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### A Study of the Values and Uses of Group Dynamics for the Pastor's Work in Church Groups

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A STUDY OF THE VALUES AND USES OF GROUP DYNAMICS  
FOR THE PASTOR'S WORK IN CHURCH GROUPS

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1957

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**SHORT TITLE**

**GROUP-DYNAMICS FOR THE PASTOR**



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## CHAPTER I

### GROUP DYNAMICS AND CHURCH MEETINGS

#### A. Introduction: Objectives

One night a pastor came home from a meeting of the Men's Assembly. "You know," he said to his wife, "I've been making an inventory of what I do. Aside from my pastoral calling and sermon preparation, the remainder of my time is spent in getting ready for meetings or attending them. No matter what kind of meeting it is, it takes a lot of my time. Therefore I keep asking myself whether or not the common ordinary church meeting should offer one of the main forces of the ministry to stir people to undergo inner growth toward spiritual maturity."

In eighteen words Professor Herbert A. Thelen, director of the Human Dynamics Laboratory, University of Chicago, says to this minister in substance, "Yes, your suspicion is scientifically correct. The face-to-face group working on a problem is the meeting ground of the individual personality and society."<sup>1</sup>

This thesis will, therefore, on the basis of the proposition above, attempt to set forth the possibilities of effective group action within the spiritual fellowship of the Christian Church. An attempt will also be made to determine what acceptable group experiences may rightly be utilized in the work of the church.

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<sup>1</sup>H. A. Thelen, Dynamics of Groups at Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. v.



It may be assumed that Christians are aware of their social responsibility. They interact and relate. Their Christian faith itself functions within a fellowship. To the Christian, social responsibility is inherent in his Christian faith, and thus to him social education and action become essential elements in the local church's regular program.

The reports from the Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston refer to the inescapable duty of the Churches in the task of creating a "responsible society." In heeding the call to social action, they mentioned that churches will need concerned leaders and effective methods of group study and action. This Assembly also spoke of the selfishness and narrowness of the average congregation, of its concern for its own social solidarity, its own worship and comfort, its own budget prosperity. The "workshop" or "group dynamic" church is one way of overcoming "routine" Christianity. It places the accent on outlook and upreach of the human being as he learns by doing in the company of others.<sup>2</sup>

We intend to move in this thesis on a higher level, the level of endeavor expressed by Paul to the Galatians: "For you are all one in Christ Jesus . . . thru love be servants of one another."

The power of the Church does not rest upon the power of any "group" dynamic, for it is based squarely upon the "dynamic" of the Gospel--as it works thru each individual. It is God's power which worketh in us: "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Thus the Christian's faith is to be moved into function.

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<sup>2</sup>Margaret E. Kuhn, You Can't Be Human Alone (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. iii.



Once he is made a new creature in Christ he is joined to a fellowship, and is to use the power of his faith "both to will and to work" God's pleasure. He is not to live alone. He is to live within the group, a "demonstration laboratory" of Christian belief in action. Within the organized or unorganized group life of the church there are many opportunities for "dynamic" interaction, as Christians witness to one another, speak the Word to one another, express love and mutually edify one another.

Leaders, and especially pastors, should be aware of the scriptural grounds for the possibility of the building up of church members thru group relationships. "Men whom Christ has specially gifted, and who become His gift to the Church, have one great task in common," states one writer, commenting on Eph. 4:11: "They must exercise their ministry in such a way that the 'saints' shall be 'perfected' or 'equipped,' in order that they too, in a non-professional but effective sense, may become 'ministers.'"<sup>3</sup> In this way and only in this way shall the whole Body of Christ be built up.

No passage in the Bible is perhaps more crucial for the welfare and mission of the Christian Church today, than this one from Eph. 4:11:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for edifying of the Body of Christ.

The RSV translation has unfortunately retained this identical prepositional wording. The same writer states: "Here, without linguistic authority but

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<sup>3</sup>John A. Mackay, God's Order--The Ephesian Letter and this Present Present Time (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1953), p. 149.



with undoubted ecclesiological bias, the fatal comma after the word 'saints' has been retained."<sup>4</sup> He makes the point that churchmen balk at sanctioning a New Testament "ministry" for ordinary Christians. Yet, according to some of the best and most modern New Testament scholarship, and some most reputable translations of the New Testament, the obvious meaning of the passage is simply this, namely, the "saints" are "equipped" to serve. J. B. Phillips, in a free translation, renders: "His gifts were made that Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole Body might be built up."<sup>5</sup> R. F. Weymouth, in his work The New Testament in Modern Speech, translates the same passage this way: "In order fully to equip his people for the work of serving for the building up of Christ's Body."<sup>6</sup>

In favor of this rendering is not only the general tenor of Paul's thought here and of his general view of special Church functionaries, but also the usage of the Greek prepositions involved. While the preposition *πρός*, meaning "with a view to," is used before the preparation or the equipment of the saints, a different preposition of similar meaning, *εἰς*, "to the end that," is used before each of the two phrases, the work of ministering, and the building up of the Body.

The emphasis which is gained by dropping the comma and giving meaning to the prepositions is important, for it places an urgent duty upon leaders and pastors, which they perhaps were not aware of previously.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>5</sup>J. B. Phillips, Letters To Young Churches (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1952), p. 110.

<sup>6</sup>Mackay, op. cit., p. 150.



And does not this better translation of Eph. 4:11 hint that perhaps the pastor ought to be concerned with a subject which will help him "better to equip the saints," such as Group Dynamics, for instance? For the meaning of the passage, says Mackay in his book, is this:

The meaning appears clearly to be that the supreme objective of the gifted men must be to equip the "saints" that they, in their turn, may engage in ministering, that they too may be servants, and that resulting from their service the Body of Christ may be built up.<sup>7</sup>

All people of the church, both pastors and members alike therefore should be concerned about the importance of the church meeting, even as the discussed passage bears meaning to them. John R. Mott, great American organizer and founder of the Young Men's Christian Association, said:

I have developed deep convictions about the power of meetings to change personal lives and to change the world. . . . And here is where the church comes in, for the church meeting is actually a dynamic group workshop.<sup>8</sup>

The church meeting admittedly offers "dynamic" possibilities for growth and change. It is the writer's belief that much can be done for the Kingdom of God, for the Church, for our own spiritual wellbeing, and for the welfare of those yet to be won--thru church meetings! The vital interaction of people in group participation in God-related, goal-oriented, and task-centered activity may well become the climate in which the Christian can grow "in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." May the Holy Spirit bless our efforts.

"Let all things be  
done unto edifying."  
--1 Cor. 14:26

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Paul F. Douglass, The Group Workshop Way in the Church (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. ix.



## B. Limitations and Scope of the Study

Group Dynamics, understood as a social science, is a highly theoretical study based on the Gestalt School of Psychology. This thesis will present a brief over-all view of the theory and mechanics of this subject for background purposes. The reader may feel that major emphasis was placed upon the "spiritual" values (note quotes!) and limitations of group dynamics for the church, and also upon the concept of a "group dynamics" leader's role in a pastoral situation.

The reader must not assume that the writer accepts all of the statements made in this thesis without reservation. The writer believes that there are definite limitations involved in the use of Group Dynamics in the Church, as such. However, having presented the theory, mechanics, and principals, we are careful to classify certain acceptable procedures and techniques which may be adapted for church meetings.

A thorough study of the many interactional uses of the various procedures and techniques is virtually impossible to treat in a Bachelor of Divinity thesis. However, the writer sought to give exemplary situations for practical application through the use of the "case-study" medium. These also were limited to a treatment of a few procedures and techniques, the adult groups of the average church being kept chiefly in mind. To treat all techniques adequately would fill a book!

## C. General Overview of the Thesis

Briefly, this thesis hopes to show why churches should be concerned about human relationships and group interaction--in the light of group



dynamics. It hints at how Christian faith involves social responsibility and participation. Furthermore, it suggests some objectives and principles of Christian leadership. This was a necessary preface to the study of acceptable procedures and techniques of group dynamics, for the successful use of them demands a leader who is capable of using them. Certain of these procedures and techniques are described in their practical utilization by case-studies.

Chapter two, therefore, discusses and explains the theory and mechanics of group dynamics and factors affecting all groups. Chapter three gives the reader both a positive and negative approach to the "spiritual" values of this relatively new field of group science. Chapter four attempts to show the superior qualities of a "catalytic" or "participant" type leader. Chapter five is an attempt to classify, define, and describe how to use procedures and techniques in somewhat brief style. Chapter six narrates (through case studies) the actual use of group dynamics, i.e., its procedures and techniques, in a "live" situation. A conclusion and summary follows.

#### D. Major Sources of Research

The major sources used in this thesis were these widely accepted texts: Group Dynamics--Research and Theory, by Cartwright and Zander, and Dynamics of Groups at Work, by H. A. Thelen. A very helpful source was the book by Paul F. Douglass, entitled The Group Workshop Way In The Church. Also used to a great extent were the many issues of the magazine Adult Leadership, the most prominent one of its field in adult education and in the study and advancement of the young field of group dynamics,



as it pertains to any imaginable type of meeting or institution.



## CHAPTER II

### THEORY AND MECHANICS OF GROUP DYNAMICS

It is assumed that, behind every technology, every policy decision, indeed, every behavior, there is a set of understandings of the nature of the processes one is dealing with. These understandings may be explicit or vague, narrow in scope or comprehensive in insight. So also is the study of group dynamics!

The development of Chapter II is based on several propositions: That the needs of individuals cause them to participate in groups; that the group as an organism exists to satisfy the purposes for which it was gathered together; that the group is influenced by and influences the community; and, finally, that through experiences in the group and community the individual develops and changes his pattern of needs. Thus the line of reasoning comes full circle.<sup>1</sup>

More specifically, the first part of this chapter states the following: Section one surveys the common psychology of a person's behavior which stems from the person's needs to work out his relationships to groups and to the problems of living. Section two points out that the individual deals with these problems through the processes of feeling, thinking, and doing; and that the particular balance among these processes is characteristic of his personality--learned through experience with other people. In section three we look at the various sorts of realities with which experience deals and which we attempt to control through consciously applied group dynamics. Section four explains the development of the group as a whole, a miniature society with its own standards of behavior,

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<sup>1</sup>H. A. Thelen, Dynamics of Groups At Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 219.



needs, and policies for controlling itself.

The second part of this chapter deals with four chief factors which effect the more practical side of this issue, the productivity of a human group.

Quite admittedly and intentionally the first part has been taken largely from Thelen's textbook: "Dynamics of Groups at Work,"<sup>(1)</sup> the most outstanding recognized authority in this field. This part is interspersed with explanatory statements from other sources, especially from Cartwright and Zander's primary source, Group Dynamics--Research and Theory.

The second part rests primarily on the most basic articles found in Adult Leadership, the authoritative magazine in the field of group dynamics.

It should be noted that in this effort to present background material which will give the reader an understanding of theory and mechanics--the opinions here stated as fact are not necessarily those of the writer but rather the opinion of the sources.

#### A. Inherent "Dynamics" of All Groups

##### 1. Membership: the groups within<sup>2</sup>

In this complex world people are interdependent, and the way they interact with one another are important objects of inquiry. The urge to get together, to form a group, may be said to be almost a basic human instinct. All human life, from the most primitive savage community to the most sophisticated civilization, falls back upon this basic ability

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 223-42.



to organize and to work and play together. Groups, consisting of a number of individuals banded together for a common purpose and governing themselves by certain set rules, follow certain fundamental patterns. They exist for purposes of pleasure, sociability, or service.

Climate: Membership in a group constitutes the right to influence and the agreement to be influenced. One must develop the capacity to perceive his own role and the role of others around him. The amount and kind of sharing with others of which a person is capable are enhanced or minimized by the group "climate." No two groups are alike. There may be adequate leadership, a well-shared set of purposes; there may be vast differences in view-points in patterning the organization either on autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire lines.

Groups which are oriented toward the goals of their members and tend to seek stability, continuity, and maturity by their performances -- placing purpose above procedure -- will establish a healthful climate under which the membership can participate effectively.<sup>3</sup>

Conflict: Obstacles to effective participation do not necessarily arise from wilfulness, obstinacy, or stupidity, per se, but may be due to other causes. There are some who withdraw from group life because of inability to sustain the effects of the group process, while others tend to create "conflict" unless provision is made to modify the membership role. A healthy type of aggression is desirable or there would be no gain on the part of the members of the group.

Hierarchy: Each member has a place, a role, in the group. He fits into and is part of the social structure according to his personal make-up. Because each role differs, there emerges a hierarchy, or "status"

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 234.



structure system clearly defining the worth of individuals to the group. This stratification of individuals is usually based on demonstrated ability in furthering group interests. Such factors as social class, wealth, occupation, age, experience, skill, education, etc., are often used as lines of demarcation in the hierarchy. The existence of such stratification cannot be denied and members usually have a clear idea of where they themselves, as well as their co-members, fit along the scale.

Just as each member submits himself to the discipline of the group can he learn to conform himself to spiritual values--under the guidance of the Divine Will. The greater his sensitiveness to the group within, the more conscious does he become of its power to guide, inspire, or restrain him. And the wider his conception of righteousness the higher will be his religious ideals to the laws of God.<sup>4</sup>

Values and Costs: The degree to which a person is capable of co-operating with others is determined to a large extent by his approach to other people, to problems, and to life in general. We think of some people as being cheerful, outgoing, as making friends easily, or as feeling free to make demands upon others. On the other hand there are those who are withdrawn, reflective, and who have difficulty in asking or receiving favors. People thus have different sense of "value."

Change: Differences in such fundamental properties as character, personality, even the I.Q., result from changes in social environment. But "desired" change is also produced through group experience, this alteration occurring in people as well as in groups. Changes in the way of behaving presumably reflect a new and improved attitude, insight, or degree of skill, in addition to changes in maturity and efficiency of

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<sup>4</sup>Basil Henriques, Club Leadership Today (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 144.



operation.

Three distinguishable types of changes are:

1. Changes in ability to solve problems, meet decisions, encourage or inhibit the formation of cliques, etc.
2. Effect on other groups and the community.
3. Change within the individual, reflected in his changed attitudes and behavior pattern.

Since individuals change as a result of working together, there must be certain directions of "change."

Classic studies prove that redirection of tendencies can be accomplished by the therapy of group membership and its consequent intimacy of communication. Moreover, experiencing social influences and cultural conditions transforms an individual's mental structure by forcing his instinctual drives into certain directions favoring some and blocking others.<sup>5</sup>

Selected needs and drives which are conditioned by the dynamics of interaction in group participation are:

1. The need to be in an "identifiable" group
2. The need for status
3. Necessity for curbing undesirable drives
4. The enhancement of self-esteem<sup>6</sup>

These are further expanded in proper order:

The need for belonging is the primary wish to identify oneself with an admired group which possesses similar interests, qualities, and objectives. In answer to this need a member's desire is to associate himself with others in order to achieve a tangible goal, accomplish

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<sup>5</sup>E. Cartwright and V. Zander, Group Dynamics--Research and Theory (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson & Co., 1953), p. 54.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-57.



contact, derive satisfaction in a completed job. This "belonging" satisfies instinctive needs for protection, security and affection in the sharing of ideals and interests.

The need for status is recognized in a person's requirements for self-esteem or a feeling of importance in life situations. For those who do not achieve the business or professional success they seek, group activities provide opportunities to broaden social, artistic, athletic or service contacts and in so doing offer another kind of success and recognition--within the group or community.

By providing ways to serve the church and/or civic endeavors group membership not only answers the need for status, but also enhances it occasionally by furthering promotion in one's business or profession.<sup>7</sup>

Group membership often establishes the proper conditions for curbing undesirable drives. One feels an obligation to respond to the behavior of others. Awareness of performance standards and limits to expression create many desirable standards while cancelling the undesirable ones, thus giving a sense of approval.

The quality of an individual's gratification depends upon his conformity to the standards of conduct while one's social personality becomes generalized by the relationship between himself and the group.<sup>8</sup>

The need for the enhancement of self-esteem is not to be confused with the false desire for ostentation. Social satisfaction can be found by demonstrating a talent, not by allowing it to lie dormant. Creative talent, organizational or athletic skills, ability to teach, to campaign,

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<sup>7</sup>M. A. Glasser, editor, What Makes a Volunteer? (Chicago: Public Affairs Publications Press, 1955), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Thelen, op. cit., p. 228.



and to do mission work cannot be used for personal gratification but must be put into operation to enthuse, to inform or to help others. Opportunities being provided to use whatever gifts he has, interests grow, and satisfactions increase.

## 2. Integration: evaluating and acting<sup>9</sup>

The term "integration" describes the appropriateness of the principles by which groups control the processes of feeling, expression, and acting.

"Feeling" is a state of affairs within the group evoked by situations and is communicated to others by tone of voice, inflection or tempo of speech, elaborateness or bluntness of phrases, or any departure of behavior from that which a problem usually requires. People respond in many ways to such communication. One person may feel defensive, another may respond to a feeling of frustration with an emphatic, "Amen, brother!"

Expressions signal that we like or dislike the way things are going, that we anticipate success or failure, that we have an adequate grasp of the problem. Comments may be a barometer indicating need for clarification. But, if they arise from sources such as having had an unpleasant experience outside the group, then direct display of anger, derision, or inadequate grasp of the situation may cause an unnecessary problem, since the group will be at a loss how to respond to it.

If people are listening to each other attentively, making contributions of new ideas, high morale will be indicated and no concern about bad feelings are felt. When growth lags and there is over-dependence on

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 245-60.



the leader it may be advisable to ascertain shared feelings in an orderly way. Unbridled acting-out of feelings has no value.

