there has perhaps been added confusion with discussions
regarding "generalist" and "specialist" in ministry with such
confusion multiplied by high expectations placed upon the
church's ministry by a high-tech, service-driven culture.[3]

The challenge of the church's ministry has been, is, and
will be to carry out the mission of making disciples of Jesus
Christ through the Means of Grace within the context of the world
to which it is sent. As the people of God, we are to use the
gifts which He gives to effectively accomplish that mission even
in a context that in recent times has accelerated with change.
One of the gifts He gives to His church is full and part-time
workers who have been called by Him through the church to share
in team ministry. How can we be better stewards of that gift?
The strategic planning process is one way to enhance the
effectiveness and the joy of team ministry in the local church.

A Definition of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is the process of formulating long-range
planning for an organization. Although there is no single
definition of strategic planning, this definition by Peter
Drucker may be most helpful:

> Strategic planning is the continual process of making
> entrepreneurial (risk-taking) decisions systematically
> and with the greatest knowledge of their futurity;
> organizing systematically the efforts needed to carry

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[3]Lyle E Schaller, It's a Different World, (Abingdon Press),
pp. 200-209.

out these decisions; and measuring these decisions against expectations through organized systematic feedback.[4]

A distinction must be made between "intuitive strategic planning" and "formal strategic planning." The former has been a part of organized societies for thousands of years, but it is more reactionary in nature than the latter. The emphasis in formal strategic planning is a future orientation which seeks to anticipate potential change. Formal strategic planning in the business world is, therefore, relatively new. The primary reason for its emergence in the last few decades is the need to effectively manage a business in an environment that is characterized by continual change. It minimizes the element of surprise and maximizes the ability to manage change more effectively. It allows a team or company to move from "reacting" to "acting." A mechanism for evaluation of progress and personnel is also an inherent benefit of strategic planning.[5]

The strategic planning process includes, as a high priority, a careful analysis of the present environment, both inside and outside of the group or company, as well as a strong future orientation. Within that framework the plan is developed to effectively achieve the desired future.[6] A mission statement,

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[4]James Jurinski, <u>Strategic Planning</u> (American Management Association), p. 1.

[5]Ibid, <u>Strategic Planning</u> (American Management Association), p. 2.

[6]Arthur A. Thompson, Jr. and A.J. Stricklend, III, <u>Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases</u>, 5th ed. (Boston: Irwin, 1990), p. 91.

articulation of values, goal-setting, and evaluation are all part of the process. It is helpful at this point to outline the various steps in the strategic planning process as they relate to team building.

The Situational Analysis

In this first phase of the planning process, information is gathered regarding the environment in which the team (or company) is to perform its work. Facts about the internal and external situation are collected and catalogued as either a STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY, or THREAT. The acronym S.W.O.T. analysis is helpful to remember what information the group is looking for.[7]

The Vision Statement

While this step springs from the first, which tells the group where the organization is, this is the most critical for the overall process since all other steps in the process relate intimately to it.

> Cheshire Puss, Alice began...would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?
> That depends on where you want to go, said the cat.[8]

The vision statement basically answers three questions:

1) What business are we in?

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[7]Arthur A. Thompson, Jr. and A.J. Stricklend, III, <u>Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases</u>, 5th ed. (Boston: Irwin, 1990), pp. 46-48.

[8]Ibid., quoting from Lewis Carroll), p. 3.

2) What do we believe in?

3) Where are we going? or What do we want to become?[9]

Team Mission Statement

Here the team must ask the questions:

1) Who are we?

2) What is our role in the organization?

3) How do we relate as a group to the organization's

vision?

The team's mission becomes, in large part, its identity.

> The first step in transforming a group of individuals
> into a team is to gain a shared understanding of the
> team's purpose. A team mission statement can generate
> enthusiasm and commitment by expressing that purpose. A
> mission statement also clarifies the team's part in
> achieving the organizational goals and helps each person
> make stronger individual contributions.[10]

The Statement of Values

This phase outlines the manner in which the group will

proceed toward the achievement of their stated mission. Some

values will be held higher than others by the group. Strongly

held values will serve as "a benchmark for judging both company

policies and actions and individual conduct...Value statements

serve as cornerstones for culture-building"[11] within the group

of organizations. They are the moral watch dogs.

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[9]John Zenger, <u>Leading Teams: Mastering the New Role</u>, p. 156.

[10]Ibid, <u>Leading Teams: Mastering the New Role</u>, p. 94.

[11]James Jurinski, <u>Strategic Planning</u> (American Management
Association), p.

Core values can have tremendous effect when they take consistent outward form in daily behaviors.

> You'd be very unwise to fling your body against a moored freighter in an effort to move it away from the pier. But place one finger against the hull and lean...and before long, it begins to move! In the same way, the steady pressure of a new or renewed values can move great organizations.[12]

Goals and/or Objectives

The terms, goals and objectives, are used interchangeably among planning consultants. Objectives may be a bit more broad in scope than goals. However, the key elements are a relationship to the vision, clarity, and measurability.

> Goals represent incremental, short term steps toward realizing the vision.[13]

> Achieving focus requires a vision and a clear, complete and measurable set of goals based on the vision. The vision and the goals must be shared by everyone in the organization. But the focus also requires that everyone have a set of performance measures based on the organization's goals.[14]

That introduces well the next step in strategic planning.

Personal Mission Statements

The phase, Personal Mission Statement, is not technically a part of the strategic planning process. It is an addition that I deem important and takes the place of the "set of performance

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[12]John Zenger, <u>Leading Teams: Mastering the New Role</u>, p. 157.

[13]Harlan Jessup, "The Road to Results with Teams," <u>Training and Development</u>, September 1992, p. 67.

[14]Peter Turney, "Beyond TQM...", <u>Management Accounting</u>, September 1993, p. 28.

measures" mentioned in the quotation above. It also relates to the final step of the strategic planning process, namely, the development of action plans and task assignments based on the agreed upon objectives of the group or organization. "The people who do the work have the most knowledge about what they do."[15]

At this point in the process it is important for each member of the team to answer the questions:

1) How am I uniquely gifted?

2) What is my role in the team's mission?

3) What will be my contribution toward the vision and mission?

A personal mission statement helps the team member function more effectively and joyfully because it helps him/her to say "yes" or "no" with confidence when faced with prioritizing tasks. Such a mission statement also assists greatly with team member evaluations since it provides an objective criteria which he/she has penned.

Action Plans for the Team and "Team" Evaluation

This final step in strategic planning constitutes the ongoing process of communicating the vision, values, mission, and objectives that the team has birthed. It calls for outlining and assigning tasks, and the evaluation of progress toward the stated objectives, and hence, toward the vision. The evaluation process is ongoing since each action plan is designed with the

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[15]Peter Turney, "Beyond TQM...", Management Accounting, September 1993, p. 28.

inherent questions, "Was the task done?" and "What was the result?". It means developing and implementing action plans with specific time frames.[16]

As a final note, this phase also directs the team to review constantly the changes in the organization's environment or context and outline contingency plans.

Approaches to Strategic Planning

There are four approaches to performing the strategic planning process: The Master Strategist, The Delegate It to Others, The Collaborative, and the Champion. For the purposes of this project the Collaborative Approach will be used. Such an approach encourages the involvement of key personnel under the direction of a specified leader to "hammer out a consensus strategy that all 'the key players' will back and do their best to implement successfully."[17]

A Definition of "Team Ministry"

In order to arrive at a definition of "team ministry," it is essential first to define each term of the compound. Then based on a common understanding of each, a composite definition in the context of the church can be achieved.

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[16]James Jurinski, Strategic Planning (American Management Association), pp. 79-80

[17]Arthur A. Thompson, Jr. and A.J. Stricklend, III, Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases, 5th ed. (Boston: Irwin, 1990), pp. 52-53.

Ministry

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in its September 1981 report on The Ministry provides valuable insights from Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions with regard to a definition of ministry.

Ministry, in the general sense of service (diakonia) may be applied to all Christians in that all are called through faith in Christ to be a part of the Holy Priesthood (I Peter 2:9). It is to His Church that Christ has given the power and authority to forgive and retain sins, which we call "The Office of the Keys." However, the public exercise of this office is given to certain members of the church who are rightly called and authorized by God through the church. "While there are many aspects and functions of ministry in the church, there is only one ministry. The pastoral office is unique in that all the functions of the church's ministry belong to it".[18]

Dr. Robert Kolb and Steve Arnold explain it this way:

> To be sure, there are several Biblical givens as we define public ministry. First, God instituted an office of administering the Word among His people. That office serves the people of God as His tool for the public use of the means of grace. It leads people in service in a Godlike way. That is why it is called the ministry (Mark 10:42-45). Second, the character and characteristics of God's public servants are set forth (e.g., in 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 1:5-16). Characteristics such as "not being quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting...opponents with gentleness" spell out the servant model of the public

[18]"A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, September 1981," The Ministry-Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1983), p. 19.

ministry. Third, fleeting glimpses of the activities of those engaged in public ministry in Luke's and Paul's lifetime provide a fairly firm picture of their involvement in the proclamation of the Word, but the specifics of their "job description" escape us. God has given His church the freedom to let the public ministry take the shape that bests serves the Word and the Lord in specific cultural settings.

The Lutheran Confessions offer more specific guidance about the shape and functions of offices in the church. Luther was supremely interested in questions relating to how the Word, in the various forms of the means of grace (cf. Smalcald Articles III:IV), works. He was supremely disinterested in questions of the precise shape of the public ministry. He took the public ministry for granted as a Scriptural given; he exercised no little freedom in redesigning the pastoral office for service in the newly reformed congregations that accepted his theology.[19]

Therefore, ministry is the proclamation of God's word and the administration of the sacraments and all the functions that pertain to it. In this project, the term ministry will be limited to those holding specific positions to which they have been called or for which they have been contracted by the local congregation. It should be understood that all such positions and functions are under the administration of what is commonly called the Office of the Public Ministry.

Team

A group of people is not a team. A team is a group of people with a high degree of interdependence geared toward the achievement of a goal or the completion of a task. In other words, they agree on a goal and agree that the only way to

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[19]Steven Arnold and Robert Kolb, "The Software of Service: Lutheran Presupposition and Perspective on the Public Ministry and the Office of Teacher," Lutheran Education Association Monograph Series, Vol. 19, No. 2, (Saint Paul, Concordia College), p. 6.

achieve that goal is to work together.[20] It is not the gathering of gifted athletes in one location that makes a team. They may have just happened to be there for dinner. A team is created when gifts are shared and woven together to accomplish a shared agenda.

It is important to note in defining "team" that there is more than simply participation. Team participation is not an end in itself. There is always a goal toward which the team is striving. It is this goal that gives the team cohesion and identity. This common goal and cohesion give the team "character."

Elements of group character that make a team:

1) Spirit. It is an intangible element, but is an arouser of loyalty, pride, and a sense of belonging, all heavy contributors to group achievement.

2) Interdependence. A group builds a kind of network of inner struts and ribs, invisible structures that support and strengthen.

3) Self-subordination. The willingness of the individual to set aside personal convenience, even benefit for the good of the group...ignoring personal preference.[21]

Even though good teamwork is something all organizations may strive for, the question of exactly how good teams get so

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[20]Glenn Parker, <u>Team Players and Team Work: The New Competitive Business Strategy</u>, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), p. 16.

[21]Auren Uris, <u>The Executive Handbook</u>, p. 142.

good is a bit elusive. However, team-building guru, Bruce W.
Tuckman, already in 1965 outlined four stages that effective
groups can anticipate going through: Forming, Norming, Storming,
and Performing.