Periods of productiveness are more rewarding than a mere avoidance of discomfort or cost. Confidence in goals to be achieved lies in the group's past experiences. The group sets up criteria to be discussed, and considers alternatives and plans, for action on a new project.<sup>10</sup>

While this is being enacted the individual member is concerned whether the strategy selected will meet his own needs, how much frustration might be encountered or tolerated, what will others think of him if he does or does not assist with the project--what opportunities it offers him. All but extremely passive members wish to play some role and prefer that it be rewarding to themselves personally. Naturally, these personal considerations are not expressed to others.

A group member tries to evaluate the quality of his membership in association. The "aggressive" type "dives" in, making comments and testing the approval of the leader and of those members of higher rank than he. The "watcher" experiences his greatest facility with data which others have produced and "processed" for him. His evaluations are primarily an echo of the opinions of others. The "plunger" accepts opposition and takes action more easily, but perhaps not too advantageously.

The kind of member of most help to the group has an easy relationship to problems and people. He is not anxious but acts spontaneously rather than compulsively, like the "plunger," or with inhibitions, like the "watcher." With this sort of self-discipline, action-channels are available and he does not become frustrated.

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<sup>10</sup>Cartwright and Zander, op. cit., p. 297.



In every association there usually are set rules or "agreements." There are also group-sanctioned explanations about why such rules are necessary. The question for each group must be whether the rules have enough scope and validity for social learning. If so, then integration in the group increases the possibility of meeting life-situations as they come. If not, then experiencing integration in group membership makes adaptation in other situations more difficult.

The purpose-minded group rather than the procedure-minded one is likely to have an environment in which the individual learns to adapt to the larger world, for which his group provides the necessary experience and culture and knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

The real spirit of cooperation is typical of a mature mind. There is something greater than "what I want for myself." It is "what can be done to help others?"

### 3. Reality: factors in the problem situation<sup>12</sup>

The reality principle states that there is a set of conditions in which the group operates. These are:

- a. The personalities of the individual members: differences in normalcy, adulthood, experience, education, culture, training, efficiency, and emotional reaction.
- b. The characteristics which members have in common: church affiliation, Americanism, language, over-all interest and tendencies.
- c. The social relationships between members: position in the hierarchy of the group or status in community.
- d. The nature of the problem: This comprises two levels of influence which, dynamically related are, (1) The achievement problem

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>12</sup>Thelen, op. cit., pp. 263-72.



which is capable of logical manipulation and has the highest material reality. (2) The process problem which is concerned with emotions such as anxieties, desires, fears and resentments within the group.

Obstacles to achievement-problem solving are due to the energy diverted to process-problem demands. If energy is unproductive, we look for process-problems to account for the trouble. In such problems we find difficult-to-describe periods in group life--periods which have the quality of rivalry, of adolescent ambivalence between dependence and independence, sudden insights, and resistance to work.<sup>13</sup>

These differentiations carry implications which may threaten to disturb the existing balance among members and impair the solidarity of the group. Such factors as sub-conscious group mentality, the relationship between process versus achievement problems, etc., may be necessary to be studied so that energy lost may be diverted toward fruitful goals.

The basic concern is to develop ability for dealing simultaneously on all levels of this principle called "reality." To understand these factors is to be able to blue-print a set of policies for deciding how to proceed. This requires decision among alternatives, which is the function of leadership.

#### 4. Control: developing the group culture<sup>14</sup>

Control endeavors to increase the rate of the processes going toward desired ends and to slow down or inhibit the processes going against them. There are fundamental differences in approach. Bending people against their wishes does not work for long! Groups which achieve have an unusual awareness of their processes which they will tolerate to be used.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 275-95.



In general, we think of control as exerted continuously during a meeting. Conditions requiring control are:

1. To keep the discussion group-centered so that it is of interest to all;
2. To safeguard ease of expression so members may say what they really think;
3. To keep the discussion at a practical level so that everyone can visualize what is being talked about;
4. To maintain sufficient sensitivity to what happens so that participants are interested and motivated.

Members have a certain "readiness" for different goals at given times; and there are times when some members are not ready for any overt participation. Co-ordination may be accomplished by a generally-agreed-upon plan to overcome obstacles.

In a meeting of a certain group, the leader decided to withdraw temporarily. The members started talking about problems but their speculations had very little basis in fact, they were simply trying to maintain their involvement in the group and found interaction more gratifying than the embarrassment of sitting quietly. With little to go on, they carried on such learned discussion as: Are we too independent? Does a person have to give up his independence to work in a group? These questions were simply advanced to fill the gap.<sup>15</sup>

This illustration is cited to indicate the impossibility of controlling groups effectively unless there is an accepted work task. With a goal in view each member's role is definable and individuals know what to expect.

A control system operates in one of two ways:

1. Through the authority of shared ideas.
2. Through the authority of a particular person or group.

The first is the ideal of democracy; the second of autocracy. The

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<sup>15</sup>Cartwright and Zander, op. cit., p. 595.



democratic basis for co-ordination is, of course, the most effective. Note that this state of democracy does not mean complete independence in the traditional sense. A shared agreement is a social contract. It implies that if I feel my action not to be in agreement with my policies, I must accept the idea that group policies are better than those of any individual. Such democracy is essentially a relationship of trust.

Because persons can control one another by force or coercion, and need to control one another due to complicated divisions in problem solutions, there arises some kind of need for regulation and pressure toward, stabilization of control. The nature and extent of such control becomes a part of the framework of rights and duties--the structure of authority.

This entails the embodiment of authority in a leader. The concept of leadership is a means for developing, maintaining, and modifying the group control system. Leadership, though vested in one person, is to be considered as a function and not actually a person. The culture of a group is determined to a large extent by the kinds of policies leaders have.

#### B. Factors Effecting Group Productivity<sup>16</sup>

This part of the chapter concerns the factors which effect the work of a group. It attempts to describe these factors in such a manner that leaders and group members will be better able to relate this theoretical knowledge toward the more practical purposes of: (1) Developing ways of

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<sup>16</sup>H. G. Dimock, "The Group At Work," Adult Leadership, V (September, 1956), pp. 80-82.



promoting group growth; (2) Planning more effective procedures. Factors affecting such work can be divided into at least four chief areas:

1. Involvement
2. Interaction
3. Cohesion
4. Task Requirements

This classification can at best, be somewhat artificial, for the factors in one area are usually interacting with factors in other areas. However, almost any logical classification makes the observation and analysis of theoretical group dynamics a bit easier for practical purposes.

#### 1. Involvement

To form an opinion about the involvement of a group it is helpful to ask: Why are the members here? Is the group attractive to them? Why? How much stake do the members have in the outcome of the problems discussed?

The involvement varies from meeting to meeting. It depends upon the members' interest in the topic under discussion and on their freedom from outside distractions. To some extent involvement may be estimated from the rate of absences, late arrivals, and the turn-over of group members.

There are several ways in which involvement may be increased. Members are attracted to groups that give prestige, that accomplish things worthy of recognition, and, in general, meet their personal needs and interests. It is useful then, to emphasize and dramatize the various sources of attraction for the members. Pointing out the accomplishments of the group, helping it to have joy in its work, and securing recognition



for its work from outside sources (publicity), are typical examples.

Involvement can be increased from within the group by helping the members play more active roles. Role Satisfaction is extremely important to the dynamic interest. More active roles, for example, can be created by rotating the jobs of planning, working on committees, and by asking members frequently for ideas and suggestions.

A post-meeting reaction questionnaire may be found of value in diagnosing the intensity of involvement. Evaluation of any kind, whether it be polls, "feedback" situations, questionnaires, etc., should ask questions such as these: "What do you consider the strengths and weaknesses of this meeting?" "What could have been done to make the meeting more successful?" "What do you suggest for the next meeting?"<sup>17</sup>

Such evaluation has the effect of clarifying the objectives of the group since all members are able to express themselves freely. A regular evaluation period helps in understanding the feelings of members and presents a channel for all to have a "say" in the groups' agenda and procedures. Thus is the factor of involvement important to group productivity.

## 2. Interaction

A study of the interaction pattern of a group shows a great deal about the effects of the size of the group, of status or position differences, and of problem members. An analysis of the different contributions shows whether they were relevant to the task at hand, or whether they were contributions which helped build and maintain the group. It also shows whether a few members were carrying the ball or whether all were

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 81.



participating and sharing leadership and responsibility.

The size of the group is important. It should contain all the people necessary to do the job that needs to be done. A group that is organized to exchange information can be a lot larger than a problem-solving and decision-making group.

Some research has suggested that ten to twelve is the best number for a problem-solving group. If the group is very much larger, then techniques and procedures adapted to large group meetings should be used. As the size of the group grows, the problem of communication becomes increasingly difficult.<sup>18</sup>

A study of the interaction patterns of a group also reveals the "problem-members." These may be the over-participators or dominators, and the under-participators. They may also be the blockers, the digressors, the special-interest pleaders, and the with-drawn members. Helping these members become aware of the effects of their behavior is often a big step toward the working out of the problem.

Recognizing these tendencies enables the membership to push for a balance by:

1. Encouraging "low status" members to participate.
2. Trying to analyze everyone's contribution charitably, on its own merit.

### 3. Cohesion

The degrees of cohesion or "groupness" is directly related to the involvement of the members. Some groups, however, may have a high degree of cohesion based on mutual friendships alone, and the members may not even be involved in any work of the group. A certain amount of groupness

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.



or cohesion within a group makes two valuable contributions to well being:

1. It maintains the group. Low cohesion is liable to have a high rate of turnover and absences, or just disintegrate.
2. A cohesive group can develop standards of teamwork which have a strong influence over the behavior of members.

A group with low cohesion is often unable to make decisions because members do not feel obligated to moderate their individual positions in the interest of securing agreement and common action.<sup>19</sup>

When members understand each other, there is likely to be good cohesion. Such groups are more productive because, for one thing, members are able to discuss problems of morale through evaluation periods, and then face conflicts on their own power, and are able to communicate more easily and to deal with threats to its continuity more readily.

A special, friendly, get-to-know-each-other time can contribute much to this cohesion factor.

#### 4. Task Requirements

A good place to start is with the goals which are common to the group members. Each member should have an opportunity to contribute to the goals, and care should be taken that those who don't contribute, at least understand the goals.

Next, some sort of flexible plan should be developed for reaching the goals. It is useful if the group is acquainted with different procedures for communication, study, and decision-making which are appropriate for various needs. These may be, to mention a few:

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<sup>19</sup>Cartwright and Zander, op. cit., p. 126.



1. Free discussion
2. Business session
3. A speech
4. A case study
5. Evaluation period
6. Panel or symposium
7. Role playing
8. Buzz groups
9. Use of visual aids
10. Any combination of these.

Incidentally, this whole process of task requirements and the four factors of group dynamics mentioned in this section were clearly experienced in an elective course, Number 582, "Christian Education For Adults," taught at Concordia Seminary by Professor Harry G. Coiner. This course includes a worthwhile training in group dynamics for church use.

From time to time it is important to evaluate the movement of the group:

Goals may be carried over from one meeting to another, perhaps in the form of agenda items. It is helpful if the meeting is planned ahead of time, though the agenda should be subject to change at the next meeting in case important items have come up between times. A check should be made at each meeting to see if the decisions of the last meeting were carried out. If repeated failure is evident, perhaps a revision in the use of certain methods would be advisable for the task requirements of the group.<sup>20</sup>

The factors of climate, involvement, interaction, cohesion, and task requirements are useful considerations when we set about analyzing the growth and development of any small group. It is one thing to locate areas where improvement is needed, and quite another thing to bring about such improvement. Here are a few suggestions for helping a group improve its latent dynamic power:

1. It is helpful if the group understands the theory of group dynamics, what is involved in change, and can see the advantage

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<sup>20</sup>Dimock, op. cit., p. 82.



- of doing things a new way.
2. It is helpful if the group can be trained to make the decision itself in trying out the new way. The group should participate in making the change.
  3. Having made the change, the group must make sure that the new way is really more effective than the old way.<sup>21</sup>

The use of group dynamics depends to a large degree for success on how well the leader or the group applies the theory and employs the mechanics. Thus a view of "group-dynamics-applied," through the medium of case studies, which are included in a later chapter, is pertinent.

One word of caution. Changes develop slowly, as a rule. Aspirant users of group dynamics should be aware of this. Each change toward a "dynamic" situation brings added value to every meeting, both in terms of productivity for group tasks and in a feeling of accomplishment on the part of the individual members. A church group may, in certain areas of activity, employ the theory and mechanics of group dynamics to advantage. Toward that end the study of this thesis is undertaken.

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 84.



## CHAPTER III

### THEORY OF GROUP DYNAMICS IN CHURCH RELATION

#### A. Spiritual Values of Group Dynamics

One might say that in recent years sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, personnel specialists and educators, have rediscovered "groups" and their importance to individuals.<sup>1</sup> Others who have been studying in the field of "group dynamics" have helped us to see that within any group are forces which vitally influence a person's growth and behavior. These forces have a great deal to do with what a person learns and the kind of person he becomes.

##### 1. Realizing the mission of the church

Now we might ask, "In what way can group dynamics be related to the mission of the church?" Possibly several observations will help clarify this matter.

a. Confronting the individual.--There is a new awareness, these days, that salvation is not a transaction between an individual and God--in the sense that it is carried on without relation to or concern for other people.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sara Little, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, c.1956), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Reuel L. Howe, Man's Need and God's Action (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury Press, 1953), pp. 75-76.



The whole story of God's dealing with man is a record of His working with the individual in community.<sup>3</sup> For example, consider the books of the Prophets in the Old Testament. He does not wait for men to come to Him, but He seeks them out through their experiences. Thus any creative interaction of men, struggling together to hear what God says in their everyday life, becomes an area in which the Holy Spirit continues to confront them.<sup>4</sup>

God's ultimate revelation is that of a Person speaking to persons. God incarnate in Jesus Christ, the "Word made flesh," speaks to man in a profoundly dynamic way. Somehow when a person "believes on Jesus Christ," all that he is or does, witnesses to other men of this Christ and in his speaking the Word he becomes an instrument thru whom the Holy Ghost causes others to believe also.

The Holy Spirit creates that kind of Church in which the Truth can be communicated. Thus the Church becomes most truly "the" Church when its members thru the Word are discovering together God's will for them in their immediate situations. In the experience of searching together the Holy Ghost makes known to the group truth which may be hidden from the individual in his solitude.<sup>5</sup>

Note especially St. Paul's words to the Ephesian Church on this subject:

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<sup>3</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>Margaret E. Kuhn, You Can't Be Human Alone (New York: Association Press, c.1956), p. 4.



Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way unto him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Eph. 4:15f.).

b. The "redeeming community."--Mansie Elackie Anderson has written in a helpful booklet for students of Group Study that when we call a Christian organization a "reconciling" or a "redemptive" (quotes are ours) community we are really saying that in some way it is expressing the life of the Church in that particular locality.<sup>6</sup>

But, the Church's existence, yes, its very life, has compulsion that it preach the story of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ the Son of God! Therefore, the "live" Church is part of, even is--the Body of Christ, in whose life the work of love and redemption is to be constantly expressed and renewed. And it is the Church, the Body of Christ, which carries on the work of reconciliation.<sup>7</sup>

Now how do we as individuals, or collectively as a church, become part of the Body of Christ? Obviously, it can only be when we have come to accept this "living" Christ in faith, and are made into a redemptive community or force through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. For every one who hears and answers God's Word becomes a part of the Body of Christ, participating in the life of an organism in which the gifts or special abilities of each one are needed by all members of that organism, for mutual edification and well-being.

This bearing of one another's burdens is in a real sense a part of

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 19.



the ministry of the Church, a ministry shared by laymen and clergy alike, and recalls the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers as a "profound Christian truth" which is ignored "at the peril of personal and ecclesiastical sickness." It is, indeed, "one essential condition of being a Christian."<sup>8</sup>

Rose Snyder interprets this doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers" by reference to Martin Luther's instructions to Christians to act "reciprocally and mutually on the Christ of the other" and to "put on our neighbor."

"To put on our neighbor" means that all the resources of our life are available to our neighbor . . . and that we put on the way he sees and feels the world, his sorrows, anxieties, and frustrations. We deal with them as if they were our own.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Encouraging fellowship and fostering love

From the section on Evangelism of the Evanston, Illinois Conference, came a statement which, in essence, states the reasons for the emphasis here given to the importance of, and need for, group dynamics in the Christian fellowship:

The Church which God uses to communicate the Gospel is a fellowship, a koinonia, drawn and held together by the love of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and by the need and desire of its members to share this experience with each other and to draw those outside this experience into that koinonia. The evangelizing Church will offer this gift in its preaching and teaching, especially through the individual and group witness of its members.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ross Snyder, "Group Dynamics in the Life of the Church," Religious Education, XLV (November-December, 1951), p. 323.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>"Report of Section II, Evangelism," Evanston Speaks: Reports from the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches (New York: World Council of Churches, 1955), p. 20.



a. Fellowship through dynamic situations.--Can our churches really be fellowships in this sense? Can they be redeeming forces in society? To give the people the experience of fellowship in our society today may require "another reformation" in many churches.

Margaret E. Kuhn suggests an appraisal of the Church's program and purpose of group life in this way:

1. We need to revise our ideas about the role of groups and the characteristics of group life in the Church in relation to mankind's yearning for fellowship and community.
2. We need new competence in effective group approaches to the human mind and spirit, utilizing a variety of methods to improve the group life of the church.
3. We need to discover the ethics of complex group relationships for Christians.<sup>11</sup>

Although human beings are sinful and self-centered, they yearn for satisfaction beyond themselves. Their lives attain completeness only in community with others, and in efforts for the common good. Remember Christ's words: "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it."

This, of course, is idealistic. Yet Christians are deeply concerned about human relationships. Many thousands of churchmen find deeper fellowship in a union, a trade association, or a lodge. Moreover, many persons in modern society have lost a sense of community, and honestly seek it in the Church.<sup>12</sup>

But all too often churches provide only a superficial sociability or cliqueishness that misses all of the deep implications of the Christian

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<sup>11</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



fellowship. Undoubtedly there are opportunities for a vital fellowship through the numerous groups and organizations that are found in every church.

Such vital groups are, unfortunately, all too rare. Far more often we find groups in which most of the members engage in activities merely in a spectator capacity, rather than as a participant understanding and sharing in the purpose of the activity. Occasionally, a member may be vaguely stirred by hearing an interpretation of the message of a prophet, or by an elusive idea that almost touches him. But nothing real happens. Too concerned about himself and what people think of him to be interested in, or feel empathy for, those other people, he moves on, lonely in the midst of many people and anxious about something he knows not what. One writer has said:

Our communities and churches are filled with frightened and lonely people who, being afraid to give themselves in personal encounter, seek solace in the comfort of things, only to suffer from an increased sense of estrangement and death.<sup>13</sup>

Why all this harangue on negative conditions in the church? Simply this: When the sense of security and fulfillment so necessary to human beings is found more often through participation in secular groups than in church groups, it is time to be troubled.

Is it possible that group dynamics and its principles and procedures (rightly understood and applied) may have great value for an effective and vital fellowship in the Church?

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<sup>13</sup>Howe, op. cit., p. 25.



b. Love, the result of fellowship.--A writer mentions that "the creation of an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance is basic for learning to take place and be assimilated."<sup>14</sup> She sees certain implications for the church. So ought we! The understanding and acceptance of which public educators and group work agencies speak are, in the church, love and forgiveness! These two characteristics which the church expresses bear with them a power which may sustain that individual who responds in faith to the love of God, and which is revealed to him through the fellowship of the church.

Now what is love--the type to which a study of ethical group dynamics might be applied? At the foundation of the whole teaching of the church, as it relates to positive change and a working fellowship, lies the motivating concept of love.<sup>15</sup>

Actually, love in a secular sense means an inner urge to action that leads a person into immediate, personal, and helpful contact with others. Love is an outreaching act of helpfulness of one person toward another.<sup>16</sup>

Henderlite defines the meaning of love operationally by saying that:

We must not make the mistake of thinking that love is easy. Love is of the will, requiring thought and decision. It is not a warm

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<sup>14</sup>Majorie Felder, "Implications of Group Dynamics for a Philosophy of Christian Education," an unpublished Master's Thesis, General Assembly's Training School, Richmond, Va., 1954, p. 57.

<sup>15</sup>Paul F. Douglass, The Group Workshop Way in The Church (New York: Association Press, c.1956), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>J. F. Brown, The Psycho-dynamics of Abnormal Behavior (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1940), p. 138.



feeling only; it contains an element of calculation, a demand for personal action.<sup>17</sup>

These statements may be true in themselves, but when we speak of an "operational love" in the truly and wholly Christian sense of "agape" we mean that it is the love of God toward us and expressed toward men--for Christ's sake! St. Paul describes love operationally when he says: "Love bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things."<sup>18</sup> Every consideration of the church in connection with group dynamics, takes its point of departure from this "working" concept of love--the emphasis being on working. Thus, love as an attitude toward people is always expressed in the performance of a role.<sup>19</sup>

When people, who associate with one another in any of the many meetings within a church, come to look upon themselves as performing necessary roles to achieve purposeful goals in the spirit of Christian love, then the group begins to be spiritually productive. It ceases merely to go through routine motions; it begins to move forward in a direction, and spiritual love is on the increase, as Christians out of love to Christ and for his sake express "action love" to others in their church meetings.

### 3. Increasing christian character and growth

Many pastors have directed our Christian teaching largely to the

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<sup>17</sup>Rachel Henderlite, A Call To Faith (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1955), pp. 184-87.

<sup>18</sup>James Moffat, translator. The Holy Bible (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1926), 1 Cor. 13:7.

<sup>19</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 5.



individual while paying little attention to the forces operating in the groups into which individuals are gathered. One may follow the practice of simply trying to convert more individuals, and assume that right attitudes and relationships inevitably follow. Or one may pay attention to the individual as he is related to the group.

Social psychologists have been telling us that it is often easier to change the attitudes and behavior of a group of people than it is to re-educate one individual, because it is often group forces which really mold his life.<sup>20</sup>

a. Character for the individual.--Ever since Hugh Hartshorne and Mark May began their research in character education, a quarter of a century ago, social scientists have suspected that moral character is a group phenomenon as well as a personal attribute.<sup>21</sup>

Character has group roots; and the church which operates with group dynamics may deepen these group roots by strengthening healthy patterns of interpersonal relationships. Hartshorne puts it this way:

The normal unit for character education is the group or small community which provides through co-operative discussion and effort, the moral support required for the adventurous, and discovery plus effective use of ideas in the conduct of affairs.<sup>22</sup>

✓ Group dynamics carried on within the framework of the church can justify its existence only in so far as it shares in the church's work of

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<sup>20</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Hugh Hartshorne, Character in Human Relations (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 301.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 309.



fulfilling God's eternal purpose for the individual soul.<sup>23</sup> For transformation of personality really occurs only as men meet God, Who in His grace seeks them out. Drawing them to Himself, away from their self-love and inadequacies, God enables them to become "a new creation." And it is through a supporting power (that quality of life provided by the Christian group dwelling in the Holy Ghost) that this transformation is enhanced. As man changes, he moves toward Christian maturity.

And is not "edification" in part, included in the doctrine of sanctification? Dr. J. T. Mueller states: "In its narrower sense sanctification denotes the inward spiritual transformation of the believer," and also, "Where there are true Christians they give themselves and all they have to serve Christ and His own."<sup>24</sup>

Thus those who experience the new relationship with God, who have this sense of being made whole, feel an inner compulsion to help others discover in their own lives the power of God's redemptive love. Because they are themselves free, they can accept new ideas, meet hostilities, and care for many unlovely people. Knowing himself to be loved, he can love. And thus he becomes himself a man of character!

b. Group "growth" through role satisfaction.--Now what is good for the group. Groups, let it be understood, can be just as healthy (and just as sick), as a human being. A sick group manufactures spiritually sick people.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>24</sup>J. T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1951), pp. 384, 412.

<sup>25</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 12.



The sick group fails to provide for full and genuine exploration, involvement, participation, and action. Recognized from a study of its symptoms, it becomes a timid, suspicious, trivial, and ingrown "integration." It provides no challenge and brings to focus no major issues. Such a group is not only sick, it is moving futilely to slow but certain death. A healthy group, on the other hand, is productive for the very opposite reasons.

Now any group which hopes to provide the "climate" for character growth, requires performance skills. Every group needs to recognize this fact and provide for proper in-service training. "Skills," Hartshorne says without qualification, "are basic to character." Indeed, "the good intentioned bungler lacks something which belongs to genuine character."<sup>26</sup>

It is a general psychological principal that people enjoy what they do well, and increasingly better. They feel they belong together, they develop team spirit, high morale, and their individual performance deepens group roots of character.

Since character develops in groups which develop skill and thus are productive, we must seek to make them so. A group in order to be productive must provide role satisfaction to its members.<sup>27</sup>

What is meant by a role? It is a functioning position occupied by an individual in the working program of a group. It is like a position on a ball team which a baseman must skillfully play to win the game. In the current theory of human relationships the role is the chief social

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<sup>26</sup>Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 258.

<sup>27</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 14.



consideration.<sup>28</sup>

And group dynamics provides that necessary consideration in abundance. For practice in the skill of doing, which its procedures and techniques provide, is essential to every step in character growth and role satisfaction.<sup>29</sup>

The total performance of such a healthy Christian group creates a spiritual climate that infuses the members with a deep sense of soul satisfying and thankful achievement. It may indeed be "a working of the spirit" among people of "one accord." Loyalty to a group of this type can in no way deter from the greater loyalty to the church. On the contrary, it should intensify one's church affiliation.

Dr. Oscar E. Feucht of our Missouri Synod supports this line of reasoning well:

This is no denial of the fact that only the Holy Ghost can make a Christian. Nor a denial of the truth that nothing but the Gospel of Christ can bring about a true conversion. It is simply saying what must be said, namely, that the Gospel must have a human channel. God does not choose to rain Gospel tracts from heaven upon India or Africa. He uses men! The pastor who has set for his goal a ministry which seeks to make his people self-reliant priests of God, "thru role satisfaction," (words in quotes are ours) able to lead their own household in all spiritual things, is wise.<sup>30</sup>

#### B. Spiritual Limitations of Group Dynamics

A study of this nature can be fair only if both sides of the story

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<sup>28</sup>Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, editors, Toward A General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), passim.

<sup>29</sup>Doubllass, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>Enlisting And Training Kingdom Workers, edited by Mo. Synod Committee on Enlisting and Training the Laity (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), pp. 24f.



are presented. Group dynamics--the writer feels--does have its limitations. And the Christian leader, above all, should be acquainted with them. For he is dealing here not with "principalities and powers," but with souls which belong to Christ. The following limitations are of major concern.

1. Will not produce spontaneously changed persons

It is dangerous to assume that procedures in group dynamics will automatically produce changed persons, or even that it is the only approach to people.

Leaders may mistakenly assume progress when they see people active or talkative. This "misplaced participation" says one modern writer, may be found in business where they strive for high morale by consulting and planning with all levels of workers in what is often only a gesture to make them think they have a part in decisions; this, he says, is not positive participation.<sup>31</sup>

Along with that goes what he calls "false personalization." When there is forced display of abnormal personality for the benefit of the group, the result is that of manipulatory and false character.<sup>32</sup> People can become themselves only when they are freed by looking for something outside themselves. Unless people follow through in group work with some individual thinking on their own part, they may have nothing to contribute or receive from the group after a time. They merely "pool ignorance," as

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<sup>31</sup>David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1953, Anchor Books Edition), pp. 302ff.

<sup>32</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 27.



someone has said, or engage in "intellectual ping-pong."<sup>33</sup>

All this represents the extreme, of course. So long as people's concern for one another is genuine and as long as there are persons of Christian integrity, such danger can be avoided.

## 2. Too much emphasis on procedures versus purpose

Because there are certain procedures which seem to result in better participation than others, these procedures tend to be employed indiscriminately, whether they are appropriate for the occasion or not. They may, in fact become ends in themselves, and a pastor or lay leader may feel compelled to use certain methods, more because they are "fashionable" than because they can accomplish desired goals.<sup>34</sup>

This does not mean to say that people are to avoid knowing about methods, and mastering their use; rather, it is to emphasize the value of knowing the why behind them, and then using them wisely. This is doubly true when a pastor attempts their use as a tool for the Holy Spirit in building God's Kingdom. For procedure which has no spiritual purpose in connection with church meetings should be re-evaluated. To substitute group procedures for the means of grace is unthinkable.

## 3. Too much emphasis on the group versus the individual

Living in a culture which develops people who desperately need social approval, the Church may unintentionally allow the group (rather

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<sup>33</sup>Study Groups and Their Leadership (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 9.

<sup>34</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 28.



than truth as communicated through the group) to become the determining influence on the lives of its members.

Edward R. Gross, in an interesting article entitled "Group Worship--The New Orthodoxy?" states: "What is disturbing about the current emphasis on the group is that too much is expected of it. Group participation is being offered as an answer to all problems."<sup>35</sup>

The "fear of freedom," he says, "is the reason why the faith in the group has arisen and such high hopes are held for it."<sup>36</sup> For the individual faced with a difficult decision or problem which requires careful thought, it is always much easier to join a group, because this throws responsibility on the leader and gains the added sanction of social approval!

Yet when people become "other-directed," they feel guilty, not about failure to live up to inner spiritual standards but about failure to be popular, or to manage smoothly their relations with other people.<sup>37</sup>

Now, obviously, if a person says, "I'll go along with the group," in order to secure approval, he is defeating the whole purpose of what has been projected as an opportunity for Christian growth. It matters a great deal that the goal of group procedure in church work is not to develop "other-directed" people, but, people whose lives are directed by their Christian faith. For in the final analysis, the person stands alone, faced with gulfs not encompassed by any group.

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<sup>35</sup>Edward Gross, "Group Worship--the New Orthodoxy?" Adult Leadership, IV (April, 1956), 4.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>37</sup>Riesman, op. cit., p. 28.



Indeed, it is because a man becomes a person, a self, only as an "individual in community"<sup>38</sup> and a Christian only as a member of the body of Christ that the use of group dynamics is here conceived of as an instrument for the fulfilling of God's purpose for man.

#### 4. Theoretical assumptions are not scientific

"Religious educators," says R. G. Gunderson of Oberlin College, "should be aware of dangers in endorsing this group dynamics 'furor' in which: (1) basic theoretical assumptions are open to serious challenge; and (2) advocates make exaggerated claims of scientific virtue."<sup>39</sup>

The imperative need for more healthy human relations (in our churches as well) makes the study of group dynamics almost too inviting for application in religious work.

This is also true of pastors who wish some quick, yet scientifically sure-fire method of putting that magic dynamic spirit into every one of their church groups. But in studying individuals as they participate in groups, religious leaders and pastors will do well to rely upon a psychology which demands controlled experimentation, carefully defined terminology, and an honest recognition of limitations.<sup>40</sup>

This can be said because of definite reasons. Group Dynamics is based on the old Gestalt psychology, and as an outgrowth of this type, it has "some of the virtues and most of the vices" of "Gestalt"

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<sup>38</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>39</sup>R. G. Gunderson, "Dangers in Group Dynamics," Religious Education, XLIV (November-December, 1951), 344.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.



psychology."<sup>41</sup>

However, most exponents of group dynamics, like the Gestaltists, are willing to accept subjective observation in experimental data, a practice which many psychologists challenge. In attacking their impatience, in contrast to the "slow, painstaking methods of science," for example, Henry Winthrop maintains that the "dynamicists are in the vanguard of the retreat from reason."<sup>42</sup>

In an unusually brilliant article in The Psychological Review, I. D. London criticises Lewin's work as "this translation of previously recognized facts into the unfamiliar and complicated language of a pseudo-mathematics, totally unrelated to the needs of psychological theory."<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion to this section let it be said that rejecting the theoretical basis of group dynamics does not mean that this subject is of no importance. Professor J. E. Asch reminds us that "in the forest of social psychology the first paths still have to be carved out."<sup>44</sup> So give it time.

The spiritual limitations of an unscientific medium for church work are obvious when there remains the possibility that group dynamics is grabbed at for a magic cure-all of group ills. Let it be remembered however, that the Holy Spirit is still the cause and only "scientifically"

<sup>41</sup>R. G. Gunderson, "This Group-Dynamics Furor," School and Society, LXXIV (August 18, 1951), 98.

<sup>42</sup>H. Winthrop, "Outgrowth of Gestalt Psychology," The Journal of General Psychology, XXXVI (April, 1947), 139.

<sup>43</sup>I. D. London, "Lewin--A New Psychology?" The Psychological Review, LI (September, 1944), 266-291.

<sup>44</sup>Gunderson, "This Group-Dynamics Furor," p. 100.



accurate blessing to Christian fellowship. Group Dynamics must be used only with this in mind!

#### 5. Experimental work and techniques criticized

Theoretical speculations of the dynamicists are less well publicized than are some of their devices for use in group discussion.<sup>45</sup> Role playing, "feedback" or evaluation reports, and buzz sessions have been widely advertised as revitalizing techniques for classroom and conference.

There may be some psychiatric benefit in assigning role playing, for instance, to certain problem situations in meetings, but the inherent artificiality, if not blasphemy, involved in the process makes this device absurd as a method for the discussion of serious religious matters.<sup>46</sup>

Other writers seem to indicate that it were better if this device were left to the area of teaching children, not adults.

Concerning the dynamicists' use of evaluation or "feedback," one critic says that "published transcriptions of these sessions often are reminiscent of confession periods in Buchmanite meetings!"<sup>47</sup>

The experimental work behind these devices also has been criticized. H. J. Eysenck writes in a review in The Journal of General Psychology: "Dynamicists have failed to bring forward any objective evidence whatsoever . . . in favor of their principles and their superiority. Quite often data contradicts their conclusions."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Gunderson, "Dangers in Group Dynamics," p. 343.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>47</sup>Barron and Krullee, "Case Study," The Journal of Social Issues, IV (Spring, 1948), 25ff.

<sup>48</sup>H. J. Eysenck, "Review of the Principles of Group Dynamics," The Journal of General Psychology, XLVI (July, 1949), 139-40.



Some conclude that (1) much of the experimental work in group dynamics suffers from inadequately defined terminology concerning group functions, procedures, and the use of unprecise measuring methods; (2) the application of group dynamics to non-laboratory situations or "action research" has often produced weird manifestations, if not downright quackery.<sup>49</sup>

Some of this may be true! But, by rejecting group dynamics one does not minimize the importance of studying individuals in group participation. Though still a "babe" perhaps some day it will mature as did psychology, and sociology.

However, the spiritual limitations are there. A pastor cannot depend on the scientific exactness of this study, as he might upon the recent scholarship of the Dead Sea Scrolls or Greek exegesis. The results may, but not necessarily, be different.