> During the "forming" stage, teams start learning what's
> to be done and by whom...In the second stage, "norming,"
> team members begin to establish expectations of one
> another and of operating procedures...The "storming"
> stage comes about when problems arise from differences of
> information, perceptions, roles or values that team
> members have...The fourth stage is "performing." Now the
> team concentrates on important issues and produces a high
> volume of quality work...When members are gained or lost,
> the team often returns to the forming stage, but its
> progression to the performing stage usually goes faster
> than the original team-building effort.[22]

Team Ministry

Having discussed the two elements of the compound, a
working defintion for team ministry may be offered. Team
ministry is the service of a group of God's people in Christ
specifically called by a local congregation to publicly
administer the Word and Sacraments under the umbrella of the
Pastoral Office. As a team, they share a common goal. They
willingly share their individual gifts toward the accomplishment
of that goal. While each team member may be called to carry out
different aspects of the ministry, team member's individual
identity is clarified and enhanced by the team and its shared
goal(s). Not all team members are called to administrate the
sacraments, but all are called to share in the ministry. The
total is greater than the sum of its parts.

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[22]"Developing Teams," Training, August 1992, pp. 12-14.

There are hindrances to the experience of "team" in team ministry however. Kolb and Arnold rightly observe:

> In a fallen world, ministers of the Word are always vulnerable to becoming victims of Satan's lies. Nowhere does Satan get more delight in letting his lies disrupt God's harmony than among ministers of the Word, especially when God has named them to a team of ministry in a congregation. Influenced by their environment, ministers slip the Gentile software in so easily and begin to play the power game. We do that because we lose confidence in God's Word of acceptance to each of us as individuals. We try to secure our own lives and positions through God's creations, including His creation of the office of the ministry, rather than recognizing that Christ secures our identity and worth for us.[23]

Summary

The challenge of the church's ministry to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) is made even greater when we take into consideration our rapidly changing culture. While the message of God's saving love in Jesus has not changed, and His Spirit is as powerful as ever, the church has not risen to the challenge if declining synodical membership is any indication. It is my contention that the problem is not with God or the Means of Grace which He has given to His church, but the problem lies in the administration of those means. In His grace, God has chosen to carry His treasure in "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). And it is the "love of Christ that compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14) to be faithful to this stewardship from God.

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[23]Steven Arnold and Robert Kolb, "The Software of Service: Lutheran Presupposition and Perspective on the Public Ministry and the Office of Teacher," Lutheran Education Association Monograph Series, Vol. 19, No. 2, (Saint Paul, Concordia College), p. 10.

In particular, the purpose of this project will be to address the unique concerns of team ministry which is described above as "the service of a group of God's people specifically called by a local congregation to publicly administer the Word and Sacraments under the umbrella of the Pastoral Office." While some are called to serve specifically to teach the word, others are uniquely called to preach, teach and administer the sacraments. Still are all part of the ministry team.

Again, Kolb and Arnold rightly observe:

> Only when the relationship between pastors and teachers can be seen as a matter of the Word and its service—service to God through service to His people, can questions of Gentile power be set aside. Then it is possible to focus on the important questions of power: how can this pastor and this teacher work together to loose the power of God's Word into the lives of God's people, so that they die to sin and rise to newness of life in Christ?[24]

The question is, "How do we proceed under God's grace to work together to loose the power of God's Word?" Through the use of the collaborative approach of strategic planning, I hope to develop a more cohesive and joyful ministry team that more effectively administrates the Means of grace. Through such planning, the ministry team may better negotiate the fluctuating currents of change in order to communicate the changeless, but life-changing, Gospel. And thereby, Make disciples.

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[24]Steven Arnold and Robert Kolb, "The Software of Service: Lutheran Presupposition and Perspective on the Public Ministry and the Office of Teacher," <u>Lutheran Education Association Monograph Series</u>, Vol. 19, No. 2, (Saint Paul, Concordia College), p. 5.

It is hoped that the degree of satisfaction and joy in ministry will be elevated among team members as they share together through the planning process and the carrying out of the mission. As the team works through the planning process and strives toward the vision they will experience "forming, norming, storming, and performing."[25] They will celebrate each other's unique gifts and contributions to the whole as they encounter interdependence and synergism with fellow team-mates, when one plus one equals more than two.

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[25]Auren Uris, The Executive Handbook, p. 142.

CHAPTER II

A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

AND MINISTRY TEAMS

Any discussion of the church's ministry must bow to the
scriptures as the final source and norm. If there is not ample
support in the word of God for a course of action either
descriptively or prescriptively then the action is better not
taken.

However, there are ample examples of both team ministry
and strategic planning in both the Old and the New Testaments of
Holy Writ. These are not prescriptive in nature in that we are
thereby commanded or directed to proceed in this manner, but they
are descriptive in nature. By that I mean that God's Word
describes people and events in such a way that elements of team
work and strategic planning are evidenced within the text or
alluded to by the actions or words recorded. Through an
examination of such accounts we are better able to make God-
pleasing decisions regarding a given course of action.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to examine several
biblical accounts and passages of God's use of team ministry and
strategic planning among His people. Examples of team work among
God's people are many. However, only a few are connected to

strategic planning either explicitly or implicitly. Therefore the discussion will be limited to those texts where both elements of this project are found.

Old Testament Examples

Moses and Aaron

The call of Moses into leadership of God's people, Israel, is recorded in Exodus, Chapters 3-4. In this account, God reveals to Moses His strategic plan to deliver the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. This is an example of the "Master Strategist" approach to strategic planning, with God as the Master Strategist. God has assessed the situation:

> The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering" (Exodus 3:7).

God has also set the vision that is to fulfill His covenant promise to Abraham:

> So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Exodus 3:8, see also vs. 16-17).

God's plan also includes Moses: "So now go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10).

However, Moses is reluctant because of his perceived inadequacies. In particular, he is concerned about his inability to speak well (See Exodus 4:10). Interestingly enough, God does not choose to change Moses and gift him with an eloquent tongue.

Instead, God creates a ministry team as He has also called Aaron, the brother of Moses.

> The LORD became angry with Moses and said, "Have you not your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know that he is an eloquent speaker. Besides, he is now on his way to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will be glad. You are to speak to him, then, and put the words in his mouth. I will assist both you and him in speaking and will teach the two of you what you are to do. He shall speak to the people for you: he shall be your spokesman, and you shall be as God to him. Take this staff in your hand; with it you are to perform the signs" (Exodus 4:14-17).

Directed by God, Moses, with his teammate, Aaron, confront Pharaoh and eventually lead the people of Israel out of captivity as recorded in the next several chapters of Exodus. However, the completion of God's plan was yet to be accomplished.

Jethro's Plan for Team Ministry

Exodus 18 records the visit of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. During this visit Jethro observes Moses carrying out what apparently was his regular duties as the judge over God's people. The account is as follows:

> The next day Moses sat in judgment for the people, who waited about him from morning to evening. When his father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he inquired, "What sort of thing is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone while all the people have to stand about you from morning till evening?" Moses answered his father-in-law, "The people come to me to consult God. Whenever they have a disagreement, they come to me to have me settle the matter between them and make known to them God's decisions and regulations" (Exodus 18:13-16).

Jethro discerns that such an administration is not wise and will lead to frustration. He then suggests a strategic plan to accomplish the desired result of God's people knowing His will

in civil and domestic matters. Jethro's elements of Strategic planning are these:

1) Assessment of the situation: "What you are doing is not good...the work is too heavy for you" (v. 17).

2) Desired result is stated: "...The people come to seek God's will...You (Moses) must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him...make your (Moses) load lighter" (vs. 15,19,22).

3) A plan is suggested, then implemented: "Teach them the decrees and laws...but select capable men from all the people...and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens have them serve as judges over the people at all times, but have them bring the very difficult cases to you...Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said" (vs. 20-22,24).

God used Jethro in a more "collaborative" approach to strategic planning to better administrate the will of God among His people. It was collaborative in that Jethro had no specific authority over Moses to demand that his plan be followed. Moses, as well as those officials that he appointed, participated in the process, and a ministry team was created.

Nehemiah and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem's Wall

The Book of Nehemiah recounts the work of God through his appointed leader Nehemiah to accomplish the rebuilding of the wall in Jerusalem. The story is couched during the Babylonian

exile of the Children of Israel. Nehemiah is allowed by King
Artixerxes to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls. The
desired goal of the plan is simply to rebuild the wall, but the
efforts of Sanballet and Tobia, the opposition party, necessitate
the use of another aspect of strategic planning, namely: a
contingency plan.

The elements of strategic planning and team building
contained in Nehemiah's experience are outlined as follows:

1) The Vision cast: "If it pleases the king...let him send
   me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so
   that I can rebuild it" (2:5).

2) Assessment of the situation: "I set out during the
   night...examining the walls" (2:12,13).

3) Values clarified: God and His people cannot be
   disgraced by the shabby condition of God's city
   (See 1:3-10; 2:17).

4) Collaboration with subordinates: "Then I said to them,
   'You see the trouble we are in'...they replied, 'Let us
   start rebuilding!'" (2:17,18).

5) Contingency plan to confound their enemies: "From that
   day on, half the men did the work, while the other half
   were equipped with spears, shields, bow and armor...and
   each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he
   worked" (4:16,18).

Nehemiah is certainly a good example of leadership, but
the cohesion experienced by the work-team in rebuilding the wall

was primarily accomplished by the Holy Spirit working through a driving vision collaboratively agreed upon. Because there was a strategic plan, when the environment changed and became hostile to the accomplishment of the plan, a contingency plan could be implemented. Thereby, the work proceeded and a team spirit remained high.

New Testament Examples

Jesus and His Disciples

As with the call of Moses by God, the collaborative approach to strategic planning and team building is absent from the call of Jesus to His disciples. It is always the case, that divine monergism calls, gathers, and enlightens by the Gospel. In this instance, the very Word of God incarnate, Jesus Christ, calls the twelve to follow Him. Eventually He commissions them to carry out His strategic plan. Jesus is the Master Strategist. The eleven who remain after Judas' betrayal and subsequent death are a ministry team called by the grace of God in Christ and centered around the Great Commission of Matthew 28.

For the purposes of this writing, I will extract elements of strategic planning as it relates to the development of the disciples as a ministry team. No attempt is made here to capsulize the ministry of Jesus with His disciples into a packaged program. It is simply my desire to illustrate that the ministry of Christ through His Church bears elements of strategic planning that began already with the call and commissioning of

the first disciples by the Lord Jesus. Such observations are largely descriptive, rather than prescriptive in nature.

1) Situation assessment: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing" (Matthew 22:37). God's gracious plan for His people, Israel, was often frustrated by their disobedience and disregard for His Covenant promises through the prophets. Nevertheless, His ultimate plan of salvation for all people through the promise to Abraham would not be thwarted (Genesis 12). God's grace would overpower the sinful situation by the cross and empty tomb of Christ.

2) Values stated: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:16-17).

3) Vision cast: "Go make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19).

4) Strategic plan outlined: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

All the training, teaching and encouragement that the disciples received from the Lord Jesus culminated in their participation in His strategic plan. Even after His ascension, the disciples were not left to themselves to carry out the plan; but rather the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them on the Day of Pentecost and continued to enlighten, direct, and empower them as a team in ministry for their Lord.

Paul and Barnabas

This story about the co-labors of Paul and Barnabas recorded in the Book of Acts highlights for us an important point about team ministry and its relationship to strategic planning. Paul and Barnabas part company. The cause for their break-up was not doctrinal, but rather a disagreement with regard to the plan or the manner in which it was to be carried out. It may even have been a disagreement about "values" relative to the plan. Paul may have had an urgent pace, while Barnabas exercised more patience in the process. Barnabas may have placed more emphasis on relationships while Paul focused on the task of mission. But imagination must be the servant, not the guide.