Yet whether a spiritual "aid" is acceptable to the Lord of the Church, a healthy reminder is this: God's blessing shall always rest with His Church, new methods or not! For the Holy Spirit is the total and only cause of all good works in the Church, and He will remain so! The synergistic whims of man shall never supersede. This is not tragic, indeed, it is a great comfort!

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<sup>49</sup>Gunderson, "This Group-Dynamics Furor," p. 100.



## CHAPTER IV

### ACCEPTABLE LEADERSHIP METHODS WHICH MAY BE USED BY A CHRISTIAN PASTOR IN CONGREGATIONAL GROUPS

#### A. Understanding Christian Group Leadership

The minister has a unique responsibility to a congregation. In dealing with the spiritual lives of his members, he also deals with their pasts, their presents, and their futures. And tied with these destinies is a bewildering combination of emotional colorations, intellectual and economic variations, and cultural differences.<sup>1</sup> Such a man with his own answers to seek, must have the courage of a lion, the cunning of a fox, and the gentleness of a dove. This is absolutely true, of course, of the pastor who places the entire burden of leadership on his two shoulders alone!

For years many church leaders have assumed that leadership consists of certain inbred, or carefully cultivated, characteristics that will enable their gifted possessors to cope with any and all situations. But by experience and thoughtful observation of what happens in groups we know that no one can be, or should be expected to be, a leader at all times and in every group, unless he is a genius or an absolute dictator. Nor must an individual always be a follower.<sup>2</sup>

It is a strange fact that even as Christ said: "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it," so also a Christian leader may have one

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret E. Kuhn, You Can't Be Human Alone (New York: Association Press, c.1956), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>D. Withall and W. Brown, "The Potential of Group Process For The Church," Religious Education, I (January-February, 1955), 54.



of his best sessions when the members may be entirely unaware of the leader as a person or of his part in the picture.

A leader is best  
when people hardly know  
that he exists;  
not so good when people  
acclaim him,  
worst when they despise him.  
But of a good leader,  
who talks little,  
when his work is done,  
his aim fulfilled,  
they will all say,  
"We did this ourselves!"<sup>3</sup>

# 1. A new conception from research

Perhaps the most basic development growing out of recent research is a changing conception of the nature of leadership. When the social scientists started observing groups at work and tabulating incidents of leadership behavior, they found that the things that leaders do were being done by many members of the group; in other words, that "leadership" is not the special property of any one person.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, leadership is dynamic, and frequently shifts from one person to another. It is not the sole possession of one or two exceptional persons who are able to dominate others. Nor can it be described by a listing of traits of character or personality.<sup>5</sup>

Happy is the young Seminarian who discovers--before having the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Malcolm Knowles, How To Develop Better Leaders (New York: Association Press, c.1955), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 8.



leadership position in a church thrust upon him--that his role does not require in-born traits or bubbling personality! But that, just as in his more spiritual duties, what is most important to him for good leadership is that he "be found faithful" in his task. This of course, means that hard work in the study and planning of leadership will always be necessary--for genius, by and large, will remain "98% perspiration." We do not mean here to eliminate the importance of personality, etc., altogether.

## 2. Leadership a shared process

This new conception does not deny that there are leaders. But it does eliminate the sharp distinction that usually exists between leaders and followers. The evidence is overwhelming that in many situations the more widely leadership functions are shared among all members of a group, the more efficiently and co-operatively they work together!<sup>6</sup>

Thelen says concisely that "leadership is the set of functions through which the group co-ordinates the efforts of individuals."<sup>7</sup> Each member can then contribute his own unique talents and knowledge in accomplishing the common goal.

Certainly this is a most Christian manner! For no person comes into a group situation a blank. Each member brings to the group his experiences, background, inheritance, and training.

All persons are potential leaders in some situations in that they

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<sup>6</sup>Knowles, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Herbert Thelen, Dynamics of Groups At Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c.1954), p. 296.



have something to contribute to the process of facing problems and arriving at group decisions, and making human relationships more satisfying.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Leadership "needs" change

An important result of recent research is the insight that a dynamic group is a growing organism with needs for different leadership at different stages of development.<sup>9</sup> This is true of a mature group also. When a group reaches maturity, it functions as a well-integrated, independent organism. It is able to accept responsibility for its own actions. It divides its tasks among its members in keeping with their abilities.

But a group can remain "mature" only by solving its own problems--without help from a dictator! Therefore, it is axiomatic that as a group faces new problems and senses new needs in its members, new leadership should emerge from the group.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes groups actually do progress to the point of making leadership a consciously shared function. To accomplish this there may be a rotating leadership, or co-leaders, or some other plan devised.

The competent (and Christian) leader will understand this process of group growth and need and will do whatever is necessary to assist the group toward maturity. The leader who does not understand the process or

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<sup>8</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Knowles, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Kuhn, op. cit.



who refuses to give up his authority or "lose control" can easily keep a group in an infantile state; completely dependent on him. As one writer so aptly said:

The small man will fear to let any of his supervisory and administrative powers out of his vest pocket; the big man empties his pockets as fast and as efficiently as he can.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Three types of leaders

For purposes of this discussion, leaders may be classified in three categories: the boss, the overseer, and the catalyst. Each of these types of leaders tends to determine the "climate" of the group and its participation pattern.<sup>12</sup> This climate of the members may range from that of dependence and resentment, to continuing growth initiative, the capacity to bear responsibility, and the awareness of values.

Some authors, such as Uris,<sup>13</sup> Little, and others, also include the laissez-faire type leader:

This type of leader is the "easy-going" kind who believes in having no restrictions what-so-ever. This leader, who proudly announces that he has little to do because he believes in "permissive" leadership usually finds that the group ends up as a chaotic collection of confused individuals.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Withall and Brown, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>12</sup>Paul F. Douglass, The Group Workshop Way in The Church (New York: Association Press, c.1956), p. 128.

<sup>13</sup>Auren Uris, How To Be A Successful Leader (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., c.1953), p. 29.

<sup>14</sup>Sara Little, Learning Together in The Christian Fellowship (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, c.1956), p. 79.



## 5. The "Christian" group leader

To be a Christian leader is not an easy thing. What is demanded is not a "glorious" overseer who draws those lesser persons--his followers--to him in a personal devotion which may obscure the real purpose of the group. (This type is perhaps the biggest "sin" among Lutheran pastors!) Nor is a "dictator" boss wanted, for he would never be willing to let people become themselves, any more than he would know how to help them in that process.

Rather, the "catalyst" type leader is certainly the most desirable and probably the most "Christ-like," because a catalyst must (in the ideal sense) have motives which are in no way self-seeking. Who would be better for this type of leadership than a truly Christian layman or pastor? For the leader who is needed is a redeemed Christian, willing to make all the resources of his life available to the group, whom he sees as persons of worth and dignity in their own right.

We can not necessarily say here that a person is less "Christian" if he happens to be an overseer type leader! But a catalyst leader is more Christ-like because he sees himself as the servant of the group. He is willing to accept criticism, to absorb hostility, even to fail and try again. He encourages participation, and desires the growth of the individual by creating an atmosphere of respect for all.<sup>15</sup>

### B. Catalytic Leadership and Productivity

A new conception of the role of the designated leader seems to be

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.



emerging from this line of thinking:

Emphasis is slightly away from the notion that the leader is one who plans for, thinks for, takes responsibility for, and directs other people--toward the notion that the leader is primarily a convener, trainer, and co-ordinator for a group.<sup>16</sup>

Just as in chemistry a "catalytic agent" is one which hastens the combination or reactions of elements--so here a leader's central function is coming to be seen as helping the group learn to decide and act for itself more efficiently. Such a leader works to keep the channels of communication open so that all the relevant resources of all the different people in the group can flow into the meeting.

A catalytic leader has at least the following characteristics:

1. He possesses technical competence in the area of the group's interest: Colonel Waterman says bluntly that there are two parts to leadership: "knowing your stuff" in technical matters, and "knowing human skills" for motivating people.<sup>17</sup>
2. He has responsibility for steering the group: steering "by consequences"--that is, by the incidental comments as they come out--the leader seeks to develop the most information available about each alternative course of action, so that the next step can be planned more wisely.
3. He keeps the activity of the group in an objective view. The comments of the group must never be the result of bias--but from exploratory and experimental activity, if the total resources of the group are to be used.<sup>18</sup>
4. He is aware that change produced by his group has consequence for other groups also: "Consequences," Thelen observes, "ramify like the spreading ripples on a pond."<sup>19</sup> What affects group B could in some way alter the plans of group A.

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<sup>16</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>17</sup>B. S. Waterman, "Don't Let 'Management' Trick You," The Army Combat Forces Journal, XXI (September, 1955), 37.

<sup>18</sup>Douglass, op. cit., pp. 130-31.

<sup>19</sup>Thelen, op. cit., p. 190.



So it is that a catalytic leader must master the skills of his job--  
not in order that he might manipulate the group to his own ends--but  
 because it is his duty to help group members communicate with one another.  
 ✓ He is thus a catalyst, a friend, and a fund of useful information.<sup>20</sup>

And as the above he is also a trainer. In his role as trainer the  
 catalyst leader can perform these unique services:

1. The leader helps to establish a "social climate." His attitude, if it is one of respect for the members' integrity and worth, will produce a climate of friendliness and co-operation.
2. The leader helps the group to organize itself. He is sensitive to the needs for definition, or clarification of goals and purposes. He sees that the group builds its agenda and identifies its tasks, planning its work co-operatively.
3. The leader helps the group to determine its procedures. The standard method of parliamentary procedure is often too formal and rigid for democratic groups. He therefore helps the group to analyze each situation and determine what procedures (such as buzz session, role playing, etc.,) will best suit its requirements. The leader should be a good procedural technician.
4. The leader keeps decision-making wholly the responsibility of the group. He never allows himself to be put into the position of making decisions for others. He recognizes the right of the group to make mistakes and that it can mature only if it takes on its own responsibilities.
5. The leader helps the group to learn from experience. By developing the habit of looking not only at what they do, but also how they are doing it, groups improve. The leader has a special responsibility to train the group through evaluation methods.<sup>21</sup>

Under the stimulating influence of skilled catalytic leadership, a group changes and becomes truly productive. The end product of genuine leadership expresses itself in a quality of the "culture" of a group--

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<sup>20</sup>Paul Maves, The Church And Mental Health (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 93-94.

<sup>21</sup>Knowles, op. cit., pp. 12-14.



co-operative, dynamic, and productive! The members of the group in their changing culture act with a new confidence. The group response becomes, as Lawrence Frank says, "circular, reciprocal, and creative."<sup>22</sup> And the catalytic leader has thus become a new way of life to the group.

### C. Acquiring Ability to Use Conflict Creatively

Group leaders and participants should not be surprised or disturbed by differences of opinion. Conflicting points of view should be welcomed, not feared, because they actually improve discussion and stimulate group thinking.

Christian educators and social scientists are learning that attitudes are not readily changed in groups where all are of the same mind or where individual prejudices are strengthened by group approval. Rather there must be amalgamation of ideas leading into a solid integration.<sup>23</sup>

Through the interchange of differing opinions people are often shaken out of their individual biases and "mind sets." For it is actually easier to change the opinion and conduct of a group than to change an individual's opinion and conduct.

Church leaders have tended to emphasize group consensus and agreement as virtues to be protected at all costs.

Perhaps this is one important reason why church organizations go stale. For complete group agreement is depressing and undesirable because it makes people (a) overconfident that they are right,

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<sup>22</sup>Lawrence K. Frank, How To Be A Modern Leader (New York: Association Press, 1954), p. 62.

<sup>23</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 12.



(b) complacent and sure that they have solved all their problems correctly, (c) stop thinking. In brief, such a group can easily become "an aggregate of contented cows."<sup>24</sup>

#### 1. Leader's attitude over conflict

In handling controversy creatively much depends upon the leader's own attitudes. "A leader's size" says Mary Parker Follet, "to a large extent is determined by his attitudes toward opposition and conflict. He should therefore have an honest respect for freedom of inquiry and expression, appreciation of the positive values of dissenting viewpoints, basic regard for the dignity of persons, and belief that people and situations can change."<sup>25</sup>

The skilled leader learns to create a group climate of such kind wherein the fellowship spirit permits and even encourages disagreement. But he also learns how to drive a wedge into the conflicting opinions of the group which seems to lift up a dissenting point of view. This may be done by a provocative question or comment.

Leadership in conflict thus involves these functions:

1. Putting down "ground rules" about showing respect for all points of view and holding all members to the rules.
2. Asking questions that point up differences and get all angles "out in the open."
3. Helping the group to appreciate conflicting issues involved by frequent summaries or restatement of various points of view.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>25</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 125.



4. Helping all to see the benefit of an increased fellowship and group growth under such conditions.<sup>26</sup>

According to an old adage we learn this bit of advice concerning conflict: "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!" We might make somewhat of an adaptation here and say that if men cannot avoid conflict, they should use it. Rather than condemn it, they should set it to work.

A Christian pastor will therefore deal with controversial issues concerning adiaphora, not in bitter acrimony, but by striving for creative tensions that encourage growth and deepen faith. No one should better understand this type of leadership than the Lutheran minister!

## 2. Creative integration

"Using" conflict can best be done by creative integration. "Integration," we remember from Chapter two, refers to the manner in which a group controls the processes of feeling, thinking, and actual participation. It is the general awareness that all thoughts must be integrated or added together, as it were, for an answer more creatively perfect than any one party or clique could give.

When two desires have been integrated a solution develops which finds a place for the best in both. This does not mean compromise, for compromise means giving up something, but integration develops a new strength out of previous divergences.<sup>27</sup>

Integration is rather, the joining or multiplication of ideas under the power of group qualification and enlightenment, this phrase being the

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<sup>26</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>27</sup>Douglass, op. cit., p. 125.



writer's own personal definition. This sounds somewhat theoretical and magical, but it has been done, as perhaps the reader has observed on very rare occasions. It is the sure sign of a very mature and productive group.

The kind of leadership which encourages integration and thus produces creative conflict can be summarized this way:

A leader's major task is to maintain the right conditions required for the group's maximum intelligence to assert itself. A leader stimulates maximum group performance when he distributes the task of leadership among the members of the group.<sup>28</sup>

Some cliques obtain and retain their power by offering to do all the work, and thereby implement the program towards their own ways of thinking. The best way to involve such persons into the process of integration for creative conflict is by delegating various work tasks or different informal "leadership" roles to one or the other of the annoying clique but never to the clique as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

In a footnote in a management manual of the General Electric Company, it is stated that a leader acknowledges failure when he feels that he must make temporary use of "domination" in order to "get at a settlement of a conflict,"<sup>30</sup> while he should be developing group leadership capabilities through integrated creative conflict.

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<sup>28</sup>Thelen, op. cit., p. 307.

<sup>29</sup>Basil Henrique, Club Leadership Today (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 145.

<sup>30</sup>Harold F. Smiddy, Integrating and Motivating for Effective Performance (New York: General Electric Co., 1955), p. 7.



#### D. Competence in Understanding Adult Ways

In every controversial situation, understanding of the personalities is essential.<sup>31</sup> For some persons, even Christians, may deeply dislike each other, and carry their personal rancor into the discussion of the issue.

Jesus was so successful in using conflict creatively, and became known as an *ἐξουσία* or "authority," because He "knew what was in man."<sup>32</sup> In short, He understood adult ways. We shall want to be concerned with the matter too.

##### 1. What concerns adults?

What motives keep adults going? Human beings are so incessantly active that we seldom stop to think what makes them act one way in some cases and in others the very opposite way. We shall not try to give even a brief resume of adult psychology here--an impossible task. But the leader working with adults should be aware of a few basic facts for a very general understanding, and that is the aim of this section.

To understand wisely we must search for the "hot-spots" of interests in which the adult dwells. This is defined as some live issue of the day, or an issue which can be made alive by the leader if he lifts it into the consciousness of the learner.<sup>33</sup> A Christian for example, who is

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<sup>31</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>32</sup>John 2:25.

<sup>33</sup>G. F. Zeigler, Toward Understanding Adults (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1942), p. 51.



struggling to live the good life, can be understood by the chief issues confronting his Christian life, and his attitude toward that issue.

The Church must demonstrate that it is not only interested in meeting those issues and needs, but also ready and able to do so. If adults are to be led to look to the Church for help, and to give their service in return, there are some things that the Church and its leaders will have to do:

First of all, the Church will have to lay hold on these real issues of life. Adults live where issues are being met and argued and decided, and those wanting Christian answers honestly seek them in the Church! Secondly, we must start with what adults want to know. Show them that their interests of secular nature can be related to Christian life. Thirdly, the Church must expect to provide variety in its program. For not all are adults at the same age of Christian growth.<sup>34</sup>

Merely to understand the basic human drives of adults, such desires as to be active, gain security, hunger for sex, desire for prestige, and the craving for fellowship--in one sense merely proves that an adult is very, very human.

Thus we know that to understand a group of adults only from basic human drives, or even from outward attitudes, while fully sound, can be very misleading--even in judging ourselves. Jesus would have made many errors in dealing with the individuals of his ministry if He had not seen the real motives back of the outward mask. The following quote supports this thought, although of course it must be understood in the frame of what people can be by the grace of God:

Jesus believed in men, in their capacities, in their ability to rise above circumstances. His faith in men gave them faith in themselves;

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<sup>34</sup>E. P. Westphal, The Church's Opportunity In Adult Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1941), p. 99.



they acted on his belief . . . and became strong. We must imitate this divine strategy of Jesus in our dealings with men. For our influence with people is in proportion to our faith in them.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Two basic motivations of importance

In the interests of adult group leadership, there are two basic motivations of all adults the world over which should be known. They are the desire for self-realization and the desire for self-dedication.<sup>36</sup>

Concerning self-realization we know that as one writer stated, "Man has as his prime pleasure the feeling of worth and growth of his personality, and as his worst hurt the feeling of decay and inferiority of that personality."<sup>37</sup> This "desire to be a person" must be understood and used by all who would deal wisely with adults or help them towards wholesome growth.