Paul and Barnabas had worked as a ministry team, set apart by the Holy Spirit, in Cyprus, Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. The mission was to proclaim the Gospel to the Jews who were living in Gentile provinces. Barnabas was the team leader if the account of the activities in Lystra bare testimony. "Barnabas they call Zeus (the chief god) and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker" (Acts 14:12).

Another partner in Ministry had been John Mark. However he left to return to Jerusalem early on in their travels (Acts 13:13). The reason for his departure is not stated. However, Paul's dissatisfaction over his departure is noted in Acts 15:38. It was a disagreement over whether or not to take John Mark along on the return trip which led to a break-up of Paul and Barnabas as a ministry team. It is important to note here that the vision of mission stayed intact despite the disagreement. Paul simply continued on with Silas; and Barnabas with John Mark. Interestingly enough, two ministry teams were now aggressively working in the Lord's mission. Both ministry teams were successful under the Lord's blessing.

Summary

While there is little evidence that "Formal Strategic Planning" was used in the accounts discussed above, it is clear that "intuitive strategic planning" was a part of the life and ministry experience of God's people. Such planning enabled and enhanced the called servants of God to work together as a team in service to God.

Although examples of strategic planning relative to teamwork are descriptive in nature, there are ample passages of scripture that are prescriptive with regard to teamwork and planning respectively. Drawn together, we can understand strategic planning as an exercise in biblical stewardship of God's varied grace given to His church through His called

servants in team ministry. It can serve as a framework for putting God's Word into action.

Planning

Jesus instructs all would-be followers to count the cost of discipleship. He chooses as His example the strategic planning of a king who must "First sit down and consider whether he is able with 10,000 men to oppose the one coming against him with 20,000" (Luke 14:25-33).

The book of Proverbs points out the folly of planning without the Lord in mind and the blessing of planning good things which honor God. "There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD" (Proverbs 21:30). "Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love and faithfulness" (Proverbs 14:22).

The Apostle Paul communicated that He made ministry plans as he wrote requesting support for his ministry destination of Spain and therefore his planned visit to Rome (Romans 15:23-29). He encouraged the Christians in Rome to prepare a plan to give similarly to his instructions to the church in Corinth (II Corinthians 9:1-15).

Team Work or Working Together as God's People

Paul's letters are a rich source of instruction regarding shared ministry. The picture is that of the Church being the Body of Christ where each person is a member of the body, uniquely gifted, fully a child of God yet incomplete without the gifts of other members. In fact, fellow members of the Body of

Christ are dependent upon the others to carry out the ministry of the church (Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12). In Ephesians, Paul lists Apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastor/teacher as gifts to God's church for the purpose of building up the people of God until they reach maturity in Christ (Ephesians 4:4-11). Paul also saw himself as part of a larger ministry team used by God to bring the saving message of Christ to people as he seeks to defuse partisanship (I Corinthians 3:1-15).

CHAPTER III

A REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC

PLANNING PROCESS WITH THE MINISTRY TEAM OF

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

This chapter will chronicle the activities of the writer
and the rest of the ministry team of St. Peter Lutheran Church
and School with respect to the strategic planning process. It
represents over three years of effort on the part of all,
including several key lay leaders, as well as a large segment of
the congregation's membership.

While the report is outlined according to the phases of
formal strategic planning, as described in Chapter One, it is to
be understood that not all aspects of each step were taken in
exact sequence. This is due in large part to the immediate and
ongoing demands of the ministry.

Also, it should be noted that the whole process was
initiated and stalled a few times due to staffing changes. Since
no long-range planning had been done for the future ministry of
St. Peter Lutheran Church, staff changes brought about more of a
"reaction" rather than a "response." While a ministry cannot

plan or anticipate the call of God upon an existing team member to another ministry, contingency plans can be developed to respond to such a situation along with a procedure for assimilation of the new member. However, to have a contingency plan is to assume that there is a plan at all. Instead, time was invested with each new team member, to inform them of our progress in the Strategic Planning Process. In this way, new team members could participate more fully in the on-going work.

A Description of the Ministry Context

Upon arrival as the new Administrative Pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School in February, 1993, I immediately began to gather data for a situational analysis of the congregation's ministry and ministry team. This would serve as a baseline for measuring progress for congregational growth and health, as well as team cohesion, joy, and effectiveness.

The Situational Analysis included several steps. First, a ten year statistical report on the congregation was prepared with the use of existing computer and hard-copy files. This report included trends in the congregation's growth and/or decline in areas of finances, membership, worship attendance, and Sunday School and Bible class attendance. Comparisons were also made in regard to transfer growth and adult baptism or profession of faith. An age/sex graph was also included to communicate the congregation's demographics.

A demographic report of our ministry community based on the most recent census (1990) was ordered through the Michigan

District Office of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. This
report listed population, household types, average and median
income statistics and projected population growth for the county.

In addition, a "team" ministry survey was taken of all
staff members to discern staff cohesion and to identify areas of
need in team building. The survey used was adapted from Parker's
team survey.[26] Also included was a "Discernment Worksheet"
designed to gather input from team members about strengths and
weaknesses specific to the team.[27] These forms are included in
Chapter IV.

Finally, a seven month process was carried out to involve
a large segment of the congregation's communicant membership to
gather input and insight from the Body. This involved an hour
and a half meeting each Wednesday evening from May through
November of 1993. Each elder group household was contacted by
written invitation and followed up by a personal phone call from
a volunteer encouraging them to attend a "Meet the Pastor Night."
During these sessions I led a discussion with twenty to forty
people regarding their perceptions of the congregation's
strengths, weaknesses, and future dreams for ministry. Notes
were taken on butcher paper.

For the purposes of clarity the, acronym S.W.O.T. will be
used to communicate the situational analysis. What follows in

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[26]Glenn Parker, Team Players and Team Work: The New Competitive
Business Strategy (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), pp. 155, 156,
157.

[27]Ibid, p. 158.

this section is an outlined composite of the information gathered from the procedures listed above. It is helpful to note that the first two sections, namely "strengths" and "weaknesses" are focused on the internal environment of the organization, while the latter two, "opportunities" and "threats" focus on the external environment.[28] I reiterate, these are perceptions of both team members and lay participants. Listed below are items that consistently were named throughout the process described above.

Strengths

Team Strengths:

- Common faith in Christ
- Well educated and trained for ministry tasks
- Shared leadership among departments
- Affirmation from other team members
- Safe environment
- Hard working individuals

Congregational Strengths:

- Location: Next to Lutheran High North, North central Macomb County, major North/South thoroughfare gives high visibility
- Property: over forty acres
- Facility: large school complex

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[28]James Jurinski, <u>Strategic Planning</u> (American Management Association), pp. 45-60.

- Day school

- Dedicated staff

- History of numerical growth

- Traditional Lutheran worship, but willing to try new forms to meet needs.

- Music ministry

- Biblical sermons/God's Word and Sacraments

- Strong family roots

- Financial support of membership for ministry

- Confessionally Lutheran

- Large core of faithful volunteers

- Increased worship attendance annually

- Known as a "friendly congregation"

- Congregation's demographics reflect well that of the community.

Weaknesses

Team Weaknesses:

- Lack of communication of mission

- Lack of communication of expectations

- Poor conflict resolution

- Lack of team focus, no team mission statement

- All do not feel "connected"

- School staff feels separated from pastoral staff

- Little or no evaluation

- Only work, very little socializing

- Feel taken for granted

Congregational Weaknesses:

- 1.4 million dollar debt

- Lack of relational infrastructure: "I don't know who these other people are."

- Sanctuary is too small (seats 350). While average worship attendance has grown annually over the past ten years, the percentage of membership in weekly worship has declined from 43% to 40%.

- School getting filled to capacity. Soon there will not even be room for all the member children.

- Youth ministry

- Understaffed

- Decline in Adult Bible class attendance. In particular, relative to the introduction of an additional worship service at that hour in 1989.

- Day school ministry consumes 72% of overall budget. Other areas of ministry suffer neglect.

- Living week to week. No long-range plan(s).

- While income has increased, per communicant member giving has decreased.

- A large number of "inactive" members

Opportunities

(Note: since this and the next portion of the S.W.O.T. analysis was not part of the "team" survey, only a general listing is given based on the "Meet the Pastor Nights" and the demographic study.)

- Young and growing county. Estimating 9-13% population increase over the next 5-8 years.
- 51% unchurched in the county.
- Romeo Plank Road to be widened in near future.
- 24 Mile Road to be paved East of Romeo Plank Road.
- Garfield Road to be completed, will provide Northwest access to church's property.
- Property values increased due to community growth.
- Romeo School District moving to Outcome Based Education, families are concerned about quality.
- Lutheran High School Association plans to expand Lutheran North's facility.
- Need in community for senior housing and/or adult day care
- Area farms being sold to developers
- Most households are double income families with young children

Threats

- High property taxes and indebtedness puts financial pressure on young homeowners.
- Economy fluctuates with the auto industry.

- White collar community is highly mobile.
- Some people join the congregation only to "escape" the cost of tuition with little or no commitment to the congregation's overall ministry while other Lutheran schools have gone to a membership tuition base.
- Double income families means fewer volunteer hours.

Analysis Summary

From its inception in 1882, the congregation of God's people called St. Peter Lutheran Church and School of Macomb, Michigan, has grown from a small country church ministering to area farmers and their families to a large community of believers seeking to reach a bulging community of more than a quarter of a million. It has sought to respond to that growth through seven building expansions, land acquisitions, a mission congregation in a nearby community, participation in the Lutheran High School Association, increase in teaching, pastoral and support staff as well as a consistent ministry designed to touch the hearts of people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Still, the challenges and opportunities of carrying out the Great Commission from her Lord greet her at every turn. While a celebration of God's blessing and direction in her past and present is certainly in order, it must serve only as a motivation to look and plan for what God desires to accomplish in and through her in the future.

It is the intent of this project to develop through the strategic planning process a joyful and effective ministry team

of called servants of the congregation who will be used by God to lead the congregation into its preferred future.

A Vision of Ministry

With the information gathered from the S.W.O.T. analysis in some reasonable order, discussions about its interpretation and impact for the planning of the future proceeded. With an eye on where we are and who we are, the work to develop a vision statement for the ministry was begun by asking who or what God may want us to become by His grace. It needed to be a statement that reflected the Biblical mandates regarding the mission of the church which can be summarized by the Great Commission, "Make disciples" (Matthew 28:19), and the Great Commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

At the same time the vision had to carry with it a personal identity with this congregation, with its unique strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This is of practical importance as we seek to proclaim the Gospel in our unique ministry context, using the gifts that God has given to us. Such an attitude of contextual ministry also echoes the stewardship of the reformers in the Solid Declaration, Article X.

> We further believe, teach, and confess that the community
> of God in every place and at every time has the right,
> authority, and power to change, to reduce, or to increase
> ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it
> does so without frivolity and offense but in an orderly
> and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most
> profitable, beneficial, and salutary for good order,

Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the edification of the church.[29]

During the Fall months of 1993, the administrative staff made up of the three pastors, the minister of music, the principal and the assistant principal, were reading through and discussing in our weekly staff meetings Callahan's book, <u>Twelve Keys to an Effective Church</u>. Callahan suggests that a congregation build on its strengths rather than trying to shore up its weaknesses.[30] In the context of the S.W.O.T. analysis, it was determined to reflect that attitude in the congregation's ministry statement. It was decided that since the vision statement was for the entire ministry, lay leaders should be primarily involved in the process of its writing. As the Administrative Pastor, I would serve as a liaison to the rest of the staff for feedback and reaction.

The Futures Committee was then formed and select leaders were appointed. Selection of participants was carefully done to include a broad spectrum of the congregation. Both administrative staff members and the Church Council submitted names for the committee. The voters confirmed their appointments and the work on the vision statement began.

Through the prayerful discussion of the S.W.O.T. analysis, one outstanding strength surfaced. That strength was the

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[29]Theodore G. Tappert, editor, <u>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</u>. (Fortress Press), p. 612.

[30]Kennon L. Callahan, <u>Twelve Keys to an Effective Church</u>, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), pp. IVI - IVIII.

congregation's ministry to families. What was most interesting was that family concerns were evident in the opportunities listed. In addition, aspects of this strength could also be found among the listed weaknesses. These discoveries led to a one word catalyst for the vision of ministry for St. Peter Lutheran Church and School. The word: FAMILY. The concept of family reflected current ministries as well as future needs in both the congregation's membership and in the community.

Casual and formal conversations with various staff members, lay leaders, as well as input from the eight member Futures Committee led to the drafting of our vision statement. As the reader will observe below, the word "family" would serve as an acronym for the vision.

The drafting process began in the early months of 1994 among the members of the Futures Committee. Staff members added valuable input and clarification at our annual staff retreat in August 1994. In September of that same year, an expanded document was presented for discussion at the annual leadership retreat which had in attendance all administrative staff and all members of the various ministry boards. The day was invested in an overview of the Futures Committee's work and a guided discussion of the F.A.M.I.L.Y. vision document with an effort for revision, input and application from the larger group of congregational leaders.

39

The document is included here in the body of this paper to
demonstrate the inclusion of much of the S.W.O.T. analysis in the
formation of the vision.

1994 Leadership Retreat

"The F.A.M.I.L.Y. of God

Growing in Christ"

Prologue

Dear Ministry Partners in Jesus,

A county work crew was sent to the west side of the city.
The foreman instructed the laborers to dig a hole six feet by six
feet by six feet deep. They willingly complied.

After the hole was dug, the foreman peered over the edge,
frowned, and gave instructions to fill it in and dig a similar
hole some ten yards away. Again, the laborers complied, but less
eagerly.

By late afternoon, the second hole was dug. Again the
foremen looked over the jagged side of the sweat produced cavern.
Again he frowned and ordered it filled in.

A third time the foreman directed the crew to dig yet
another hole some ten yards away. This time however, the workers
grumbled and refused to dig another hole. They felt abused,
ridiculed, and unappreciated. They were determined to quit.

The foreman was nearly in tears as he blurted, "Men! You
can't quit! If we don't find that broken gas line, this whole

side of the city might blow up. Do you realize how many people could be injured or killed!?"

With that, the laborers responded, "Why didn't you tell us why we were digging?! Knowing that makes all the difference!"

And so, the foreman and his crew worked on into the night until they found the leak and repaired it.

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That story illustrates the importance and the power of a VISION. Without a vision, a sense of purpose, a reason, work becomes tedious and joyless. Workers become apathetic, angry, hurt; and many just quit. It's true in the Church!

In the following pages you will discover the compilation of the hopes and dreams of many people. One definition of VISION is: A PREFERRED FUTURE. I have reason to believe that this VISION is God-pleasing and God-directed. Allow me to share with you how it came to be.

1) Beginning in May of 1993, only a few months after my arrival as your new Administrative Pastor, I began meeting weekly with small groups of St. Peter members. We called these "Meet the Pastor Nights". Over the next several months more than 500 people met with me; and through our time of fellowship and sharing of ideas, dreams, strengths, and weaknesses several key points filtered to the top.

2) Based on many factors, the overarching theme of "FAMILY" came into focus. This theme was evident in the review of input from the "Meet the Pastor Nights", as well as a brief

overview of St. Peter's history of God's work in this place. Finally, a careful look at our community and ministry context, discussion with lay leaders and fellow staff members, and prayerful examination of Scripture and God's revealed will for His Church clarified our focus on "FAMILY". "GOD'S FAMILY GROWING IN JESUS" well captures the rich history, the exciting present, and the dynamic future of God's work among and through His people here at St. Peter Lutheran Church and School.

3) Also, in February 1994, the Present "Futures Committee" was formed. Having sought the guidance and blessing from the Church Council, the first meeting was held in my office. The original members were: Sherrie Patterson, Joa Penzein, Bob Wangelin, Arleen Luchtman, Phil Wiegand, Mary and David Monguea, and Linda Schwarb. Since that time, Bob and Joa have left the committee to serve the Lord in other ways while Mike Byrnes and Wilma Wangelin have joined in the process.

The committee's objectives were approved by the Council and are as follows:

a) Identify the VISION of St. Peter Ministry.

b) Develop ways to communicate that VISION.

c) Ask the question: "What does this mean?"

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What follows is the Futures Committee's prayerful effort to accomplish, at least in part, its objectives. This document is not a "finished" draft. However, it is the fruit of much work, to which the above process can attest.

It is my prayer-filled hope, and of the committee, that
you will read, consider, offer suggestions, discuss, pray over,
add to and delete from; and ultimately gain ownership of this
VISION. Then with our eyes focused on the same vision, we will
walk together into our future, guided and empowered by the Holy
Spirit.

The results of ownership in a VISION will be a deeper
sense of partnership and purpose in our ministry. Our various
boards, committees, staff persons, and members will have a
clearer sense of direction and unity. By God's grace, St. Peter
Congregation will be an even brighter light in a sin-darkened
world.

The defining of the VISION along with the values we hold
dear will lead us to develop one, three, five, and ten year
ministry plans. Once the VISION is "owned" such planning is not
"pie in the sky". Instead, planning becomes a vehicle for
accomplishing God's good work in and through us. It helps us
address the GREAT COMMISSION of our Lord to "make disciples of
all nations" (Matthew 28:19) in chewable bites. The results of
accomplishing significant goals toward an immense VISION are joy,
celebration, enthusiasm, fun, thanksgiving, momentum, courage,
and hope. Indecision and fear are dealt a fatal blow.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, however, God's will and work are
accomplished as people are brought into a close and growing
relationship with Jesus, the Savior. For all such believers,

ourselves included, there is the ultimate VISION: Eternal joy in the presence of our glorious God in heaven.

To that end I labor with you in Christ,

Rev. Robert E. Kasper

September, 1994

FORGED by the Spirit of God through His Word and Sacraments

Scripture says: "Do not be conformed to this present world; but rather be transformed by the renewing of our minds in order that you may know the good and acceptable will of God" (Romans 12:2-3).

The Vision

Today, like at no other time, families and individuals are under fire and pressure by a vacuum of values in American society, financial stress, marital strife, family violence, and a host of related issues. The metal of relationships, rather than being strengthened by the heat and pressure of daily living, is crumbling under the strain.

However, God, has a different plan for his people. To be FORGED by the Spirit of God is to be warmed by the presence of Jesus and have lives and relationships shaped and conformed to God's will as revealed in the Scriptures. God also gives us His Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, that call and mold us into the people He wants us to be.

We see St. Peter as God's foundry, through which God's Spirit will work to FORGE lives after the likeness of Jesus. To accomplish this, we will provide multiple options of times, days

of the week, topics and groups through which God's mighty Word can be studied. This will necessitate developing and staffing a "School of Christian Discipleship" with a core curriculum and electives designed to equip lay people with the skills and biblical knowledge needed for training and leading others as well as missions. In addition, our KEY-GROUP MINISTRY will continue to grow and become the "key" to our cohesive family of faith.

We see an expanded Christian lending library enhanced particularly by instructive video tapes, as well as a cassette tape library of sermons from our pastors on various texts and topics. Such a tape ministry will multiply our Sunday worship participation. These materials can be used for personal or group study as well as pastoral care for the sick and shut-in.

Because each individual and family is unique and uniquely loved by God there will often arise special needs that cannot be addressed with the broad brush of programmed ministry. Therefore, the need for qualified Christ-centered counseling will be addressed through future staffing and referral.

St. Peter will continue to be a leader in the community with regard to the Christian education of the young as well. Through the creative use of our present facility, we can find ways to expand our present day-school ministry. Some thought has been given to a twelve month school with multiple class cycles of students and staff along with adequate child care, such as latch-key, for single parents and/or double income homes. In the long range we may serve other congregations in our area by supporting

their efforts to begin or expand their school by developing a
"middle school" here at St. Peter, which would function as a
magnet school for other Lutheran elementary schools in the area
as they could "double-up" their lower grades.

Our mid-week and Sunday school will also be expanded to
include larger numbers of students, including those with special
learning needs. The effectiveness of the time invested in this
educational ministry will also be multiplied by creating courses
of study, and groups for the parents and families of these
students.

The VISION: to be known as a congregation that has a
passion for the hearing and living of God's word; and thereby
become people who are FORGED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

ADORING GOD through Worship and Praise

The Vision:

Worship is central to the people of God. It must be so.
Worship is to acknowledge God's worth...to adore Him in response
to His faithful Love in Jesus and His awesome deeds. It is in
worship that we celebrate and renew our Baptism through
confession and absolution. It is in worship that we feast on the
Body and Blood of Christ, and thereby, receive His forgiveness
and His strength to live for God. It is in corporate worship

that we gather as the family of God around His Word and receive instruction and blessing of our Heavenly Father.

St. Peter is more than a building. It is the people of God created to praise Him. There are many ways to praise our God. We will continue to enjoy our rich Lutheran heritage while also opening our eyes and hearts to new forms of worship and new sounds of contemporary praise to more effectively involve the unchurched (or non-Lutheran) in the praise of our awesome God.

Expanding our music ministry through staffing and the addition of more and different groups will enhance our praise of God and give even more people unique avenues for worship. By networking the gifts and talents of area congregations we will sponsor special times of praise through Christian concerts, blending our voices with contemporary Christian recording artists. Such concerts will serve as unique outreach opportunities to our unchurched neighbors who also enjoy good music.

During such concerts, the use of testimonies from fellow members can serve as real encouragement to others as we live out our lives before God. Such testimonies can give us tangible examples of God's faithful love which will motivate us to deep joy and thanksgiving.

Living in an agrarian area, it would be a powerful witness to our community as we recognize that it is God who gives seed to the sower and bread to the hungry. In addition to Christmas, Easter and other holidays, seasonal celebrations such as seedtime

and harvest will direct our hearts to God with thankfulness. Such seasonal settings might be enhanced by adjustments to the atmosphere in the sanctuary through sights, sounds and smells.

With the variety of work schedules and demands on the time of God's people, multiple worship times, including midweek, will be offered. However, as we have grown and continue to grow, there is need for a larger worship center. A sanctuary seating 1300+ would facilitate such growth. With an adequate sound system and creative seating, we will still enjoy the family atmosphere and intimacy of God's family gathered together ADORING GOD THROUGH WORSHIP AND PRAISE.

MISSION-MINDED Toward a World in Need of Jesus

Scripture says: "Jesus told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'" (Luke 24:46-48)

<u>The Vision:</u>

As we are FORGED by the Spirit of God and join together in ADORING GOD, we are compelled by our relationship to our Lord Jesus to be MISSION - MINDED. St. Peter Lutheran Church will continue to be used by God as an instrument of His saving grace as we witness His love to the community and the world. We see God developing in us a passion for those who are lost and outside of faith in Christ and fellowship with His Church.

In the future we will observe regular Mission Sundays with special missionary speakers to expand the vision of God's people and motivate us for courageous work in the mission field...be it on the other side of the globe, downtown Detroit, or in our backyard. In association with these special observances and with our "School of Christian Discipleship" we will provide vital and varied training opportunities for "visitation teams" who will reach out to our neighbors, nursing homes, or short-term missions (inner city and/or extra-territorial). Such mission experiences will create fertile ground for God's work in the lives of individuals of all ages.