Concerning self-dedication--let it be said at the outset that man does not seek merely to maintain his individuality.<sup>38</sup> The failure of some writers to recognize this basic need in explaining the action of man is because of too great a dependence upon "animal" as distinct from "human" psychology or by too easy a surrender to the cynicism which characterizes not a little of our modern thought.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Raymond Calkins, How Jesus Dealt With Men (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), p. 34.

<sup>36</sup>W. E. Powell, The Understanding of Adult Ways (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, c.1941), pp. 97-98.

<sup>37</sup>A. Myerson, The Foundations of Personality (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1939), p. 218.

<sup>38</sup>Powell, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.



Man does not seek merely to maintain his individuality; he is impelled also, as two eminent psychologists have declared, by the "desire to belong." He does not want to be isolated in his uniqueness; he desires to outgrow himself. His "I" must have some relation to a "Thou."<sup>40</sup>

When this "desire to belong" is recognized by the Christian leader and is chastened and spiritualized, it becomes the highest motive from which men can act--the whole-hearted giving of themselves to unselfish purposes. And anyone is capable of this! But the result depends on the leader's knowledge of adults, and his ability to recognize and utilize this need already there, lying dormant.

### 3. Negative and positive character roles

Perhaps as a practical addition to this section it would be well to list and describe, very briefly, several different types of characters which will be found in almost any group.

"Just as all the world's a stage, and all men and women merely the players," so each group has its cast of characters,"<sup>41</sup> states one writer. Some are heroes and some are villains. No one assigns these roles; each one assumes the one that best fits his own personality. So you'll have people in your meetings who assume roles which are helpful. You'll find others, a few, who hinder, work against, and detract from the group. It is good to know these traits.

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<sup>40</sup>R. Dodge and G. Kahn, The Craving for Superiority (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1931), pp. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup>S. S. Southerland, When You Preside (Danville, Ill.: The Interstate Printers and Pubs., 1952), p. 12.



First will be listed those on the helpful side. These following nine classifications have been taken from Douglass' fine book in which he describes them as "Mature Conference Types":

1. The Proposer--the person who brings up new problems. The pastor in many cases fills this role.
2. The Clarifier--an orientator; who asks, "Now, just what is our problem? What are we trying to accomplish?"
3. The Weigher--takes all things into consideration.
4. The Explorer--opens up new territory, comes up with new information, searches out a problem.
5. The Mediator--irons out difficulties, becomes a harmonizer.
6. The Synthesist--ties the thinking of the group together into some kind of pattern, and describes it.
7. The Formulator--the man who phrases all the motions thus taking over where the synthesist left off.
8. The Programmer--plans how (not what) motion should be done. He provides ways to implement policy.
9. The Gatekeeper--usually a stickler for correct methods; in the church he sees that everything is done with spiritual purpose. An evaluator, he may also be the pastor in many cases.<sup>42</sup>

It can readily be seen that any member, or the leader himself, can be all of these at the same time or any combination of them, for they overlap. Other writers list and give almost the same breakdown of positive type members.<sup>43</sup> Some list as high as fifteen.<sup>44</sup>

Now it is well to list the "Immature Conference Types," to borrow Douglass' phrase--or we might say those who detract from a meeting's

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<sup>42</sup>Douglass, op. cit., pp. 108-12.

<sup>43</sup>Southerland, op. cit., pp. 12-20.

<sup>44</sup>D. M. Hall, The Dynamics of Group Discussion (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers and Pubs., 1951), pp. 55-69.



progress:

1. The Playboy--who "horses around," takes no interest; and does no work. Usually funny!
2. The Blocker--who is "agin things," against everything! He usually is negative, runs down group opinion. Often he acts as the tough aggressor.
3. The Monopolizer--or babbler, just talks, but says nothing important. He tries to seek recognition. He is the present day version of "Ich und Gott."
4. The Bandwagon Boy--has no mind of his own. Accepts any opinion, wants to get meeting over and go home, or else he wants to be "in on the in" of everything.
5. The Blind-fish--good member for discussion, but has no vision in his comments. He backtracks but can be helped easily.
6. The Dodger--avoids taking stands on anything, takes no responsibility, but detracts group from its line of thought.
7. Mr. Zipper-Mouth--just won't talk, neither harmful nor helpful. Hard to help because of his personality.<sup>45</sup>

The foregoing are the main character roles on the negative side.

These also often overlap with one another. But the leader must be aware of these member-roles to be a successful catalyst for group purposes. Just how the leader can use this understanding of these roles will be described in a practical way, in Chapter six (Compare case study, number one).

#### E. Motivating Groups and Individuals

One won't find much trouble in getting agreement that audience passivity is the chief enemy of the successful meeting. Volumes have been written concerning this danger.

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<sup>45</sup>Douglass, op. cit., pp. 112-15.



But in many cases, audience passivity is handled as if it were a problem only during meetings. When the problem is seen only in this way-- advice is usually given for planners and leaders to set up emotional and dramatic situations.

No doubt many of these methods have their uses in getting interest during a meeting. But there is sound reason to doubt that they help in solving the second, and more important problem of passivity--the problem of passivity after the meeting is over.<sup>46</sup>

Unless the purpose of a meeting is entertainment, we want people to act differently as a result of taking part in it. If the purpose of a meeting is learning (e.g., Adult Bible Class), individuals should retain the learning they have acquired and use their ability in their thinking and conduct after adjustment. If the purpose is to alter people's prejudices (e.g., Voter's Assembly), these changes should show up consistently in their choices after the meeting is over. If the purpose is to induce people to take action on some problem (e.g., Rally Meeting), the action should take place.

Unfortunately, most audience members tend to have a feeling of completion when the meeting is adjourned--this goes for leaders, too.<sup>47</sup> The meeting has been exciting, interesting, and informative, but now it is over. Self-promises made during the meeting face many obstacles and barriers in the cold light of the next morning. It is easier to resolve than to act.

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<sup>46</sup>"Hold that Audience," Adult Leadership, I (December, 1952), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.



What good will all manner of careful planning do then? Here, then is the basic problem for the leader. How can audience members be encouraged to become committed to change in their attitudes, knowledge, and actions which endure among the realities of the morning after.

### 1. Interest versus involvement

Perhaps we can clarify the problem by a contrast between audience interest and audience involvement.

An individual may be interested in an experience without having committed himself to it or to accepting the consequences which follow from it. Involvement means that the individual has entered responsibility into a situation and will be actively committed to dealing with that situation until it is played out.

The difference between the two is like the difference between a boy's sticking his toe in the water to test it--and his actually diving in to swim.<sup>48</sup>

Interest in a presentation may lead to involvement during and after the meeting. But it will do so only if certain psychological requirements for involvement are met. H. A. Overstreet says in his well-known work that "no appeal to reason that is not also an appeal to a want can ever be effective."<sup>49</sup>

Leaders and pastors should be concerned to meet these requirements in the meetings they plan if they are concerned to solve the problems of

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>49</sup>H. A. Overstreet, Influencing Human Behavior (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., c.1925), p. 33.



passivity during the meeting and especially after it.

## 2. Some requirements for involvement

What are the conditions which must be provided if audience members are to become involved in a meeting and--in furthering its aims after adjournment? One writer lists the following:

1. The over-all goals of the meeting must include persistent purposes important to each individual taking part in it.
2. The problems, issues, information, or skills being dealt with in a meeting must be seen by members as situations in which they actually live and act.
3. The changes which the meeting is seeking must tie up with the members own aspirations for improvement.
4. The member must be helped to think and work out the obstacles and difficulties which must be overcome if the goals are to be carried out after the meeting is over.
5. The meeting thus must open up possible channels of action in which, after the meeting, the member can participate in completing the goals of the meeting as he has helped to develop them.<sup>50</sup>

This last point is probably one of the most brutally neglected by our pastors. So much preaching and leading is done (for instance, in asking for money or services) which gets interest but gives no actual help on just how to go about it.

Edgar Dale, in a very fine article entitled, "How do You get Action," tells us: "To get action requires motivation, content, and a mechanism for carrying out the desired action. LET PEOPLE KNOW. MAKE PEOPLE CARE. HELP PEOPLE ACT."<sup>51</sup> He has noticed very accurately why people are

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<sup>50</sup>"Hold that Audience," p. 7.

<sup>51</sup>Edgar Dale, "How Do You Get Action," The News Letter, published by Ohio University Press, XVIII (December, 1952), 1-4.



interested but don't act. Here are a few of his suggestions for getting action from motivation:

1. Start where people are--realize that people may have no background experience, but don't underestimate their ability.
2. Try for action through change--maybe it is possible to do the same old thing better in a new way.
3. Provide local examples--Voters, for example, may not like new evangelistic methods successful in New York. But these same methods used in a neighboring church will convince them.
4. Personal flavor helps to get action--voters may not want to take Synod's opinion for action but a member of the group can express the same opinion and get results.
5. Team effort gets action quicker--no one individual is responsible for failure then. There is mutual decision, mutual policy making, and a higher degree of creative action.
6. Be satisfied with little changes--progress is a series of nudges, not a big jump. Don't expect too much, too soon.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Audience participation the key

All of these fine requirements just quoted can be, of value only to the degree that the members become active participants, and can carry out their participation "power" to constructive ends. A story in Synod's manual for enlisting Kingdom Workers should illustrate this:

Phillips Brooks proclaimed one Sunday morning in his sermon, "With three hundred consecrated Christians by my side, we could save Boston." Monday morning four hundred eager volunteers appeared, asking, "What can we do?" The reply was, "I haven't the least idea."<sup>53</sup>

Let us remember that the sermon is important--but by building top

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

<sup>53</sup>Enlisting And Training Kingdom Workers, edited by Mo. Synod Committee on Enlisting and Training The Laity (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 40.



organizations a pastor will have a "top" membership which will be in church to hear his sermons in the first place!

So many in our large congregations lack a sense of belonging, because the congregation fails to integrate new members into the life and program of the church.<sup>54</sup> This would seem to demand that an active role for the audience needs to be built into the meeting design.

It means more than this, however. Audience members should become participants before the meeting in setting the goals of the meeting, in selecting its priority content, [in suggesting methods, in selecting its priority content,] in suggesting methods or procedures and techniques to be used.<sup>55</sup> This can be done through various ways--through the usual committee work, etc., but more important ways of getting action and involvement are through procedures and techniques which shall be described in Chapter four.

#### 4. Involvement or manipulation?

A word of strong caution should be expressed against attempts to use involvement devices as tools for manipulating people. There are powerful ethical arguments against such attempts,<sup>56</sup> which we assume the pastor is aware of. But there are practical arguments against such attempts as well.

Perhaps it is sufficient caution here to point to the self-defeating

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>55</sup>"Hold That Audience," p. 7.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.



character of any confusion between involvement and manipulation. If meeting planners view the use of techniques and procedures for audience involvement and action as means to get audience members to do only what the planners themselves want done, the initial success they may have is likely to be short-lived.

In conclusion we see that one answer which the study of Group Dynamics has for the Congregation's problems in its meetings is the leader's knowledge of dynamic methods in dealing with groups. Another answer is the procedures and techniques of Group Dynamics which he can use. This latter one is the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER V

### PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES WHICH MAY BE USED BY A CHRISTIAN PASTOR IN CONGREGATIONAL GROUPS

#### A. Approach to their Study

##### 1. Explanation of the terms

Reading the subject of Group Dynamics, one realizes that there is a confusion of terms; the study being relatively new, and the various authors have no definite, descriptive basis for a system of terms for the various parts of this new science.

The trouble lies in the discussion of the three terms: method, procedure, and technique. Various authors such as Kuhn, Little, Dougless, Southerland (cf. footnotes), treat these synonymously. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that a distinction can be made in these terms.

##### 2. An attempt to differentiate

For the purpose of this thesis, it will prove beneficial to make an attempt at establishing one set of definitions, both for clarity and simplification. Perhaps the best way to begin is by way of an illustration:

Let us suppose that a mechanic has a "meeting" with a customer who asked him to fix his car in smoothly running order. The mechanic upon examination, finds that, among other things the car needs a new motor. Now, putting in a new motor is a procedure, just one procedure. Other procedures such as installing a new transmission or new brakes, may be needed to make the car run as the customer wished. However, the mechanic will use certain tools or techniques for doing



the various procedures, perhaps the same tools (or techniques) in many of the procedures.

This little illustration gives the reader a close description of the terms as they shall be used in this thesis. The term method was not used in the illustration as it is confusing. Some authors speak of methods when they discuss techniques, others use it for procedures. Perhaps there is some excuse for this according to Webster's Dictionary:

Procedure, "manner or method of a course of action; method of conducting business"<sup>1</sup>

Technique, "method or details of procedure essential to expertness of execution, detail of procedure."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it follows that the term method causes the terms techniques and procedures to be used interchangeably, and we shall drop the term method from our present vocabulary.

Technique is used as an aid to procedure and, therefore, implements procedures. This is where the illustration of the mechanic's "tools" comes in. These tools aid in the removal of the motor.

### 3. Basis of classification

The pastor who applies the study of Group Dynamics to his church meetings should understand the distinction between these terms if he is to be a good procedural technician. Therefore, an attempt shall be made in this thesis to classify each term. The criteria of judgment should rest on this basis: Those which can be used during the course of an

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1947), p. 790.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1024.



entire meeting are termed procedures. Those which cannot in a practical way be the substance of an entire meeting, must be used as aids, and are therefore properly called techniques.

The procedures have been divided into two groups: Those which are primarily "information-giving," and those which are best for a "work-producing" purpose. All techniques are suitable under either division.

The following is a classification of these two terms:

### PROCEDURES

#### Information-giving

1. Lecture (Speech)
2. Symposium (Debate)
3. Panel (Moderator)
4. Forum (Question period)
5. Audio-Visual (Drama, Recital)

#### Work-producing

6. Parliamentary Rule (Robert's Rules)
7. Discussion-Group (Round-Table)
8. Work Shops (Retreats)
9. Laboratory (Training)
10. Field Trips (Projects, etc.)

### TECHNIQUES

1. Buzz Teams (Phillips 66)
2. Work Teams (Committees)
3. Research Teams (Resource Persons)
4. Role-Playing (Socio-Drama)
5. Evaluation ("Feedback")



Note, that there are two kinds of procedures, loosely speaking: Those which primarily give information--and those best for getting work done. Their value and purpose:

If members are to be more deeply and intimately aware of their fellowship with one another and with Christ, many churches (large or not) will need to provide more face-to-face situations for their members, where people can associate in smaller, more meaningful group relationships.

#### 4. Small group situations

Solomon Asch, the social psychologist, has observed that small groups, such as the family, neighborhood group, or work team are the natural units of society. In such groupings much of the world's work gets done, political decisions are reached, and social pressures are exerted to act wisely.<sup>3</sup>

Although millions read the newspapers and keep tuned to radio and television stations, the greatest influence upon them is still that which they receive by discussion with family, fellow-workers, and acquaintances. Small groups are essential links between individuals and larger, more complicated institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The Church should realize this single fact--in a PRACTICAL way. Small groups are of special value in the church's program for:

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<sup>3</sup>Solomon Asch, Social Psychology (New York: Prentice Hall Co., 1952), p. 546.

<sup>4</sup>Margaret Kynh, You Can't Be Human Alone (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. 14.



1. more effective Bible study;
2. intimate discussions of family life problems, etc.;
3. development of prayer life of the church;
4. solution of administrative problems of the church.

Values of using the procedures and techniques we are about to discuss lie in this principle: "that of providing temporary small group situations for better communication, role satisfaction, and face-to-face relationships."<sup>5</sup>

Social research has shown that small groups will develop more constructive ideas and solutions than the same number would project in one large group.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore, a wise idea to divide a large group into groups of five to seven in number, for at least part of the meeting period.

#### NOT THIS

X  
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

#### BUT THIS

XX      XX      XX  
 X   X   X   X   X   X  
 XX      XX      XX

#### 5. Parliamentary rule and/or group dynamics?

The cry of the day has long out-moded the old method of using parliamentary procedure alone for church meetings. This does not mean that Robert's Rules of Order must go. But, they can be greatly enhanced by the principles of Group Dynamics. Not to take advantage of these procedures and techniques shows either no knowledge of their value, or

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 15.



perhaps little appreciation of the same.

Having a part in a dynamic situation, each member of any meeting cannot but feel a deeper sense of fellowship, and personal commitment. Lonely, isolated people can thus have an experience of community helping them to satisfy themselves with each other and with God's purposes for their life.<sup>7</sup>

#### 6. Some factors determining their use

Procedures and techniques in themselves communicate and inform, whether it be to the advantage of a meeting or not. The way a procedure is used, in part determines its success. The choice of procedure or technique used has a great deal to do with the atmosphere of a group, and group interrelationships.<sup>8</sup> They cannot be chosen arbitrarily. A procedure is best only if it "belongs" to the purpose of a particular meeting.

Here are four factors to serve as guides to group leaders in their choice of the procedure or technique:

1. Appropriateness--to purpose, content, ages, and characteristics of group members, and time available. (For example, it would be rather absurd to try role-playing in a twenty minute meeting).
2. Variety--to maintain or renew interest. But appropriateness always takes precedence over variety.
3. Participation--their chief purpose! Procedures and techniques must be chosen as ways of opening channels of communication--to help the individual and the group to higher levels of benefit.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Sara Little, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1956), p. 33.