We also see St. Peter taking a more prominent role in community concerns such as social ministry (feeding the hungry, shelters, Habitat for Humanity, etc), and community service projects (adopt a highway, adopt a family, etc.). Already we are involved in Lutherans for Life (Loving Arms Chapter), Crisis Pregnancy Center, LOVE I.N.C., and Salvation Army. Through such involvement, as well as through the use of signage, radio, cable, and newspapers, we will demonstrate our passion to serve others in the name of Jesus and give a powerful witness of Christ's love.

As new members join us, our efforts in interviewing them will help us determine which ministries first drew them to us and also what additional ministries could be offered to reach others still outside the church in our community. Such an effort will enable us to open more and more "side doors" to our congregation

rather than the traditional "front door" only of worship services and education opportunities through our day school. One such "side door" may be a shuttle service for elderly adults or small children to and from our services and sunday school hour.

We are called to develop a magnetic ministry that draws people to the cross of Jesus. Enthusiastic, powerful training and deployment will be used by the Holy Spirit to create a people who are MISSION-MINDED TOWARD A WORLD IN NEED OF JESUS.

INTER-GENERATIONAL Scope of Family Ministry

Scripture says: "What we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us, we will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. His power and the wonders He has done...even the children yet to be born" (Psalm. 78:3-4,6).

The Vision

St. Peter has a rich history of God's grace at work. We have the blessing of strong families which reach back to the founding fathers of this mission. In addition, we enjoy the freshness of new faces as new neighbors join us in membership and ministry beginning a renewed sense of mission. It is the strengths of that history and this present which we will capture as we open our eyes to see the vision of INTER-GENERATIONAL ministry.

All generations are children of God; and therefore, a climate must be created to bring them together with various programs, including but not limited to parents and children.

Each generation can benefit from the other and both young and old grow together and as individuals. We will seek especially to develop ministries for youth and young adults through future staffing and programs.

While some ministries already exist, such as KEY-GROUPS, Sunday Bible studies, 60+ Group which provide opportunities for older adults in fellowship and growth, much more needs to be done to effectively minister to a rapidly growing and valuable segment of our society. One way to do this will be to intentionally expand present groups to be more inclusive and to relate them with younger generations in ministry projects. Plus we will help whole families enjoy cross-generational life through encouraging home devotions.

Our school has done some positive things with regard to INTER-GENERATIONAL ministry already, but even more could be done through programs such as "Adopt a Grandparent", and others. Involving youth in shut-in and nursing home visitation will also serve to provide meaningful ministry to both age groups.

Our Parish Nurse ministry, now in the gestational phase, may well grow into an adult day care ministry, or elder hostel. Senior housing in the not too distant future has also been discussed, and should have serious consideration in any long-range site plan. With our school and Lutheran North in close proximity to such a facility, wonderful opportunities will present themselves for fellowship among the generations which will have lasting results. Through our Parish Nurse program,

training and certification of student baby-sitters will enhance our caring family of faith.

While worship is already a time when multiple generations gather to praise God, "family reunion Sundays" could be focus points to celebrate our family of faith as well as extended families within and without the church. Along with such celebrations, a Bible class hour might be well used by an elder member sharing some of the "oral history" of God's work through St. Peter as we continue the tradition of INTER-GENERATION FAMILY MINISTRY.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT for This Generation and Beyond

Scripture says: "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but rather a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline. Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord..." (II Timothy 1:7-8a).

The Vision

Books on leadership litter the shelves of libraries and book sellers. Christian bookstores are not exempt. Such a spawning of print on the subject does not reflect a growth in understanding as much as it does a cry for help and direction in the area of leadership. There is a leadership vacuum in the society, in the home, and in the Church. We must remember that there is only One true Leader...One who leads His sheep to

eternal life with the Father, Jesus Christ. A "leadership training grid" through which potential leaders are prepared for positions in the church will be used by God to keep St. Peter ministries focused on following our LEADER, Jesus Christ.

Beyond the traditional ways of leading, such as serving on various boards and committees (which are all very necessary), members of St. Peter Lutheran Church are called by God to be leaders in many other ways. We see St. Peter as a training ground for LEADERSHIP beginning already in our day school and Sunday school as older children are "buddied" with younger ones as mentors and role models. The same sort of relationship can and must be developed among those "older in the Christian Faith" and those "younger in their faith". While some mentoring happens naturally with the course of time, we will seek to become more intentional in this area especially through our KEY-GROUP small group ministry, STEPHEN ministry training and care-giving, as well as a host of other discipleship tools like the 2:7 Series, IDM (Individual Discipleship Ministry), and the Bethel Series. Through such discipleship efforts and mentoring relationships, we will cultivate our members into motivated, Spirit-directed leaders who will eagerly serve to advance the Kingdom of God among and through St. Peter. More and more people will see the mission of the Church as their mission and participate with their gifts in the various volunteer ministries that will be created.

Parental leadership in families must also be strengthened. While our teaching staff in both the day school and Sunday school

seek to hold up in honor the role of parents for the students, still there is, and will continue to be, a need to better equip parents for the God-given leadership task they have been given in their homes. By expanding our library to include up-to-date resources including books, periodicals, cassette tapes, and videos, parents and families will have ready access to supportive training and help in family leadership. With stronger parental leadership comes stronger families and the children also develop stronger leadership qualities.

Other LEADERSHIP development opportunities will come by way of retreats and seminars. Participation in predeveloped programs by the Lutheran Layman's League, the Michigan District of the LC-MS, or sister congregations, can and will enhance our ability and motivation to create many of our own internal leadership seminars. St. Peter, as a congregation, is being called upon to serve as a leader for the Lutheran Christian community. Finally, CHRISTIAN LEADERS must be CHRISTIAN LEADERS in our communities as bold witnesses for Jesus.

YIELDED to God in Prayer

Scripture says: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 5:16-18).

The Vision

"St. Peter Lutheran Church, the people who know how to pray to their God and thereby accomplish great things for His

Kingdom". That would be a great quote to be heard said about us. In fact, all the previous parts of this FAMILY vision is just so much ink and paper, or, if implemented, only so much human effort in vain, unless God's blessing and direction is upon it. Much prayer by the Pastors, the staff, and Futures Committee, has already been done to see the vision this far. However, each step, each plan, each existing and new venture in ministry, each present and future staff member, each worship experience and outreach effort...all must be bathed in prayer.

Our future will therefore bring a renewed emphasis on prayer in our worship time (with prayer requests and seasonal prayer services), by more frequent Prayer vigils (called for every major decision before us), through intentionally training our students in the Day-school and Sunday school to be "Prayer Warriors", and by developing "prayer teams" for each staff member and ministry endeavor. While our prayer chain is active, there is need for 24 hour prayer chains and, therefore, there is need for more people involved in this ministry. We will provide prayer seminars so that people who feel they do not know how to pray may receive encouragement and Biblical direction for their effectiveness in prayer.

YIELDED TO GOD IN PRAYER will become more than a trite saying. It will become a way of life for the People of God at St. Peter. God's promise is that He will honor and answer the prayers of His faithful people. He will bless those who come to Him.

Let's pray right now: Father in heaven, I honor you for your great goodness and faithful love shown to me personally and also to your church called St. Peter Lutheran in Macomb, Michigan. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, I have been made your own dear child and part of your family, the Church. Father, in Jesus' name, I ask your continued blessing upon my congregation. Open my eyes and the eyes of my brothers and sisters to see your vision for us. By your Holy Spirit, direct us and mold us into the people you want us to be. Help this F.A.M.I.L.Y. vision become a clearer reality as we work together.

Enable our pastors, teachers and other staff members to be effective leaders for all of us as they follow you. And help me to be supportive in all my work, giving, and conversation. By your grace at work in us, may the world see the bright light of your love glowing from the corner of 24 Mile and Romeo Plank and be drawn to faith in you, our great God and Savior.

In the strong and beautiful name of Jesus, Amen.

Through the events described above, the people of God at St. Peter, both laity and staff, sense that God is leading us to be and become the family of God as we build Christian families and keep them strong through a relationship with Jesus the Savior. Having received positive feedback and encouragement from both the lay leadership and the staff, a sermon series was planned and delivered during Epiphany, 1995, focusing on the F.A.M.I.L.Y. vision of ministry.

Finally, in the July 1995 voters' meeting, the congregation of St. Peter Lutheran Church adopted the following:

OUR VISION

"The congregation of St. Peter will aggressively embrace its responsibilities as members of the F.A.M.I.L.Y. to grow in Jesus, care for one another, work within the community and reach out to the world."

Forged by the Spirit of God through Word and Sacrament.

Adoring God through worship and praise.

Mission-minded toward a world in need of Jesus.

Inter-generational scope of family ministries.

Leadership development for this generation and beyond.

Yielded to God in Prayer.

The Team Mission Statement

The team mission statement is the work of the entire ministry team and is to communicate clearly the team's role in leading the congregation toward it's vision. This statement must also be action oriented.

To accomplish this set, all staff members were invited to the first portion of a regularly held faculty meeting since most of the team members would be in attendance at such a meeting. After a brief review of the strategic planning process and their part in it; and a prayerful discussion of the vision statement, the question was posed to the group: "What is our role/mission as a ministry team in the realization of this vision of ministry?"

As the facilitator, I gave each person a 3x5 card and asked them to write one verb that communicates our role in the ministry of the congregation. With butcher paper on the wall and marker in hand, the discussion began. Our goal was one sentence of 25 words or less to which we could all sign our names. Words like lead, serve, teach, pray, instruct, communicate, encourage, love, and model surfaced from the thirty-four participants. Then we attempted to construct a sentence which would bare our identity as a ministry team. With the time running out, a small committee volunteered to work with me in word-smithing a final draft to be ratified the next week.

The Result: "We are called by God to lovingly model servanthood to Christ as we lead, inspire, and equip God's people at St. Peter in Great Commission ministry."

Team Values

With other team members invited to another faculty meeting, the following illustration was given to introduce a discussion of team values which guide us in our mission toward the vision.

Suppose I have set a goal for myself of becoming a millionaire. The question now poses itself: 'How, or in what manner, shall I proceed toward my goal?' Shall I get an education, a good job, work hard, invest wisely and earn it?...Play the lottery?...steal, cheat, and kill for it? It is a question of values.

What are our team values as we proceed in our
mission together in leading our congregation toward the
vision? What are the spoken and unspoken values of the
congregation?

Again with butcher paper on the wall and marker in hand,
we began the process of defining our team's values. The results
by consensus as listed: Quality, Lutheran Confessions,
Scripture, integrity, dedication, tradition, hard work, teacher
leads the student, accountability, mutual respect, people are
more important than the program or process, the call of God,
intangible rewards are more important, creativity is encouraged,
loyalty, joy, forgiveness, humor, unconditional support,
professional growth, the Great Commission, keeping families
strong (ours and those of our congregation).

Team Goals/Objectives

In the July 1995, voter's meeting, mentioned above, the
congregation also adopted six ministry objectives which relate
directly to the F.A.M.I.L.Y. vision. These objectives were first
drafted by members of the Futures Committee, edited and sharpened
by the Administrative staff, and word-smithed by the Church
Council before being brought to the voters for adoption. There
was a high degree of enthusiasm and mutual encouragement as the
people of God prayerfully set their eyes on the vision of God's
work through these significantly aggressive ministry objectives.

Ministry Objectives

•Our Church *FAMILY* will be FORGED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD through education, Sunday School, Bible study and small groups, which represent 50% of average Worship attendance within eight years.

•Our Church *FAMILY* will ADORE GOD THROUGH WORSHIP AND PRAISE by providing sufficient space for worship and by increasing the percentage of members in weekly services to at least 60% within eight years.

•Our Church *FAMILY* will be MISSION MINDED by aggressively reaching out to the community through services, education, and evangelism by training 20% of average worship attendees in contact ministries. We will also designate 20% of our spending guide to Missions & Outreach Ministries. Both to be accomplished within the next decade.

•Our Church *FAMILY* will establish programs that encourage INTER-GENERATIONAL support through existing and new ministries, which will bridge the gap between the youngest, newest members, and the veteran established constituents. Fifty percent of our membership will be interconnected through these relationships within a decade.

•Through such organizations as the Stephen Ministries and Key Groups and our Christian Day School, our Church *FAMILY* will develop a number of Christian LEADERS equal to 30% of Communicants to aggressively serve the Lord and His people here at St. Peter and wherever He may send them. In addition, we will

support and deploy 25 full time Church Workers within the next
decade.

•Our Church *FAMILY* will be YIELDED TO GOD IN PRAYER as our
members realize the power and benefits of an active prayer life
through the participation of at least 50% of our average
worshipers in structured prayer ministries within eight years
(Prayer groups, Bible Study, Prayer teams for support staff,
etc.).

Having the congregational ministry objectives in place,
the ministry team whose mission it is to "lead, inspire, and
equip God's people at St. Peter in Great Commission Ministry" set
out to outline our objectives as a team. During another full
faculty and staff meeting, I led an open discussion of the
congregational ministry objectives. We determined that it was
essential that we define our relationship to these objectives as
"mentors", "models" and "leaders" of God's people toward the
accomplishment of them. We could not as individuals, or as a
ministry team, take personal responsibility for the
accomplishment of any of the congregation's ministry objectives
regardless of how strongly we felt toward them. We did however,
unanimously accept ownership of these objectives and our
leadership role toward their fulfillment.

With our role, clarified by our team mission statement in
mind, and with an eye toward the ministry vision and
congregational objectives, we collaborated on six team goals/
objectives. Again these would reflect our ministry vision, our

mission statement, and our values as a ministry team. A rather tedious task of butcher paper and brain-storming ensued, followed by small group discussions to hammer out each objective. Finally, a week later, at another team meeting, large group editing led to a final draft that each could "sign their name to".

As mentioned earlier in this document, "key elements (of goals/objectives) are: relationship to the vision, clarity, and measurability" (see page 7). In our team discussion on objectives, our greatest struggle was with "measurability". Our frustration with this point led to an important discovery which has had a significant impact on our attitudes as team players. The discovery: A leader is measured by his/her influence on those who follow. The measurability factor in our team goals/ objectives, therefore, will be our reputation as leaders through our team ministry.

Listed below are the goals/objectives of the ministry team of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School.

We will be known as men and women of God who:

1. Individually and collectively put Jesus first in our lives as we worship him publicly and privately.

2. Are people of the Word as we fellowship and grow in relationship with one another and God through participation in small group Bible studies within and outside the team.

3. Are faithful in prayer as we bring the needs of others before God's throne of Grace and celebrate openly His answers to our petitions, instructing and encouraging others to do the same.

4. Are an interdependent and cohesive team of God's servants as we visibly and joyfully participate with one another in activities and ministries outside our normal church/school parameters.

5. Take the Great Commission seriously as we involve ourselves in community activities through which we can demonstrate Jesus' love for all people.

6. Practice good stewardship of all our resources of time, money, and spiritual gifts as we joyfully live and demonstrate a servant's lifestyle.

Team Members Develop Personal Mission Statement

In preparation for the writing of personal mission statements by each of the team members, I made arrangements for all of us to take the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator during the summer of 1995. The purpose of this exercise was to better understand ourselves and our teammates. The hoped for result was an increased appreciation for one another and a greater awareness of our individual participation style in the team. These instruments were then sent in for interpretation and our annual staff retreat in August revolved around the findings of this instrument. Our team building seminar was led by a trained and experienced Christian psychologist who helped us to celebrate our

unique approach to life, work, and relationships. This was especially helpful with five new staff members on board as it sped-up the relationship building process significantly.

In our devotion time together as a ministry team, I have consistently encouraged them to prayerfully seek how God has uniquely gifted them for ministry, and in particular, in their call to serve here at St. Peter. What personal passions do they have with regard to the Lord's work in and through His Church? Have other Christians confirmed that they were particularly good at doing a certain task?

In November, 1995, at a regularly scheduled Team meeting, I gave the following assignment with the example of my personal mission statement:

Assignment:

Write your personal mission statement.

*Keep in mind your Call

*Keep in mind your position on staff

*Keep in mind your unique abilities and Spiritual Gifts

*Keep in mind your MBTI results

*Keep in mind our team's mission statement

*Keep in mind our congregation's Vision statement

*Be encouraged to discuss your mission with teammates.

An example: My mission is to grow in my relationship with Jesus as I prayerfully discern the ministry vision for St. Peter congregation and lovingly motivate and shepherd

God's people toward the effective and joyful accomplishment of that vision.

Pastor Rob Kasper

Team members were given two weeks to respond and return their personal mission statements to me. Below is a sample of personal mission statements of team members who gave consent for their inclusion in this document.

Loren Popke

> As a called teacher, I feel that my mission is to provide children with learning difficulties the support needed to receive a Christian education.

Lisa Bach

> As a child of God, called to do His will and to praise Him with my life, I am to set a Christian example of integrity, leadership, effort, love, forgiveness, and personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as I both admonish and encourage my students and players in the classroom and in coaching athletic teams.

Bob Hoch

> My mission is to imitate Christ by modeling His love and service as I lead, guide, and encourage through the St. Peter athletic program and as assistant principal of the school.

Erv Aufdemberge

> My mission is to lead - with joy, faith, and enthusiasm - in the ministry of music and worship of the church so that (1) the Gospel is proclaimed and (2) the people of God respond in praise, prayer, adoration, and thanksgiving.

Diane M. Zienert

> My mission at St Peter is to serve all of the children, their parents, staff and other members equally; always portraying Christ's love for us. I will convey Christ's love and forgiveness through my actions, caring and service to all of God's people.

Dorian H. Dopp

As a teacher of young children, I feel it is my mission to develop the concept that God is a loving Father and Jesus is their Savior and best friend, using love, kindness and patience to convey this truth to them and their families in a Christlike manner.

Sue Bennett

To serve God by helping each of my students attain his personal best in a Christ-centered environment where the love of God is incorporated throughout the curriculum.

Judy Kosmatka

My mission is to grow in my faith, teaching abilities, and witnessing so I can lead my students, their families, and others I come into contact with to a greater love and service to Jesus and to eternal life in heaven.

Carl Schinnerer

I will daily reflect on my Lord's love for me and then, empowered by His Holy Spirit, joyfully resolve to laud Him in all I think, say, and do.

David Dembeck

My first and foremost mission is to provide my students with the tools they need to be living witnesses to their Lord and Savior as they develop and use the talents given them by God the Father.

Frieda Schluessler

To be devout in worship and the study of His Word, and to efficiently and effectively assist the St. Peter Staff and Administration to communicate the Gospel message to its people and community.

Nancy Dodson

To glorify Him by providing St. Peter Lutheran Church with a dedicated service, assisting the Treasurer and assuring the members of the safe keeping of their contributions. With the help of God in Word and in Prayer, to set a Christian example in attitude and actions.

Jan Stange

I am compelled to teach God's Word, connect it to every subject in the curriculum, and be a living example of Christ's love to my students, fellow staff members and parents.

Kim Streeter

With God's help, I will serve and instruct through my coaching and teaching abilities the community of believers here at St. Peter to gain a greater appreciation for Christ in our lives.

Kim Neuman

My mission is to model my faith of Jesus to my students as I communicate and equip them in their future servanthood of Christ Jesus.

Barbara Grawburg

My mission is to demonstrate my love for God through helping to provide a sincere loving and caring ministry and atmosphere in the school office. By showing my concern, dedication, and mutual respect for all students and their families, the faculty, and staff at St. Peter, I hope to serve the Lord and share **His love** for us all.

Terry Davis

It is my mission to build relationships with students, parents, & teachers so that God can love them through me as I equip them for ministry and service to this community.

Pastor Robert E. Kasper

My mission as Administrative Pastor is to prayerfully discern the vision of ministry for St. Peter Lutheran Church and School, and to equip, motivate, and lead God's people toward effective and joyful accomplishment of that shared vision.

Action Plans for the Team and "Team" Evaluation

As mentioned before, action plans constitute the ongoing process of communicating the vision, values, mission, and objectives which the team has birthed. It calls for outlining tasks and assigning tasks, and the evaluation of the progress toward the stated objectives, and hence toward the vision[31] (see also page 8 of this document Chapter I). The implementation and review of such action plans may also provide some objective evaluation for the ministry team collectively and individually.

An action plan should have some direct relationship to a specific objective. Therefore with the assistance of the administrative staff, who represent all areas of congregational ministry, one or more action plans were outlined for each team objective. Working with a smaller group of leaders seemed to streamline the effort; and the rest of the team felt comfortable with the initial results since they had already agreed upon the objectives we desired to accomplish as a team. When presented to the rest of the team, there was only minor editing and interpretation among the group. What follows are the ministry team objectives accompanied by a specific action plan. More action plans will be introduced in the future. However, for the purpose of this document, this initial sample will serve well.

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[31]James Jurinski, <u>Strategic Planning</u> (American Management Association), pp. 79-80.

Objective One

We will be known as men and women of God who individually and collectively put Jesus first in our lives as we worship Him publicly and privately.

Action Plan

We will provide additional opportunities for team members to be more visible in the worship life of the congregation. Sign-up sheets for children's messages, readers, usher teams, greeters, and communion assistants (male staff) will be circulated among team members. Those who are not comfortable with such a highly visible role are encouraged to consider continued or beginning participation in a choir or instrumental group if they are blessed with such gifts.

Steps to implementation:

1) Present plan to the Board of Elders for direction.

2) Continue to plan worship themes well in advance and communicate to teammates who will assist.

3) Develop quarterly schedule for sign-up to encourage participation and to guard against over-commitment.

Time frame:

- Begin the weekend after Easter 1996.

- Evaluate plan in October 1996.

Objective Two

We will be known as men and women of God who are people of the Word as we fellowship with one another and God through participation in small group Bible studies within and outside the team.

Action Plan

We will initiate a team Bible study during the week in addition to our daily devotions together. In this study, leadership will be shared through a small group discussion format. This will enhance team relationships as we grow together through God's Word.

Steps to implementation:

1) Select Materials.

2) Get consensus on day and time

Time Frame:

- Begin January 1996.

- Tuesday mornings from 7:30 - 8:00 a.m.

- Evaluate in May 1996 to set sites for Fall 1996.

Objective Three

We will be known as men and women of God who are faithful in prayer as we bring the needs of others before God's throne of grace and celebrate openly His answers to our petitions, instructing and encouraging others to do the same.

Action Plan:

We will commit our Friday team devotional time to conversational prayer on behalf of members and friends of the congregation and our own needs.

Steps to implementation:

1) Develop a prayer request form to be filled out weekly in each office and classroom. This form should include requests and thanksgiving for prayers answered.

2) Introduce the plan to each classroom by a visit from Pastor Kasper.

3) Focus four chapel services on the topic of prayer.

4) Use the weekly newsletter to communicate answers to prayer whenever confidentiality will not be breached.

Time frame:

- Begin in November 1995.
- Evaluate in May 1996.

Objective Four

We will be known as men and women of God who are an interdependent and cohesive team of God's servants as we visibly and joyfully participate with one another in activities and ministries outside our normal church/school parameters.

<u>Action Plan</u>

We will develop ministry outlines (job descriptions) which will better define our individual roles on the team and outline specific interdependent relationships within the ministry team.