4. Physical Arrangement--this has much to do with the effectiveness of procedures and techniques. Room size, facilities available, audio-visual equipment, etc., must be taken into consideration.<sup>9</sup>

#### B. Procedures, Their Explanation and Use

##### 1. Lecture

This, by definition in Webster's Dictionary, is:

- (a) A discourse delivered on any subject intended for instruction.
- (b) In churches, a familiar discourse delivered on an irregular occasion, in contrast with a sermon.<sup>10</sup>

Dramatic speeches of any type of "information" speech may also be classified under this procedure. Southerland lists these steps when arranging for a speaker:

1. Contact him personally at least two weeks ahead.
2. Give his speech a title--what you wish discussed.
3. Describe the type of audience to be there.
4. Give date, time, and place of meeting.
5. Tell him how long to talk.
6. Give him a program for the evening.
7. Get information for publicity release (personal).<sup>11</sup>

The use of a question forum following the talk is normally very rewarding, taking account of omissions or obscurities. The Buzz session technique

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>10</sup>Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, p. 571.

<sup>11</sup>S. S. Woutherlan, When You Preside (Danville, Ill.: The Interstate Printers and Pubs., 1952), p. 60.



should also be used, for the "give and take" between audience and speaker is generally far more interesting than a set speech that says everything.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Symposium (Debate)

When several people prepare brief speeches in advance, presenting varying attitudes and phases on some issue, we have a symposium.<sup>13</sup> Debate may also be considered a form of symposium procedure. A moderator briefly outlines the purpose to be discussed. He introduces the three or four (never more) discussants who present their opposing ideas on the subject in a series of three to four minute speeches. The moderator poses leading questions for a lively exchange of ideas. Participants are seated informally at a table facing the audience. An attempt is made to aid the audience to develop a full and detailed understanding of the subject.<sup>14</sup>

A symposium may also be used as a formally dignified and impressive way to get a fair analysis of a disputed subject before a large voter's group.

The key to a successful symposium lies in three simple points:

1. Tell speakers to limit speeches to five or six minutes, and see that they do.
2. Ask them to raise questions in their talks, not give all the answers.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>14</sup>H. N. Calver and W. L. Smith, "A Lexicon for Leaders," Adult Leadership, II (October, 1953), 25.



### 3. Use the buzz session technique with large audiences.<sup>15</sup>

#### 3. Panel

This is a small, prepared group (six to twelve persons) who informally discuss some subject under the guidance of a moderator or panel leader.<sup>16</sup> The panel members present different views of a problem. These people are usually seated behind a table or in a semi-circle at the front of the room. The moderator is expected to outline the purpose and subject, and make the introductions. He must watch the time and trend of conversation, and put in comments to move the discussion along, and concludes it in time for a brief but important summary.

Panels are often confused with symposiums, for they are similar in every respect, except these three:

1. The panelists do not make brief speeches.
2. They converse with each other (guided by the leader).
3. The audience may be brought into the discussion during the panel session, not after, as in the case of a symposium.<sup>17</sup>

Suppose that the church council has decided that a congregational meeting should be held for all, in which the topic will be: "How the Church's Organizations Can Work Together." Obviously, a lecture or symposium would not do, but a panel in which all the heads of the various organizations may be represented (and, in which certain problems will

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<sup>15</sup>Southerland, op. cit., pp. 117-18.

<sup>16</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>17</sup>Alice Myers, "Speaker or Panel?" Adult Leadership, III (June, 1954), 21.



receive prior thought), is best.

The persons selected should be:

1. well informed on their speciality;
2. have a general understanding of the whole topic;
3. be able to think constructively.<sup>18</sup>

A pre-meeting must be held if the panel is to be successful. All major discussion points should be developed at this meeting and the panel should have the right to revise questions developed by the planning committee or add other points as they see fit. (Compare case study number three, Chapter six.)

As the meeting begins and progresses, these steps should be followed:

1. Introduce the panel members.
2. Present the problem.
3. Tell the audience how and when they will have a chance to participate.
4. Lead the discussion--keep it going.
5. Call for audience participation.
6. Call for or give a final brief summary.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Forum

In broad definition, a forum is actually any information type procedure which is followed by a question period. Following a speech, panel, symposium, etc., group members almost invariably want an opportunity to question what has been said, and this becomes a new procedure--a

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>19</sup>Southerland, op. cit., p. 116.



forum.<sup>20</sup>

Usually a forum involves a lecture followed by a certain amount of audience participation. After the lecture, questions (either written or expressed orally from the floor), are directed to the speaker for answer or discussion.<sup>21</sup>

The same general principles as we have given under the symposium type procedure, apply to conducting a forum. These are:

1. Speakers who know their subject;
2. Speeches which raise questions, not answers;
3. Use of buzz session techniques.

Given an interesting subject, and a speaker who plays his part well, it is possible to secure response from the audience without using the buzz session technique to raise questions. Too often, however, the results are pretty flat, and the dead silence which can (and often does) greet the leader when he asks, "And now are there any questions you would like to ask Mr. Smith?" is too embarrassing to all concerned, to chance it, especially when you don't have to!<sup>22</sup>

## 5. Audio-Visual

Some of the most useful materials which can come under this heading are: the chalkboard, globes, maps, charts, flat pictures, three-dimensional objects, radio, TV, records, tape-recorders, film-strips or

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<sup>20</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>21</sup>Southerland, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 121.



movies.<sup>23</sup>

Drama, plays, musicals, recitals, and all media giving information "through the eye and ear," may generally be classed as audio-visual procedures.

Audio-visual aids ought to be integrated into the total program and employed with a definite purpose in mind. They are tools to facilitate learning--not ends in themselves.<sup>24</sup>

Nor should Audio-visual materials be a substitute for the leader's careful preparation and guidance of the program. Such interesting media are not to give the leader a breather, but as an aid to clarify! What the leader says to relate the purpose of a blackboard, chart, film or a recording, or whatever, to a meeting is often more important than the audio-visual material itself.

Audio-visuals may be used for long range planning (as in training programs) or for small group activities, or for skill training, or to stimulate discussion.<sup>25</sup>

Some outstanding books have been written on the use of visual-aids. Our Seminary librarian, the Reverend Dorn, states that Professor Edgar Dale of Ohio University is one of the recognized authorities on this subject, and that he has written a few excellent works on visual aids. Advance Magazine, published by our own Missouri Synod, also has a fine

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<sup>23</sup>F. Wittich and L. Schuller, Audio-Visual Materials, Their Nature And Use (New York: Harper & Bros., Pubs., 1953), pp. v-viii.

<sup>24</sup>G. Freeman and M. Lipman, "A-V's Take Many Roles," Adult Leadership, III (October, 1954), 15.

<sup>25</sup>Paul Wagner, "Workshop on Audio-Visuals," Adult Leadership, III (October, 1954), 14.



list of Audio-visual aids in each publication.

## 6. Parliamentary rule

No doubt all of us are fairly well versed in the understanding use of this common procedure. Rules of co-operative endeavor by which voluntary organizations work<sup>26</sup>--usually Robert's Rules of Order--are accepted as basic for parliamentary routine.

Parliamentary procedure is not a form or a ritual. It is an aid in accomplishing the objectives of a group with fairness, harmony, and dispatch. Only enough parliamentary rule to keep the proceedings clear and legal is required.<sup>27</sup>

Parliamentary procedure actually provides a very flexible plan for business meetings. It should not be thought of as an iron-clad system, especially when considered a part of Group-Dynamics.

Parliamentary procedure--in briefest explanation--is transacted by three single steps:

1. Proposal of a motion.
2. Consideration of a motion (discussion).
3. Decision on the motion.

It is under point two--discussion--where the great flexibility of a parliamentary rule can be seen. For here a number of other procedures and techniques may be used to aid in this step, to give parliamentary rule a fresh and interesting slant. For instance, in the consideration

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<sup>26</sup>Alice Sturgis, "Putting Parliamentary Procedure To Work," Adult Leadership, V (December, 1956), 190.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 191.



of a motion, a leader could use a symposium, panel, or buzz session, and even role-playing very beneficially in a heated discussion. There are few better ways of solving disputes fairly. For the mere "putting to vote" of a motion does not insure democracy!

Now for a few ways in which not to use this procedure. Joseph F.

O'Brien lists these faults among others:

Sin I The attempt to use parliamentary procedure where it doesn't fit. (Often leaders try to force informative type meetings or problem-discussion meetings into a business style rules-of-order mould.)

Sin II The use of as formal a set of rules as possible, regardless of the situation. (This is a common occurrence and can be seriously harmful. Parliamentary rule was made for man, not the reverse!) Stricter use should increase only as these three factors increase:

- (1) Degree of unity in group
- (2) Size of the group
- (3) Knowledge of parliamentary rule in group.

Sin III Refusing an assembly the opportunity for plentiful discussion. (Often a good debate is helpful to a quicker solution of a problem. Other procedures and techniques of Group Dynamics will be blocked out if this "sin" is clung to!)<sup>28</sup>

## 7. Discussion groups (round table)

Group discussion is "two-way-talk" (member to member) which encourages group members to find their own answers and points of agreement and disagreement in a democratic fashion.<sup>29</sup>

The following chart illustrates the differences between the usual forum procedure of "one-way" talks and discussion procedure--"two-way"

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<sup>28</sup>J. F. O'Brien, "The Use and Abuse of Parliamentary Procedure," Adult Leadership, V (December, 1956), 179-81.

<sup>29</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 18.



talk:30

## FORUM

X X X X     Speakers  
 X X X X X X X X X  
 X X X X X X X X X  
 -"One-Way-Talk"-

## DISCUSSION

x X x     Leader  
 x     x  
 x     x  
 x     x  
 x     x  
 x x x  
 -"Two-Way-Talk"-

Often discussion groups are called "round-tables."<sup>31</sup> The group must be small enough for all to participate and operate on a basis of equality. The leader is only a "catalyzer." Characteristics of the round-table procedure are:

1. They are composed of people with mutual problems.
2. The subject discussed is within their experience.
3. They agree to exchange and pool experiences.
4. Problems are solved by thinking them through together.
5. They meet to learn together, not to be instructed.
6. They group themselves informally, facing each other.
7. The group is small, generally from 12 to 25 persons.<sup>32</sup>

Conducted in an informal, "permissive" atmosphere where ideas can be expressed frankly, and heard with respect, there should be no lecturing unless a "resource" person is used.<sup>33</sup>

Two things are of utmost importance, to make this procedure work well:

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Southerland, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>33</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 18.



1. Draw out opinions, of all first, before you allow any person to give reasons for an opinion. (Discussion can be killed and minority opinion squelched early, if reasons are stated too soon.)
2. Keep arguments equally balanced as long as you can--to increase discussion. (This ability separates the really good discussion leader from the ordinary.)<sup>34</sup>

Suspense is one of the most potent ways of arousing and maintaining interest. Inviting competition is another, as is the use of auxiliary techniques such as role-playing, evaluation sessions, etc.

## 8. Work shops

The terms "work-shop" or "work-shop-conference" have come into recent use from educators' experiences. They are used to describe a type of meeting where relatively large groups discuss common problems. Sometimes "retreats" could fittingly be called workshops.

Essentially a workshop differs from a round table only in size, scope, and organization.<sup>35</sup> The fundamental procedures are the same and all the characteristics, except number seven, under "discussion groups" could fit this procedure. A work-shop may have from twenty-five to several hundred people in attendance. It may last for one hour or deliberate for a week.

The general organizational set-up for a work-shop is composed of these five major points:

1. A general session for getting acquainted, presenting the problems, and setting up committees.

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<sup>34</sup>Southerland, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 73.



2. An extended period of committee work.
3. Session for consideration of preliminary reports of committees (with buzz groups).
4. Further committee work to incorporate suggestions.
5. Final reports of committees, and summary (evaluation).<sup>36</sup>

Thus, a work-shop starts with a general meeting that discusses the problem area, and then breaks down into smaller groups, each of which is concerned with a single aspect of the problem.<sup>37</sup> The small groups report back at general meetings. The final session makes use of the evaluation technique to summarize its findings.

Today, an extra feature is being added to this last general session, that is, consideration for "back-home-application" of the results of the workshop.<sup>38</sup> This is accomplished chiefly through the use of role playing, in which work-shop "answers" are related to "live" situations.

## 9. Laboratory training

Laboratory training aims to support the pastor's efforts to improve the quality of skills and performance of people in positions such as Sunday School teaching, group leadership, Calling, etc.

Laboratory training should not be confused with ordinary training classes in which people are told about attitudes, abilities and skills. This may be training but not in the "laboratory" sense. This procedure

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>37</sup>Calver and Smith, "A Lexicon for Leaders," p. 25.

<sup>38</sup>Hy Kornbluh, "Back Home Application," Adult Leadership, IV (January, 1956), 26-27.



of laboratory training is a place where people learn by doing. Laboratories offer these advantages for training:

1. The learner is free to try something new.
2. Mistakes are expected and they help to train.
3. The learner sees the effect his skills achieve.
4. The training group helps him to perfect skills through constructive criticisms.<sup>39</sup>

Thus this procedure essentially turns a group into a "practice" session and is to be used over a period of several meetings.

Many denominations have recognized the value of the see and do method, long practiced in secular education, and have recently produced Leadership or Teacher Education Audio-Visual Kits that are well worth using as part of laboratory training. If at all possible a local church should send at least one or two of its key leaders to a good laboratory training school each year. Our own Synod has LSV schools, Youth Workers Conferences, Workshops, and Seminars, etc. for our use.

Persons attending such laboratory training centers can bring home a vision of the possibilities of such a school and how a similar though smaller one might be set up within their home congregation.<sup>40</sup>

#### 10. Field trips

In a recent manual put out by the National Association of Community Chests, editor Paul McFarland pointed out that the meeting or group

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<sup>39</sup>"If People Want To Change," by Issue Committee on Leadership Training, Adult Leadership, II (June, 1953), 7.

<sup>40</sup>v. Foster and F. Hyde, "On-the-Job Training," International Journal of Religious Education, XXVIII (May, 1952), p. 11.



"comes out of its ivory tower when it adopts the community around it as a laboratory by means of this procedure."<sup>41</sup> This is precisely the purpose of a field trip--to give first hand experience, through observation, for working at group problems.

Projects, such as the setting up of exhibits, also may be classified in this procedure type, as well as "various kinds of fact-finding and study-action research."<sup>42</sup>

Church groups of all ages can engage this procedure into their meetings after visiting other churches, child care institutions, courts, town council meetings, political gatherings, housing projects, Old Folk's Homes, charitable institutions, etc. Always it is more worthwhile if some definite purpose is behind the trip--perhaps to the benefit of the place visited.

Essential steps in planning and conducting a field trip are:

1. Confer with your hosts.
2. Detailed arrangement of tour.
3. Assignment of "guides."
4. Briefing on place and purpose of visit.
5. Time scheduled for evaluation or to apply what was observed.<sup>43</sup>

Field trips, to be purposeful, should (on the same day) allow for time to exchange ideas and impressions through discussion groups, or even

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<sup>41</sup>M. D. Kritzmacher, "Come And See," Adult Leadership, II (October, 1953), p. 19.

<sup>42</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>43</sup>Kritzmacher, "Come And See," p. 18.



through somewhat formal reports.<sup>44</sup> Thus a group can relate its findings and observance toward positive action in group assembly.

### C. Techniques, Their Explanation and Use

#### 1. Buzz Teams ("Phillips 66")

This technique involves the division of a group into smaller sub-groups for a limited period of time with a specific thing to be done.<sup>45</sup> Several sub-groups of approximately four to ten people are drawn from a larger group or audience--to engage in intimate conversation concerning the problem at hand.

Buzz groups usually report their thinking or recommendations to the total group by asking one person to summarize their discussion and to indicate minority as well as majority opinion.<sup>46</sup>

A version of the buzz group was evolved by Professor Don Phillips of Michigan State College and nicknamed the "Phillips 66 technique." The audience breaks up into groups of six each, and "buzzes" for only six minutes of lively discourse on a proposed project.<sup>47</sup>

The "Buzz" technique is a practical way to get each member in the group to participate. It is extremely versatile and can be coupled to almost any other type of technique or procedure. An imaginative leader could figure out indefinite ways of using this technique.

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<sup>44</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 29.

<sup>45</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>46</sup>Calver and Smith, "A Lexicon for Leaders," p. 25.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.



To mention but a few usages:

1. Before a speech, to get the members set on certain questions they will ask the speaker, or certain points each buzz division will look for.<sup>48</sup>
2. As an introduction to a round table.
3. As a socializing technique to get people interested in the meeting, for participation, or to stir up those shy individuals who will talk in smaller segments.<sup>49</sup>
4. At the end of symposiums or workshop sessions to get reaction.

## 2. Work teams

The Work Teams technique, like buzz <sup>2</sup>teams, results from the division of a group into smaller sub-groups. However, work-teams stay together for longer periods--frequently from twenty minutes to one hour, although they do not take up an entire meeting.

Work teams are different from buzz teams whose duty usually is to get face-to-face participation or stimulate individual interest in the over-all problem, not to solve parts of it. Work teams also differ in that they frequently use resource persons who have extra insight and experience. Their work is narrower in scope, allowing for more concentrated thinking. The members of each team work intensively on particular problems within the limits of the over-all problem.<sup>50</sup>

In a Bible study instance--a leader may first have a discussion on background material for orientation of a certain book the group is

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<sup>48</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>49</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>50</sup>Calver and Smith, "A Lexicon for Leaders," op. cit., p. 25.



studying, and then ask several work teams to dig into the more hidden problems of some passage which is important to that discussion. After twenty minutes, each work team may present its findings, and a general comparison and discussion should follow.

Work teams may be used in connection with any report (e.g., from a Research team) for the purpose of collecting, organizing, or interpreting various phases of the information thus received.<sup>51</sup>

The pastor should be aware of the value of this technique for in an actual "doing" situation such as this, people are able to:

1. receive an active role, not "passive" participation;
2. become more adequate group workers;
3. change toward better human relations with fellows through work participation.<sup>52</sup>

### 3. Research teams

When individuals or small committees in a group follow up the session by further study and research outside, then report on their findings, they are using the research team technique.<sup>53</sup>

Often the use of "resource" persons, (experts in their line) is included in this technique. These experts ~~one~~ be brought in to give specific information when it is needed.

"Experts," or research team reports, can be brought to groups on

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<sup>51</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>52</sup>Earl C. Kelly, "Human Values in the Workshop Technique," Adult Leadership, III (June, 1954), 5.

<sup>53</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 50.



tape recording.<sup>54</sup> Their reports should be related to the purpose of the group by some approximate introduction, and used in some follow-up discussion. For instance, if a missionary was to be brought in as a "resource" person on religious conditions in India--questions might be prepared in advance for explanation by the leader.

A "discussion-group" procedure might also be an aid in helping a resource person to give an interesting report, rather than a dry lecture that fails to reach the interests of the group.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. Role playing (Socio-drama)

This technique involves "acting out" situations that give opportunity for one person to understand another's point of view--to see things from "inside out" as it were.<sup>56</sup> Summary and evaluation are expected to follow.

Its "newness" has been criticized--but forms of pantomime or rehearsed dramatic expression, were used in the church of the Middle Ages.<sup>57</sup> However, this technique is not usually a rehearsed drama using a prepared script. It is most effective when it is spontaneous.<sup>58</sup>

These steps must be followed:

1. Define the problem and describe the situation.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>55</sup>P. Anderson, "Using Resource People," Adult Leadership, IV (January, 1956), 23.

<sup>56</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>57</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>58</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 51.



2. Have group decide what type characters be portrayed.
3. Instruct the players what to portray.
4. Act out the scene.
5. Cut, when "idea" is expressed.
6. Have group members evaluate, analyze, and give solution to roles played. (Use discussion procedure or "buzz" technique.)
7. Replay the scene, if necessary.<sup>59</sup>

The role-playing technique (often referred to as Socio-Drama) is not to be an "entertaining-breather" in the meeting. Remember, that the chief purpose of the role playing idea is to clarify the understanding of disputed issues, or by pointed questions after the portrayal of a problem, to gain insight into the existing situation and the end in view.<sup>60</sup>

#### 5. Evaluation ("Feedback")

When a group takes a way of finding out how they are getting along, what they have done, and whether their actions and behavior faithfully carry out their intentions, they are getting "feedback," or using the "evaluation" technique.<sup>61</sup>

Evaluation may in some uses be compared to that of a review lesson or test given to a class.

There are essentially four kinds of evaluation:

1. Evaluation of goals.

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<sup>59</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>60</sup>Grace Levit, "Learning Thru Role Playing," Adult Leadership, II (October, 1953), 10.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 25.



2. Evaluation of achievements.
3. Evaluation of group growth.
4. Evaluation of personal growth.<sup>62</sup>

This technique can have tremendous value, but because group self-evaluation is likely to show up some of the limitations of group members, it is dangerous when misused.

Some auxiliaries for using this technique to greater benefit are the following:

1. Group-discussion, either a general conversation type situation expressing all views, or buzz groups to get "feedback."
2. Post-meeting reaction sheets to be handed in at the end of a meeting unsigned: questionnaires, opinionaires, reaction polls, objective "true-false" lists, etc.
3. Use of an observer to look for certain pre-discussed problems, or who, by the permission of the group may report on individual endeavors.
4. Listening teams, which observe the climate, cohesion, etc., of the total group.
5. Tape-recording of an average session may be played back and judged--and may be fun, or maybe not!

The most important result of this technique is when concrete positive action develops out of all the talk. Use of the Work Team technique immediately following evaluation is a fine idea. For they can study, interpret, and present solutions to the assembly--and thus use "evaluation" to good advantage.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Little, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>63</sup>Robert A. Luke, "Evaluation," Adult Leadership, IV (January, 1956), 29.



## CHAPTER VI

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION TO CHURCH WORK

Thus far nothing has been done to relate all the theory, mechanics, and principals of Group Dynamics in a total, practical way to church work. This chapter shall make such an attempt. The writer feels that theory can best be seen in relation to practice thru the "eye" of actual real life case studies, as others have applied group dynamics to their church work. David Livingstone used to say that "the end of the exploration is the beginning of the enterprise." So here, we feel that the actual application is the important thing.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. Four Major Situations in using "Dynamics"

##### 1. Complexity in applying group dynamics

As we examine the nature of the human group we see that this cluster of human beings is actually an operational powerhouse! In an actual meeting people pool interests, experience, skills, and personalities in an upward thrust that developes purpose and meaning.<sup>2</sup>

But the pastor or leader can gain purpose and meaning from group dynamics only as he realizes the complex nature of people and their needs, and that these factors will cause group problems which must be solved by

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<sup>1</sup>Paul F. Douglass, The Group Workshop Way in The Church (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. 141.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



patient training. Group dynamics then, in "real life" can be complex . . . and the application of its procedures, techniques and theory will not or can not be used in such orderly or systematic fashion, as it may be seen in print.

The case studies presented here demonstrate, "between the lines," that leader's awareness of this complexity, and thus his use of varied principals, techniques, and procedures in a single meeting.

## 2. The four "problems" or situations

From the study of this thesis it appears that the pastor who uses group dynamics should "see," among other applications, at least the following four situations. These are of primary importance in actual practice:

1. Group dynamics in guiding individual-member difficulties, concerning negative and positive types.
2. Group dynamics in providing skills and training, a necessity for problem number three.
3. Group dynamics in supplying Role Satisfaction, involving all members of the group.
4. Group dynamics in resolving group difficulties, by creative use of conflict.

### B. Case Studies Visualizing these Situations

Therefore these four case studies have been selected--not at random--but purposefully in answer to the above listed problems. All of them show ample use of many of the principles, procedures, and techniques discussed:



### CASE STUDY No. 1.--"Individuals in Dynamic Participation"

Understanding the pattern of participation in connection with mature and immature individual performance is basic. The pastor should be aware of the many types of roles individuals assume when in a meeting, as we have discussed them in chapter four.

When the pastor or some of his lay leaders are aware of the influence mature members can have on the immature, and how the "few" can guide the rest toward character growth or group growth, then they are ready to apply or perhaps are already applying Group Dynamics. For, as we learned in chapter three, "moral character is partly a group phenomenon."<sup>3</sup>

This case study illustrates clearly the interaction of mature and immature performance. Note that the "proposer" has developed far along the road to mature participation. Observe also that the PASTOR is in the background--where he should be now. For the meeting belongs to the members! He is only a "spiritual guide" here--and knows (cf. chapter four) that leadership is a "shared process."

#### X-Ray of Mature and Immature Role Performance<sup>4</sup>

An edited excerpt from the verbatim transcript of a meeting gives a picture of a group at work as the members--mature and immature--play their roles:

Proposer: The question I wish to raise relates to the wisdom of developing a completely graded Bible class program for adults. I realize that this question raises a query as to whether we can

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<sup>3</sup>Hugh Hartshorne, Character in Human Relations (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 301.

<sup>4</sup>Douglass, op. cit., pp. 115-21.



improve upon our present class organization. I wish to move that we appoint a committee to study this subject and report back to our next monthly meeting.

Those of us who have been thinking about this subject believe that such a graded program for adults will increase the attendance at the Bible class, and provide a more desirable service of instruction to all adults. Also it will revitalize and deepen the religious understanding and devotional habits of our people.

The Church council, together with our PASTOR, have studied this matter, and we believe that a graded program for adults will involve more men and women in a more spiritually productive way in the activities of Christian education.

Chairman: Your proposal is that we appoint a special committee to explore the possibility of developing a completely graded Bible class for adults. Do I hear a second to the motion?

(The motion was seconded; discussion proceeded.)

Blocker: I can't see any reason for passing this motion! What good is it going to do us, any way?

Proposer: If I may, I should like to say a word about my motion. Our classes have become unadaptable affairs. They include members of both sexes and all age ranges. But adulthood is not just one uniform status. In each life cycle people have a special life interest. Within this general pattern of adulthood there is need for smaller groupings.

My motion is based on the idea that Bible study opportunity for each individual should be in a class large enough to challenge him and his teacher but small enough to meet his individual spiritual needs. Ranging according to age is proven as a good plan. Normally the adult interest spans a ten-year cycle.

A wider span increases the difficulty of teaching and makes individual learning less effective. It is for this purpose that I have made my motion.

(The discussion proceeded.)

Clarifier: Let me see if I understand your proposal. Your idea is to break down the Adult Bible class into smaller groups based on age ranges.

Proposer: Yes, you have summarized my suggestion correctly. By taking such a step, we will interest more people and better serve their spiritual needs.



Bandwagon Boy: Sounds good to me. Let's try something new for a change, how about it?

Blindfish: What's wrong with our present organization? When something is going good, why upset the applecart?

Playboy: As I was saying, Sunday School is the only educational institution people never seem to graduate from. Why not give people a rest and let them listen to the TV?

Weigher: Isn't your proposal a reversal of the whole philosophy of the Sunday School movement? Isn't it a right-about-face? I should like to balance the reasons for a change against maintaining our present program.

Proposer: The reason why I have suggested the consideration of a graded adult program is because there is reason to believe that such a program will reach more people with greater spiritual effectiveness. I know that we are doing a very good job now, but I think we can do a better one, that's all. We have learned a lot about Christian education in the last 20 years since the organized adult class movement started to roll.

Dodger: It sounds like a new-fangled idea of the new pastor to me! What do you think?

Mediator: Maybe he has some ideas that we ought to consider.

Blocker: I'll tell you one thing. I know that Bill Schultz will blow his top and get out of the church if you break up the class he is teaching.

Gatekeeper (or PASTOR): I suppose our standard to judge by here is what kind of adult organization will help people most to find and know God and serve him in their daily lives.

Explorer: Am I correct in thinking that the graded adult program would require more teachers?

Blocker: Where are you going to get them? Schultz has been teaching that class for thirty years, and I don't see anybody in line to take his place.

Blindfish: It looks to me as if everything is going good now. Why not let well enough alone?

Blocker: Is there any reason to break up the class? There were fifty-six out last Sunday. Aren't they satisfied? Aren't they happy? Why disturb us? I'm in the class and I intend to stay in it!



Proposer: I would like to answer the question about the need for more teachers. Yes, the graded adult program would require a lot more teachers. I am confident that they can be enlisted and also trained.

Explorer: One more question. With more classes, would we not require more classroom space?

Flockster: Where's the money coming from?

Proposer: Yes, we would need more education space. That is one of the problems for us to think through in relation to the proposal. Personally, I feel that it is encouraging to think that we shall need more space for our growing program.

Explorer: Let me ask this question for my own information. Has this graded adult program been attempted anywhere in our vicinity, and if so, what results have been experienced?

Proposer: The answer to your question is that St. Mark's Church graded its adult department last year.

Explorer: Just one other question--if I may. How would you divide up the cycle of adulthood by classes?

Proposer: In ten-year spans, say 25-35, 35-45, 45-55, etc. I think we should study each of these groups to determine their needs and interests. Adults keep growing and their needs keep changing.

Blindfish: I don't understand the reason for all this discussion. As John said, there were fifty-six out Sunday. That sounds pretty good to me. No other church in town had that many adults out to their Bible Class!

Bubbler: Well, sometimes you have more out, and sometimes less, but there's always a good attendance. (Note this one!)

Gatekeeper (or PASTOR): Our real concern is to find the kind of organization that will permit us to understand more fully the love and grace of God working in it.

Formulator: I think the proposal has merit, but if it is handled in the wrong way, it could blow us sky high. What would you all think of inviting to the next meeting of this committee the adult leaders to hear our neighbor, the superintendent of St. Mark's adult division, tell about his experience with multiple units and graded classes for adults?

Programmer: That seems to me to be a good suggestion. Let's look into the proposal. I move that we invite the St. Mark's superintendent to our next meeting. I make that as an amendment to the motion before us.



Synthesist: What you are suggesting, Harry, is that we examine the experience at St. Mark's as the next step in the study of this proposal?

Mediator: Of course with the understanding that the pastor, superintendent, and adult class officers are here. We want the people involved present when we discuss the subject. I am sure that by the proper approach we can work out whatever is best for the church. Some of us can't absorb these revolutionary ideas all at once.

Gatekeeper (or PASTOR): We have a common purpose. We are trying to find the most effective way to experience God in our daily life. And I am happy to see that we are striving in a mature way toward that goal.

(The motion and amendment were passed.)

#### CASE STUDY No. 2.--"Laboratory training in Church"

This study demonstrates the wonderful results of adapting laboratory principals to a single church, or for congregational use only. District supported "retreats" need not be the only way!

Note that in this experience the evaluation technique was used to good advantage, thru a good procedural set up. This combination of laboratory procedure, plus an evaluation technique, together with a knowledge of group dynamic's principals, no doubt accounted for much of its success.

The pastor who uses this procedure also for training his lay-leaders and workers, should have no lack of skilled workers. For many will have both seen and performed, thru lab training. Skill in leadership and group functioning is perhaps as important as teacher training. For chiefly thru leadership training are groups led to produce such results as are shown in these case studies.



### They Learn to Teach By Watching<sup>5</sup>

The one-day demonstration school has proved to be one of our most effective ways of training church school teachers. Actually it is a four-hour laboratory school in which all leaders are volunteers. The school is held in the church on Saturday, which seems to be the best day because the children who will be part of the lab training are then out of school. Also the men can then come in goodly numbers. Incidentally, increasing numbers of men are participating in the teaching work of our church because of this type of school.

The first unique feature of our schools is that the demonstration teaching is done by the teachers of the host church with their own children in their normal situations. Another feature is that other volunteer lay leaders from outside the host church, one for each demonstration group, are brought in to observe and to guide the evaluation period. These are persons with special skills and training for this part of the program.

After experimentation with various schedules, we have found that a shortened and lightened schedule gets the best results in this type of school. The schools are held on Saturday, registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. At 9:00 a.m. the children are gathering in their demonstration groups in pre-session activities and all observers are together for a brief worship and orientation. At 9:15 observers go to their respective age groups for further orientation by one of the demonstration teachers. The demonstration session itself (the actual lab training), as near like the usual Sunday session in the host church as possible, begins at 9:30 and runs until 10:45.

A full half hour of recess comes at 10:45, when coffee and doughnuts are served. This break is highly important, as it gives time for fellowship and for comparing experiences which improves the evaluation period to follow. The children (not the adults) are given refreshments and then sent on their way home. Evaluation in the groups begins at 11:45 and runs until 12:45, closing with a brief worship in each group.

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In the orientation at 9, for the entire group of observers or "trainees," they are told the nature of the school, its "history" and relation to other phases of our leadership education program, what its purpose is, the schedule, how to behave as observers, some tips on what to look for. They are advised that the school does not

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<sup>5</sup>H. J. Sweet, "They Learn to Teach By Watching," International Journal of Religious Education, XXXIII (October, 1956), 21-22.



pretend to demonstrate "perfect" teaching, but to show what competent teachers can do in a given situation when they are adequately prepared. They are asked to look for principles, to appraise procedures in the light of the situation, to think in terms of adaptation and not of adoption.

In the orientation for the particular group, or "guinea pig" class which they will observe, they are told something of the preparation the teachers have made, the purposes which they have set for themselves, the problems which they face in their particular situation, the lesson, activity and worship plans which they are seeking to follow, and what they hope for on the part of the observers.

The curriculum used is that being used regularly by the host church and the observers. The lesson is for the Sunday following the day on which the school is held. Children are invited to participate in limited numbers, about 10 to a class, to avoid any confusion. Junior high is included with very good results. One thing has been abundantly proved: the boys and girls of any age are not one whit disturbed by the presence of sometimes as many as 25 observers in a group.

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The evaluation period is crucial. We have given much attention to how to make it creative and a real stimulus to growth. We have developed a corp of skilled leaders for this purpose. They are successful teachers presently teaching the same lessons in their own church schools. They have been given help in guiding a group process, interpreting questions, keeping discussion on the track, discerning the main issues from the spurious.

The value of the chief evaluator, acting as a chairman with the demonstration teachers as a sort of PANEL, is fairly obvious. She has been a trained observer with a specific purpose during the demonstration. The demonstration teachers do not need to worry about the evaluation which is to follow. They will not be "on the spot" and are not likely to be on the defensive. For all members, both demonstrators and observers, are reminded that persons learn from mistakes and failures as well as from successes.

The observers thus have more of a fellow-feeling and are more objective when the focus of their questions, criticisms, and commendations (all of which are encouraged) is toward this "neutral" chairman rather than the demonstration teachers. No one is an "expert" in this situation. It is a group of fellow workers seeking the truth! And the straining laboratory has helped them to find it. Said one young minister after a recent lab school in which over 60 adults participated, "It surely showed what a single averaged sized church can do for the training of its teachers and lay workers."



### CASE STUDY No. 3.--"Role Satisfaction Thru Panels"

In the current theory of human relationships the "role" is "the chief social consideration,"<sup>6</sup> and thus it becomes one of the most important factors for the pastor to consider in applying group dynamics to church work. You recall from chapter three that "role satisfaction" is supplied when a "functioning position is occupied by an individual in the working program of a group."<sup>7</sup>

Observe how perfectly the leaders in this case study put this knowledge to use in their church program. The tremendous results stated by Mr. Wunderlich are the fruits of this kind of programing. Note also how well PANEL discussions were used in connection.