Steps to implementation:

1) Use the same outline, developed by Pastor Kasper, that is already in place for the administrative staff. The outline is:

```
POSITION TITLE
CLASSIFICATION (Hourly/salary, part-time/full-
                time, commissioned/ordained)
MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE POSITION
SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS
RELATIONSHIPS
      ministry boards
      standing committees
      ministry team
PRIMARY AREAS OF MINISTRY
```

Time Frame:

- All new team members who join us in 1996 will be provided their ministry outline as they are extended their call to serve.

- Administrative and support staff outlines are already in place.

- Returning faculty outlines will be complete by November 1996.

- Ministry outlines will be used for evaluation in Winter 1996.

- Ministry outlines will be a topic for discussion at our annual staff retreat in August 1996 as we continue to build "team".

Objective Five

We will be known as men and women of God who take the Great Commission seriously as we involve ourselves in community activities through which we can demonstrate Jesus' love for all people.

Action Plan

In 1996, we will plan and execute, with the help of lay volunteers, two additional summer camps here at St. Peter to provide a community service for the children and families of Macomb. These will be in addition to our sport camps already in place.

Steps to Implementation:

1) Brainstorm ideas for camps: computers, pre-school "Read Me a Story", science, creative writing, music, drama.

2) Develop volunteer team.

3) Co-ordinate schedule/building use.

4) Publicity

5) Plan for follow-up.

Time frame:

- Team members submit written outlines of ideas by March 1, 1996.

- Team selects two camp projects and share commitment.
- Camps are scheduled and executed in Summer 1996.
- Evaluation at Staff Retreat in August.

Objective Six

We will be known as men and women of God who practice good stewardship of all our resources of time, money, and spiritual gifts as we joyfully live and demonstrate a servant's lifestyle.

<u>Action Plan</u>

We will be the first to pledge our prayerful and financial support of a proposed new sanctuary. Since the congregation knows the sum of our salaries, we will be able to demonstrate our faithful response to God's faithfulness in Jesus by our sacrificial pledge. It is our desire to lead by example, not "show off".

Steps to implementation:

1) Bring in a financial planner to address the team at a half-day in-service to assist us in getting our personal finances in order.

2) Review and discuss prayerfully biblical stewardship as a topic in our team Bible study.

3) Agree to plan ahead to participate.

4) Communicate clearly our plan to new team members as they join us in ministry.

Time frame:

- Financial planner brought in Spring 1996.

- Bible study on Christian stewardship in Fall 1996.
- Take the opportunity to lead in this effort in Spring 1997.
- Evaluate effectiveness throughout campaign in 1997/8.

Summary

This concludes the report of this writer's effort, along with that of the ministry team of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School, to implement the Strategic Planning Process. Many hours, much effort and literally hundreds of people were involved in the process. However, it must be understood that Strategic Planning is not an end in itself. The work accomplished and reported here is only the initial phase of a renewed vision in ministry together here at St. Peter. Now comes the task of daily implementation, communication, evaluation, contingency planning, and adjustments. Always, it is the Cross of Christ which catapults us into action. It is the Gospel that guarantees our position as co-workers in Christ.

While the Strategic Planning Process is not an end in itself, the purpose of this project was to demonstrate its effects on the ministry team. The following chapter will report observations made by the writer as well as feedback from teammates and lay leaders. I will also provide some critical analysis, conclusions, and suggestions for application to other ministry contexts.

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS FOR MINISTRY FROM THE CASE STUDY

AT ST. PETER LUTHERAN

Discoveries and Evaluation of the Project

Since the purpose of this project has been to enhance the
joy and effectiveness of the ministry team by participating in
the Strategic Planning Process, it is necessary to provide the
reader both objective and subjective observations with regard to
the success of the project. I will outline in this section
specific data that will substantiate our growth as a team. The
same data will point out areas of our relationship as a team that
need additional attention. Effort will be made to interpret the
data as it relates to aspects of the Strategic Planning Process.
In a later section of this chapter, I will communicate what
future steps may be taken toward the continued development of a
joyful and effective ministry team.

Also in this section I will provide some feedback from
teammates and lay observers with regard to the process and its
impact on the ministry team. Along with this feedback, I will
offer some general observations of my own.

75

Comparisons of the 1993 and 1995 Team Surveys.

As mentioned above, in chapter three, a team survey was distributed in Spring, 1993. This was shortly after my arrival as the Administrative Pastor. Then in Fall, 1995, the same survey was taken again after we had completed our work on each phase of the Strategic Planning Process. Each statement in the survey had a range of one to eight, with one being "not at all" true regarding the team and eight being "absolutely" true about the team. The total points possible for each statement were divided into the total points per statement tabulated from the surveys returned. A comparative, positive percentage was thereby provided. The increase in possible points in 1995 over 1993 is due to an increase in the number of team members. Therefore, a comparison by percentage is the most accurate procedure.

Listed below are the survey statements and the corresponding positive percentage responses of the team. The closer the percentage to 100, the more positive the team members feel, as a group, about that statement being true at St. Peter. In seven out of 13 statements, the team increased their affirmation by ten percentage points or more. In only one area did it decrease; and one area remained the same.

TEAM MINISTRY SURVEY

To what extent is this statement true?

	Not at All Somewhat Substantially Absolutely
	Points Possible:
Regarding Purpose of Team:	1993 - 168 1995 - 184

1. **Focused Ministry**: The congregation has written and adopted a clear, concise mission/ministry statement and all ministry functions reflect stated mission.

   65%   71%

2. **Focused Staff**: Team members enthusiastically affirm the congregation's mission statement.

   64%   70%

3. **Focused Team**: The ministry team has defined its own mission in reference to that of the congregation and it is accepted by all.

   49%   70%

4. **Focused Team-players**: Each team member has defined his/her own mission statement which reflects the team's mission and his/her unique gifts and attributes.

   49%   70%

Regarding Team Relationships:

5. **Affirmation:** Team members appreciate and celebrate differing styles within the team.

   66%   63%

6. **Completion:** Team members communicate appreciation and need for each other and their varying gifts and experiences. There is not a competitive atmosphere or "turf protection".

   66%   69%

7. **Conflict Resolution**: When conflict occurs, the team members are comfortable and show no signs of avoiding, smoothing-over, or suppressing conflict.

   57%   57%

8. **Safe environment:** Team members feel supported by each other and feel free to express feelings about ministry and the team's operation.

   64%   69%

9. **Accountability:** Roles and expectations of team members are clearly defined and mutual assessments are shared.

   49%   64%

	Not at All	Somewhat	Substantially	Absolutely
	Points Possible:			
	1993 - 168		1995 - 184	

10. <u>Leadership</u>: While there is a designated leader, the leadership is often shared with respect to the functions of the team.   68%   73%

11. <u>Public Affirmation</u>: Team members spontaneously and purposefully communicate with the congregation and individual congregation members their respect and/or appreciation for other staff members.   60%   72%

12. <u>Flank Protection</u>: When a team member is complained about by a congregation member to another team member, the recipient of the complaint protects his/her fellow team-mate instructing the congregation member to deal directly with the person at issue...even offering to mediate.   61%   72%

13. <u>Team Ministry Evaluation</u>: There is a thoughtful, scriptural and practical method for reviewing team effectiveness which invites and includes input from a small group of lay leaders.   43%   60%

Of particular note is the dramatic increase in the areas of "Focused Team" and "Focused Team-player". This is due in large part to the later phases of the Strategic Planning Process, namely: "Team Mission Statement" and "Personal Mission Statement". We now have a better grasp of our purpose as a ministry team and our individual responsibilities within the team.

Closely related to the focus of both the team and the individual are the areas of "Accountability" and "Evaluation". Team members sense a greater responsibility and ownership of the entire ministry because they see themselves as an important part

of the bigger picture. Teachers are better able to see past the classroom to the boardrooms, sanctuary, and subdivisions. Likewise, administrators, pastors, and support staff are better able to see past their 'to do' lists, appointment calendars, meetings and administrative decisions and view into classrooms, hallways, and homes of families.

Of concern are four areas under "Team Relationship" that remained relatively unchanged or declined. The items entitled "Affirmation", "Completion", "Conflict Resolution", and "Safe Environment" echo of a team that is still "storming".[32] Certainly one cause for lack of positive adjustment is the influx of five new staff members in 1995. Another cause voiced by several on the team is the lack of social interaction among team members outside of the context of ministry. In other words, we need to play together, too. Play can develop warmth and trust among teammates.

In summary, the comparison of the two surveys demonstrates an overall improvement of the team with regard to shared ministry. Significant strides have been made toward a more cohesive and focused team. Team members also stated that they feel a greater appreciation as leaders in the congregation's ministry as supported by the more than ten percent increase in the areas of "Public Affirmation" and "Flank Protection". With such positive aspects describing the team environment, joy and effectiveness in team ministry can be a greater reality.

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[32]"Developing Teams," Training, August 1992, p. 13.

Improvement in each of these areas is due in no small part to our working together through the Strategic Planning Process. Areas that showed declined or no growth may be addressed through action plans connected to the team's objectives.

Team Effectiveness Measured

A measurement for ministry team effectiveness may be a bit elusive. However, statistical data on the growth or decline of the congregation can be a helpful tool in this matter. Many factors can and should be considered when discussing the growth or decline of a congregation in ministry. The question is: To what extent does the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the ministry team affect the addition of new members to a congregation?

That is an important question since the bringing of people to faith in the Savior, Jesus, is solely the work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. However, as mentioned above in Chapter I, God calls us and empowers us to administrate the Word and Sacraments. We are then responsible to effectively "administrate" these Means of Grace that God has given to His Church.

How effectively have we administered the Means of Grace through the ministry team? While God certainly uses many and desires to use all of the members of St. Peter to reach more people with the saving message of Jesus, a greater responsibility rests with those called to the ministry team. Scripture tells us that such leaders were "given to the Church for the Equipping of

the saints for the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:12). The effectiveness of the ministry team is reflected, at least in part, by the growth of the congregation. While Christ alone "builds His Church" (Matthew 16:18), He chooses to use people, like our ministry team, as His instruments in administering His Word and Sacraments to touch the lives of others.

Both the congregation's membership and the school's enrollment have increased annually over the past decade and a half. The past three years have been no exception. The congregation has increased from 2,451 in December, 1993 to 2,772 in December, 1995. The school has also increased from 457 to 573 in the same time period. This information alone does not mark the effectiveness of the ministry team when given the context of our vastly growing community. However, it is remarkable to see not only an increase in raw numbers in membership and worship attendance, but also an increase in the percentage of members in worship over the three year period from 38% in 1992 to 44% in 1995.[33] The Holy Spirit is certainly at work through His word and sacraments administered by a more focused ministry team.

Team Member Feedback

In order to gather some honest feedback from team members with regard to the strengths and weaknesses of the ministry team, I provided each member with a Team Ministry Discernment

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[33]"Annual Periodical Report, 1992, 93, 94, 95", submitted to the Synodical Office, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, for inclusion in the Statistical Yearbook.

Worksheet. This simple worksheet included three questions which
I designed myself. The feedback was to be anonymous so that team
members could respond more openly. The three questions asked
were:

1) How would you communicate our greatest strength(s) as a
   "team" in team ministry?
2) How would you communicate our greatest weakness(es) as
   a "team" in team ministry?
3) What action steps do we need to take to improve the
   effectiveness of our ministry team?

As with the Team Survey, these questions were asked in
Spring 1993 and again in Fall 1995. A comparative look at the
two responses to the worksheet questions demonstrated two areas
of dramatic improvement, and two areas that still hamper us as a
ministry team.

While the lack of planning and foresight along with lack
of leadership were commonly mentioned as weaknesses by team
members in 1993, a unifying mission focus and leadership were
listed as strengths in the 1995 responses. These written remarks
from fellow team members are consistent with their corresponding
survey responses discussed earlier in this chapter.