#### Stewardship Club Stimulates New Life<sup>8</sup>

Early in 1954 our old church in this suburb of St. Louis was becoming unsafe for large crowds. In order to create interest for a new edifice, a few farsighted individuals of the congregation started a "Strive for '55 Club." The club grew rapidly and succeeded in its goal of having a new church building program started early in 1955.

After achieving this aim and arousing greater interest of our members in their church, we thought it foolish to simply disband the club. We decided to change the name to St. John's Stewardship Club . . . and continue the good work.

Since the organizational setup was already there, all that was missing was good program. In looking about for various materials

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<sup>6</sup>Parsons and Shils, editors, Toward a General Theory of Action (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), passim.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>M. H. Wunderlich, "Stewardship Club Stimulates New Life," Advance, III (September, 1956), 4-6.



the chairman made some happy choices. In the first meeting the film-strip called "The Glad Church and the Sad Church" (from CPH) was shown. Then a copy of the booklet "Measuring Ourselves," first published in **ADVANCE** in February, 1955, was given to every one present. These were very profitable for they laid the foundation of a nine-month educational program.

The eight headings of Worship, Public Relations, Education, Evangelism, Stewardship, Administration, Property, and Goals which were described in the film and the booklet were then explained. Eight leaders or moderators, one for each subject, were chosen and assigned to a particular part of the room. The people in attendance were given their choice of joining in any of the groups for "buzz" sessions and discussion of that subject. Each leader was given instructions to get his section organized, informed, and activated in preparation for presentations in later joint assembly meetings.

#### **MONTHLY PROGRAMS**

Each monthly program was planned to provide for a panel-discussion from each of the eight groups, which would give a clear picture of the explanation and purpose of their area of endeavor. Guest speakers were invited to speak on the subject under discussion. The panel members were given specific subjects (from the booklet) to present, with the moderator eliciting questions from the assembly. In most instances the **PANELS** came forth prepared with facts and figures as to what St. John's is doing now, what should be done to improve any weak factor, and how this improvement could be effected. In order to keep the congregation informed on the topics under discussion, a special insert was placed into the Sunday bulletin preceding the meetings listing the subjects to be discussed, the moderator, the panelists, and the guest speaker. The club attendance grew from month to month.

The programs also included some "singing sessions" to provide breaks. The program usually ended with light refreshments and many an unplanned buzz session around the cake, coffee, and ice cream. The topics of discussion as they pertained to our local situation were:

- May: "The Glad Church and the Sad Church"
- June: Panel Discussion, on "Public Relations"
- July: Panel Discussion, on "Education"
- Aug.: Panel Discussion, on "Worship"
- Sept.: Panel Discussion, on "Evangelism"
- Oct.: Panel Discussion, on "Stewardship"
- Nov.: Panel Discussion, on "Administration"
- Dec.: Panel Discussion, on "Goals for '56"

#### **WHAT HAPPENED**

This program made deep impressions on the members participating:



1. It provided an enlightened, interested, and active group of people to participate in any project of the church.
2. This group spearheaded a \$100,000 fund-raising project, which was over-subscribed in cash and pledges.
3. It gave many people an opportunity to witness for Christ, thru these panel discussions.
4. Many of them became better acquainted as they organized to get facts and figures about St. John's. Many of these will be of inestimable value for future programs.
5. It gave impetus to many changes in the constitution and by-laws of the congregation to improve administration. Every resolution presented to the voting body was accepted.
6. As a result of the July presentation on "Education" many new teachers were brought into the Sunday School program. This was so vital in a growing congregation!
7. Contributions for Synod's work increased noticeably.
8. Church attendance rose to a new high.
9. The club has organized a canvass of our entire area in preparation for the coming program of the newly developed PER Mission.
10. There is a noticeable increase of interest on the part of the members in all the activities of the church.

Surely the Holy Spirit has used this means in the service of the Gospel to enable the members of our congregation in the second century of its existence to carry on the Lord's work with a much greater zeal.

#### CASE STUDY No. 4.--"Catalytic Leadership in Action"

Of the four problems under observation, GROUP problem-solving is perhaps of most important concern to the pastor in his meeting work. It is the writer's opinion that the following case study (by a Missouri Synod pastor) demonstrates an answer to this problem in a superior way.

Observe the underlying knowledge of group dynamic theory and principal at work here, Rev. Lessmann's keen insight into adult behavior, and



his sense of timing in applying procedures. Note also his proper choice of procedures, in using a SYMPOSIUM for this type of problem.

Here you see vividly a perfect example of truly "catalytic" leadership in action--as we discussed this process in chapter four.

**HOW FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH OF TOWSON, MARYLAND, BECAME A  
SELF-SUPPORTING CONGREGATION--A STUDY IN PLANNED  
GROUP DYNAMICS WHICH PRODUCED A DESIRABLE CHANGE<sup>9</sup>**

First Lutheran Church of Towson, Maryland, was a comparatively small "mission" congregation of approximately eight and one-half year's standing. As a mission it was receiving a monthly financial subsidy ranging anywhere from \$300.00 per month at the time of its inception in 1945 down to \$150.00 per month in December of 1953.

As a little child growing up must eventually reach maturity and independency and assume a normal, responsible, productive place in society, so, in the opinion of the writer who has served as minister of this congregation from the beginning, it was necessary for this church to become self-supporting--and the sooner the better. Sometimes children do not want to "grow up." It is so much easier to remain a child, dependent upon someone else for support and for the making of decisions. The same can be said of a young church. It is so much easier to remain under a Mission Board, relying upon it for support and "assists" and the determination of programs and policies.

This lethargic, reluctant, dependent, almost fearful "I-don't-want-to-grow-up" attitude was quite evident in the congregation. Year after year the question of cutting the subsidy was brought up, and although the congregation each year had experienced a sizeable growth in membership, very rarely did it dare to cut the subsidy more than ten to \$25.00 at a time. Meanwhile, the "child" was not assuming its rightful responsibility, was fearful of walking alone too soon, and consequently could not reach its full potential of productivity.

The matter lay dormant until the Fall of 1953. The writer had received a call to another church, and this congregation realized, that if they wanted to keep their pastor who was anxious to stay . . . they had better do something fast. At this time the Finance

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<sup>9</sup>Paul G. Lessmann, "How First Lutheran Church of Towson, Maryland, Became a Self-Supporting Congregation--A Study in Planned Human Relations Which Produced a Desirable Change," unpublished manuscript, by Rev. P. G. Lessmann, 1421 N. Amber Pl., Peoria, Ill.



Committee made its customary study of financial possibilities for the coming year and began preparing its 1954 budget. After careful calculation of the past and prayerful consideration of the future, coupled with encouragement and please by the writer, the committee came forth with the earth-shattering conclusion and recommendation to the Church Council that all subsidy should be eliminated beginning January 1, 1954, and that the congregation should declare itself self-supporting at that time. Much of this decision was based on sheer faith, rather than cold calculation, since it was not actually known whence some \$1500 of the proposed budget would come.

The recommendation was brought to the attention of the Council in November. An entire evening of discussion pro and con was devoted to the subject, and when the vote was taken, it was equally divided....the chairman casting his vote to break the tie in favor of self-support.

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It was at this point that the planned GROUP DYNAMIC principals came to the fore. From the Church Council it is necessary to bring all matters of business before the entire voting membership of the congregation. It was decided to call a special meeting to present the matter.

Realizing that several men on the Council who opposed self-support were eloquent speakers, and at the same time consecrated Christian laymen, highly respected in the congregation, whose opinions at this special meeting would undoubtedly bear great weight, yet recognizing at the same time a certain amount of habitual conservatism and lack of vision and unwillingness to venture forth on a greater challenge of faith, the writer decided that careful planning was necessary for this larger meeting, or the cause would be lost. At the same time it was quite obvious that if a favorable decision ~~were~~ to be rendered by the group, it would be necessary that the decision be unanimous, or at least nearly so. If it were not so, though the resolution of self-support might be adopted, it might not be supported whole-heartedly in the forthcoming year.

Just about this time the writer was attending a Group Dynamics course at John's Hopkin's University. In this course, which touched also "human relations," it was clearly demonstrated, in theory and practice, that "argument with him (the objector) may just make him feel worse about himself, and therefore make him fight harder. The best approach is for the rest to show him they respect his ideas, even though they may not agree with him." Also it became quite clear thru this course in Group Dynamics, that it is extremely important, (for group unanimity) to list all facts and opinions, preferably on a chalkboard, through a "recorder." And over and above all, it became clear to the writer that it would be desirable to give the "conscientious objectors" the fullest opportunity to



express themselves, without any attempt to repress or belittle their opinions and ideas.

Accordingly the following plan was born. The writer, having consulted with the President of the congregation, whom he urged to be completely democratic and unbiased at the meeting in his presentation of the case, selected the two most eloquent objectors together with the two most convinced devotees of self-support as a panel to present both sides to the Voter's Assembly. This heretofore unheard of course of action at a meeting of this kind was readily agreed upon by all concerned, and so the meeting began. And the SYMPOSIUM-FORUM PROCEDURE combination became the medium. Both sides of the picture were presented very capably, both in fact and feeling. Two separate chalk boards were employed to list the pertinent points, one board for each side. After all four members of the panel had spoken, questions from the floor were permitted, and were readily volunteered; thereafter additional comments in the form of fact and opinion were solicited from the floor.

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Finally the time had arrived for the vote. At this time the writer asked for the floor, and in his advisory capacity urged that IF a majority vote should be cast in favor of self-support, and should such a majority be only a small one, the assembly should reverse its decision and ride with the minority, because total cooperation would be needed in such a large matter, and a small majority would hardly be indicative of a successful endeavor of this kind at this time. In other words, the writer asserted that we were not ready for self-support and ought to postpone the issue for another year IF only a small majority vote should be cast in favor.

The vote was taken. Self-support was the decision by a majority vote of about seventy-five percent. Naturally the question was then raised to the writer as to what he had in mind by a "large enough" majority vote. The writer placed the matter right back in the hands of the group stating that in his opinion this minority ought to rule if the minority honestly felt that we were unready for self-support and could not put their heart into the program. The result: one by one the "conscientious objectors" assured the group that they most definitely would support the program with all their strength and abilities....First Lutheran Church was on its way!!

Without discounting Divine Guidance for one moment in this matter--and the group as a group did seek the help of God in this momentous decision--it would seem that the following sound principals of human relations as found in the study of Group Dynamics were largely responsible for the successful outcome:

1. It is important to let the group decide for itself without any autocratic demands.



2. It is important to have an expression of opinion from everyone in the group, carefully listing all, and at no time belittling any opinion given.
3. It is important to realize the special adaptability of the various procedures and techniques of Group Dynamics for such purposes.
4. It is important not to argue with opposition, but instead to utilize opposition itself by giving it a prominent place and opportunity of expression.

"THE SOUND PRINCIPLES OF GROUP DYNAMICS, IN PRODUCING A DESIRABLE CHANGE, HAD WORKED."

### CONCLUSIONS

After a somewhat thorough study of the relationship of Group Dynamics to Church meetings, it is the writer's sincere opinion that there can be no question of its spiritual value.

The writer must confess when he began this study that he was concerned chiefly with finding some methods or "gimmicks" which he could use in a leadership capacity--to "handle" such difficult persons like "Joe Blowhard and Mary Monopolizer," for instance--as they can literally derail and hinder the important work of God's Kingdom on earth, as it takes place in church meetings.

The writer realizes now the naivety of this type of search, but feels that he perhaps is not the only one who has thought of leadership in this way.

Group Dynamics completely transcends this whole idea of "controlling" or "manipulating" others. If science was ever the handmaid of theology, certainly group dynamics is the handmaid of spiritual progress through group work in the church. For it is concerned with the character growth of both individuals and groups toward desired and valuable goals, BUT NOT



IN THE SENSE OF ANY "MEANS TO AN END!"

The Scriptural doctrine of our church might perhaps very well admit the usage of group dynamics, if it can be viewed as one of the gifts of social science which God has given us. For it does not necessarily have to be regarded in a synergistic frame of mind, i.e., as a spiritual aid or medium for the Holy Ghost to produce fellowship and Christian love. Some of the published materials of the World Council of Churches come dangerously close in suggesting such synergistic values to Group Dynamics!

But if we can adopt the use of Group Dynamics in the LUTHERAN CHURCH by regarding it as a gift of God for use in His Church (as printing, for instance, was to the circulation of the Bible) then we can say that Group Dynamics may admittedly create the climate, attitudes, skills, etc., which facilitates the spiritual growth of Christians as they interact in the group work of the Church. In this sense, we may even say that the practice of Group Dynamics fairly "begs for the Holy Spirit" to come dwell with the group and pour out his blessings, for in its ideality Group Dynamics may create a perfect medium for the demonstration of Christian faith--through which faith, and for which faith alone the Spirit comes.

Mr. Wunderlich defended this point when he stated in his case study: "Surely the Holy Spirit has used this means in the service of the Gospel to enable the members of our congregation to carry on the Lord's work with greater zeal."

Let us speak now in a realm of human activity and growth entirely divorced from spiritual values. A more subtle value perhaps is the underlying effect that group dynamics can have upon both the individual



and the group itself. The writer is convinced that its principles can do much for the personal growth of people in a psychological sense, who come under its influence. Humanistically speaking, it has done much in the development of character, personality, and unselfish endeavor for individuals and groups alike. Perhaps the individual won't be aware of its "dynamic" quality upon his person for several months, but its effect has been seen in numerous instances.

The PASTOR who uses group dynamics to guide him in his leadership capacities will also realize many secular values. For his work load may be lessened greatly according to his ability to use the concept of "shared leadership." Through laboratory training in the principals of Group Dynamics, lay leaders may assist, or take over completely many of the secular duties. Moreover, thinking in terms of group dynamics enables both leader and group to make use of conflict in positive ways. The PASTOR will need to spend less of his time as arbitrator in voter's meetings.

Many leaders fail to make use of the actual potential to be found in "creative" conflict, because they do not understand true "catalytic" leadership. Yet Group Dynamics stands or falls on the basis of it, for the principals of dynamics can be no better than the leader who uses them. Use and understanding always go together. Jesus Himself used this type of leadership perfectly in the following way--He was not a "manipulator" but was also concerned with man's material welfare, personality, and contentment. Especially in leading His disciples did He show His concern for their personal development. The PASTOR should remind himself that he also is not only a "seelsorger," but like Jesus, he is also to be



concerned about the progress of people in group relation--and how they function both socially and psychologically--for their own welfare!

It is the writer's opinion that a Christian PASTOR--once he is aware of the potential of group dynamics--cannot afford to by-pass its application to church work, if he is truly concerned with doing the work of the Kingdom to the best of his ability. It is hoped that the case studies have portrayed the benefits of using Group Dynamics in Church work clearly enough.

Let us say just a word about the use of the many procedures and techniques discussed in the thesis. They of course are invaluable for developing and maintaining human fellowship, productivity, and interest in meeting work. However, as pointed out previously, they must be used appropriately--not merely for entertainment, etc. The writer is of the opinion that it is better for the initiate leader to use only a few of the acceptable techniques at first--to perfect his skill in applying them for actual goal gain. Otherwise they may detract, not add! A very few, such as role playing, should be used sparingly, if at all, for a leader must be quite skillful if he is to use these few to good advantage.

One more caution the writer feels is necessary. The PASTOR should remind himself that--like all "group sciences"--this one too has certain principles based not entirely on absolute scientific fact, but on reliable "probability." In years to come some of these principles may be proved wrong.

Only one absolutely reliable "dynamic," after all is said and done, actually remains. For the Christian pastor, that One is and can only be, the "dynamic" of the Holy Ghost.



Christians interact not on a humanistic selfish basis, not from any inherent "group" dynamic (although this power may well be present also), but rather from the Holy Spirit's "dynamic" or power. And they do all this out of love of Christ! They must realize this, even as St. Paul did in advising the Ephesians: "Fit in with one another out of reverence to Christ" (Eph. 5:21).

So it is that whatever relationship of successful group interaction Christian's have, it is one which stems from the dynamic of the "Comforter"---for Christ! The following passages from Paul, to the Church, appear pertinent:

For he is our peace, and hath made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, Eph. 2:14f. . . . Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way unto him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body. . . . when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love (Eph. 4:15f.).

In this thesis we have discussed group dynamic's theory as it might join the Church. It would be interesting to see a study on this subject which comes from the other direction: How the Christian Church might join itself to the use of Group Dynamics! In plainer words, there appears a need for a study of Scriptural doctrine as it might receive practical application to group dynamics. Ephesians might readily lend itself to such an approach and is obviously "loaded" with many related doctrines.

The need for the practical application of Scriptural doctrine to such practical subjects as Group Dynamics may well be recognized by our Church. At least, consideration of this subject would not by any means be unrelated! It is also the opinion of the writer and his advisor that



research into the field of Group Dynamics on a much narrower scale--for instance, on a doctrinal basis alone--might well become the happy and salutary study of some future Bachelor of Divinity or Master of Sacred Theology thesis.

May the Holy Spirit bless the study and use of this new group science in any future connection it may have with the Word of God, in church groups. For we know that only He--thru the Word--can give perfect growth and blessing to a meeting which is pleasing to our Father in heaven--and that for the sake of Christ, Our Lord! For His sake we also should strive!

"Ye shall receive power after that the  
Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye  
shall be my witnesses."

Acts 1:8



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