In 1995, one team member put it this way: "We are
dedicated individuals and work for a higher 'Boss'...we believe
in the work. Sometimes we are so focused that we may be blind to
other needs besides our goal." Another wrote in 1995: "I think
when it really comes down to it, we are here for each other.
People are willing to help each other in the ministry." Compare
those comments to these two from 1993: "I often wonder if the
left hand knows what the right hand is doing...or cares." "We

don't plan ahead or foresee problems...we don't understand what we are doing."

In spite of this marked improvement in the areas of mission focus and leadership, 47% of the respondents in 1995 and 62% in 1993 said that lack of communication among staff was our greatest weakness. In addition, several noted an atmosphere of cliques among smaller groups of staff members. These areas of perceived weakness did not run a straight line between administration and faculty or support staff. Nor is there a storm front between church and school. Rather, there appears to be a general sense of isolation of individuals or groups within the team. Although there has apparently been marked improvement in the area of communication, if nearly half of the players don't know what play has been called or don't experience a high degree of trust with their fellow players, the effectiveness will be significantly hindered. These written responses concerning perceived weaknesses are also consistent with the survey results regarding "Team Relationships".

General Observations

Having completed the Strategic Planning Process with the intent of developing a more joyful and effective ministry team in the congregation, I have concluded that the experiment has been most worthwhile. As the documentation from the two Team Surveys and Team Ministry Discernment Worksheets testify, a good deal of progress has been accomplished toward the desired end. It is that progress which must be celebrated. My observation is that

we are not the same group of people we were three years ago. That is true in part to acquisition of new team players. However, in large part, there is an attitudinal change among us on the staff of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School.

Again, we are not the same group of people, but rather a team of ministers focused on a common vision of ministry, implementing shared objectives, recognizing and appreciating the various gifts and values each one brings to the task of administrating the Word of God and His Sacraments. That is not to say we are without areas of conflict, concern, frustration, and disappointment. What it does mean is that we can now address these issues in the context of our shared mission. In particular, the gulf between church and school has been bridged by a shared focus of ministry to the whole family.

While communication continues to be a significant challenge to our joy and effectiveness in ministry as a team, we now have a "play book" to refer to when discussing issues of concern. The strategic plan with its Vision Statement, Team Mission Statement, Team Values, Ministry Objectives, Personal Mission Statement, and Action Plans to date are all a part of a new "St. Peter Ministry Team Handbook" which will be published in Spring of 1996. This will serve as a discussion starter at monthly team meetings as we review our progress, amend plans, and develop additional Action Plans that will continue the good work we have begun together. This "Team Ministry Handbook" will also

assist new team members in the process of assimilation as they join us in ministry.

The process was successful. The degree of positive change in areas of relationships is less than hoped for. However, the key word is "process." The process has begun and continues under God's grace. In regard to team relationships, I have discovered through this endeavor that it is essential for team members to not only work together, but also to play together. Shared trust as well as shared joy are enhanced through time spent together outside the confines of work. Work becomes fun when doing it with a friend. Attention to this important aspect of team building will need a higher priority in the future.

Possible Contributions to Ministry

The Strategic Planning Process offers a congregation of God's people a two-fold benefit. The first is a clearer view of the big picture of ministry for the congregation provided by a forward-looking plan for mission and ministry. Secondly, the process is as vital as the product in that through the process, communication and conflict management skills among the ministry team are fostered, along with mutual respect among team members, team identity and cohesion, spiritual growth, and interdependence.

The congregation that has been led to see the big picture of ministry may experience many benefits. Through the Strategic Planning Process, relationships between lay leadership and the

ministry team are enhanced by shared dreams, plans, hopes, and mission based on their common faith in Jesus Christ. Also, by working through the S.W.O.T. analysis, a broad base of the congregation's membership have a better understanding of their unique context of ministry; and have opportunity to express ideas as to how the church might be used by God to reach people through Word and Sacrament ministry.

The greatest benefit of strategic planning for the congregation, or any ministry group, is that the stage is set to be proactive rather than reactive in an ever changing ministry environment. Because the vision of mission is clear and is outward looking, the congregation's identity is secure. Membership shares ownership, and a plan is in place. The congregation is poised for action rather than atrophy. Contextual change is less likely to take them by surprise. The approach to ministry is marked by fluidity rather than rigidity, while still retaining a clear identity as Lutheran Christians. The future no longer brings fear, but challenges faith. The past becomes a rich heritage, marked by God's grace, and serves as fertile ground for roots of faith in a faithful God who will also guide and provide in the years to come. More than a meeting place, the church moves out in mission.

The Strategic Planning Process also benefits the ministry team in the local congregation. The earlier portion of this chapter supports that statement as it chronicles the positive change in the ministry team at St. Peter Lutheran Church. My

hypothesis has proven to be accurate. I am confident that such a process, begun and completed by any ministry team, in any context, would have similar results. By any context, I mean that there is application to District and Synodical offices and boards, as well as high school, college, university, and seminary faculties. It is not that such ministries have not done strategic planning, but that the ministry team, responsible in large part for the carrying out of the ministry, have had little or no part in the process. The team's joy and effectiveness in ministry is enhanced as it develops a shared mission, shared values, shared objectives, mutual respect, and interdependence among the team players.

The key element in the process, is the process. What is more, the process is not static, but on-going. Strategic planning cannot be looked upon as a program but a process that is continually re-evaluated, reviewed, reworked and returned to on a consistent basis. If someone doesn't want the discipline, they dare not do the deed.

I hope to provide a one day seminar on ministry team development through the Strategic Planning Process in the future. This seminar could serve as a staff retreat for a single ministry, or a weekend retreat for several ministry teams. I need first to observe and work with my team through the ongoing process of action plans, re-evaluation, and contingency plans before designing a self-directed process manual for teams to use

beyond the seminar. As I stated before, this cannot be an event, it must be a process.

I am genuinely excited about the possible applications of this project to ministry. Is there a congregation with a ministry team who could not use such a process to better administrate the Word and Sacraments? God can use this process to make us better stewards of His varied grace, and thereby, enhance our joy and effectiveness in ministry, proclaiming his saving message to a lost world in need of Jesus.

Contribution to Personal and Professional Growth

I have grown both personally and professionally through the entire Doctor of Ministry program. The interaction with other pastors in the classroom, guidance and instruction from a caring and capable faculty, the intrigue of continued study, and the discipline of daily application to ministry have all been used by God to multiply my effectiveness as a man of God and as a pastor.

In my personal life I have been enriched by relationships with fellow students who have shared their experiences and challenges in their private lives, as well as in ministry. The on campus portions of the program are essential for such an experience. Also the reading lists for each class, as well as the research for the Major Applied Project, have served to mold me into a life-long learner. I am no longer compelled by the law of the classroom but rather goaded by the grace of an internal

desire to know more and apply more in both personal and professional life.

With regard to my professional life, the program has been of great benefit. In particular, the Major Applied Project gave me the opportunity to search out solutions to frustrations I had experienced and observed in ministry. I am better equipped through the experience to be a team leader. This is true with the called staff, and with the congregation that I serve as pastor. To what extent my proficiency as a communicator, leader, or care-giver has been enhanced by years of experience, or directly by my involvement in the Doctor of Ministry Program, may be difficult to discern. However, the fact remains that my experience has included the program and the program is responsible for a good deal of my experience. While I will never be adequate in my own abilities to accomplish that to which God has called me, I am now better equipped to be used by God, Who, by His grace, makes me adequate (II Corinthians 3:4-6).

Finally, with regard to both personal and professional growth, I have become more confident in my teammates. Because we have discussed our shared vision, mission, and values, I can celebrate and share Word and Sacrament ministry. Not everything depends on me. God is using others in His church as well. Sometimes I augment their ministry and sometimes one or more of them will augment God's work through me. Either way, there is cause for celebration. In large part, the frustration I had known in team ministry are defused because a process is in place.

The challenge now is to continue to work the process. That thought leads to some final recommendations.

Recommendations

Like any process begun, completed, yet still in a fluid state, the Major Applied Project has initiated an ongoing learning curve in team ministry. There are numerous theological issues that call for further study. There are also concerns in team ministry that I omitted out of necessity in order to focus the content of this project.

Theological Issues for Further Study with Regard to Team Ministry

While the issue of spiritual gifts and the distribution of God's varied grace for work in His kingdom has been alluded to in this project, such a theological investigation would be most pertinent to the discussion of team ministry. What effect would gift consideration have on the call process of a given congregation? To what degree is there any objectivity inherent in discerning one's gifts? How do the demands of the ministry context affect an individual's function in a given area of ministry over against being "gifted" for a particular ministry? As Paul wrote to Timothy, "...do the work of an evangelist" (II Timothy 4:5). He did not state that Timothy was gifted as an evangelist. At the same time Paul writes by inspiration that "God gave...some to be evangelists" (Ephesians 4:11). How might the concept of spiritual gifts enter the discussion of being a generalist in ministry or a specialist in a focused area of

ministry? All these questions will have impact on a discussion of team ministry.

Related to the above mentioned issue of spiritual gifts is the whole matter of staff selection. The concern is both practical and theological. Is the call process modeled by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod a theological issue, or one of polity? I would concede that it is both. However, where is the line of demarcation? Is there such a line? What are the Biblical, historical, confessional, and practical roots of the call process? How do the "appointments" or "calls" to various district, synodical, or higher education faculty positions reflect those roots? Is there room in the divine call for interviews and initial two year contracts? These are all extremely practical questions that demand a doctrinally sound and workable response.

As the pastor of a large and growing congregation, these issues are real. I want to be expedient as we add additional staff members in education, administration, and support ministries. Most of all, I want to be Biblically and confessionally responsible as I give guidance to the congregation in these matters. To be sure, the growth and learning curve for our team ministry will continue to be steep as we proceed together.

Other Concerns Regarding Team Ministry

In my earliest plans for this project, I had hoped to include a well researched and aptly applied outline of the

psychological aspects of team ministry. My advisor, as well as others, suggested that be saved for my next doctoral endeavor. However, the questions still haunt me. When developing the ministry team through group process and/or by the addition of new staff members: What part does individual temperament play in teamwork? What impact might birth order have on the team's internal relationships and their ability to function as a unit? What part might learning styles play in the way team members incorporate new information or adapt to a changing ministry context, and how might that encourage or hamper teamwork? The questions are easy to come up with. The answers are more demanding to discover.

Another critical issue in team ministry is conflict resolution. Whenever there is a group of people together there are personalities, egos, personal agendas, and sinners brought together. While the Strategic Planning Process can relieve some of the conflict by turning the team's attention to the over-arching mission, there will still be the daily bumps and bruises among people of passion who labor side by side. Certainly Law and Gospel must be at the center of such a discussion. Team members must be ministers unto one another as well as among the people of the congregation and community. Repentance and forgiveness must be exercised. However, additional insights may be gained from a study of crisis intervention, training in active listening, and cues for effective confrontation.

Conclusion

The file on developing a joyful and effective ministry team is far from closed. However, the effort of this project has provided significant progress toward an end. A first step has been taken. Implementing the Strategic Planning Process with the ministry team of St. Peter Lutheran Church and School has laid a foundation for all that we will do as a team and as a congregation from here on. The theological issues, as well as the other team ministry concerns listed above, can now be incorporated in our strategic plan for resolution. Areas of perceived weakness in our ministry team will also be addressed through action plans and contingency plans yet to be developed by the team.

The essential fact is that we are a team. We are not just a group of people at the same place at the same time. We are a team first and foremost by the will of God. He has called us to serve Him here; and he has called us to serve together as a team. That is true for any ministry team in any ministry context. To the degree that this project has assisted our living out our being a ministry team, called by God, I am thankful for the privilege to have been an instrument of His grace. And to the degree that we are more joyful and effective in the administration of God's Word and Sacraments, may my part be ignored for the surpassing grace of God at work through His church.

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