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## ABSTRACT

### Corporate Discernment of God's Will in the Administrative Processes of the Local Church

by

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Matthew 7:21-22 reveals the eternal importance of fulfilling God's will during life on the earth, yet indicates many will be doing what they believe to be God's will and be cast away as evil doers. Therefore, individuals throughout the centuries have asked, "What is God's will for me?" Although systematic and biblical theologies seldom address discernment of God's will for the individual, research revealed two approaches.

The first approach, the popular method, relies extensively on inner impressions received from the Holy Spirit, verified with the Bible. Counsel of other Christians and obedience to guidance already received constitute additional aspects of the popular method.

The second approach, the modern model, accepts anything not specifically proscribed or prohibited by Scripture. It, therefore, depends extensively on the powers of human reason to determine appropriate courses of action.

From the research of this dissertation a new approach developed which seeks to balance the extremes of the popular and modern approaches. Spiritual disciplines, resulting in formative growth through deepening relationships with Jesus, are key elements for individual's discernment of God's will.

Christian Church history reveals a virtual lack of discernment of God's will as the basis for its administrative procedures. Rather, it suggests pragmatic application of secular administrative principles, with little evidence of critical

theological evaluation. The search for an approach to Church administration that included discernment of God's will resulted in understanding that God guides the Church much as He guides the individual.

Although problems arose in attempts to measure the spiritual growth of members of Levelland First Church of the Nazarene, the project produced many beneficial results. A mission statement was developed. A facilitating worship format was proposed. Directions for implementation of the mission through small group ministries were discerned. The pastor became newly aware of a primary administrative duty, that of helping individuals identify God's purpose for their lives and encouraging and assisting them to achieve all God desired them to be.



## DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the  
dissertation entitled  
Corporate Discernment of God's Will in the Administrative  
Processes of the Local Church

presented by

Billy Jarrell Johnston

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Wilmore, Kentucky

May 17, 1993

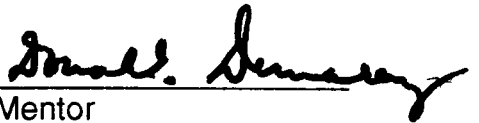
Date


May 17, 1993


Date

May 17, 1993

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Corporate Discernment of God's Will in the Administrative  
Processes of the Local Church

A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Billy Jarrell Johnston

May 1993

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents a real and tangible expression of God's grace: grace expressed through the written word as a foundation for life, individual and corporate; grace expressed through a Wesleyan heritage as it speaks best to decision making, personal and corporate; grace which heightens reason above the human, finding its ultimate expression through faith; but most of all the personal grace of Jesus Christ that touched my life on an almost daily basis guiding, inspiring and encouraging.

The staff and faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary, Doctor of Ministry Department, in their encouraging and inspiring support, served as a tangible expression of God's grace. I am especially indebted to Dr. Reg Johnson for his encouragement. Dr. Donald Demaray invested of himself freely to mentor me, especially in the area of writing. Although coming on board late in the process, Dr. William Beachy's assistance as internal reader proved invaluable.

Finally, my wife's name rightly belongs on the byline and on the diploma for her loyal support and encouragement. Truly, behind every effort of a man stands a giving woman, in this case my wife, Lillian.

The contributions of these people represent additional expressions of God's grace. So from beginning to end, this dissertation represents a work of God's loving grace.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

#### Developing the Project

I entered Seminary with four years experience in administration in the New Mexico Highway Department and more than twenty years in the U.S. Army, much of it in the area of administration.<sup>1</sup> The Army trained me in various management techniques such as Operations Research and Systems Analysis (ORSA), Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT), Management by Objective (MBO), Organizational Design and Restructuring, and provided several courses in leadership. With this training reinforced by the course on Church administration in seminary, I eagerly anticipated administering the Church as one of my pastoral functions.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, my years of experience serving on Church boards verified, at least to my thinking, that one of the key factors contributing to the local Church's failure to evangelize its community for Jesus Christ centered in a lack of properly understood and implemented administrative procedures. Therefore, as I assumed my first assignment as pastor, the task facing me was obvious. I needed to lead the Church to ownership of a newly developed mission statement with supporting objectives or goals. Surely, I could not expect to encounter threatening difficulties, especially with my training and experience. Preparing to do my Doctor of Ministry project in this area, I knew I would revolu-

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<sup>1</sup> This definition will receive additional attention later in this chapter. For the present, "administration" includes the functions commonly referred to as management, leadership and organizational structure.

<sup>2</sup> To serve as a reminder of the divine nature of the Church—a living organism, the body of Christ—and to indicate its uniqueness among organizations, Church is capitalized throughout the dissertation.



tionize the world of Church administration, or at the very least make significant contributions.

From the outset, I opposed the view of the pastor as the sole head of the Church. Following the model of Wayne Jacobsen, I frequently referred to myself as the bell sheep, reminding the people that Jesus was the only true shepherd (29). I gradually realized that a well-defined philosophy of ministry does not automatically produce an effective Church. To be acceptable, a philosophy of ministry must also incorporate the will of God both for me as the pastor and for the local Church I serve (Cook with Baldwin 23).<sup>3</sup> A philosophy that fails to incorporate the will of God may result in growth apart from God's help (Jerald D. Johnson, et al., 14). However, if Jesus truly heads the Church, the mission of the Church must be His, and not developed by the pastor, or by other leaders of the Church. Likewise, in developing goals, the goals must be His and not the pastor's.

### Discovering A Direction for the Project

Christians, as do other members of contemporary society, seek their identity in a reason for existence. "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" "Where am I Going?" "What is my purpose in life?" W. Ward Gasque reports that people live in agony because they hardly know where to begin to find answers (15). "Having given up faith in God, he [the contemporary person] finds that he no longer has faith in man, least of all in himself." (qtd. in Gasque 15). Bob Benson agrees, "I cannot think of any thing more frightening about life than to

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<sup>3</sup> The authors state "One thing working all kinds of devastation in the life of the church is the failure of the leadership to have a solid philosophy—a well-defined concept of how a church ought to operate and why." In the context of the book they modify this apparently all encompassing statement to reflect a specific philosophy based upon their understanding of biblical principles that they call "The Church as Force" (35-54).

have to live it without any real reason" (30). John Wesley provides, at least for the modern Evangelical Christian, the answer to what is missing.

We pray that we and all mankind may do the whole will of God in all things; and nothing else, not the least thing but what is the holy and acceptable will of God: We pray that we may do the whole will of God as he willeth, in the manner that pleases him: And, lastly, that we may do it because it is his will: that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive, of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do. (Works 5:338)

Wesley's answer, however, fails to explain how to find the missing element, God's will for the individual Christian.

For the Christian, Jesus' words, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."[emphasis mine] elicit a deep, internal sense of concern (Mt. 5:21). Realizing that the Christian's eternal destiny depends on doing God's will as emphasized in these words of Jesus, transforms concern into a sense of agony.<sup>4</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie's compassionate proposal, "There is no more important subject [than to know and do God's will] when seen in the light of God's purpose, power, and plan for each of us," lovingly pierces the soul of sincere Christians (Discovering 5; Dobson 112). Therefore, what constitutes God's will weighs on the hearts and minds of sincere, searching Christians.

The words of Wesley ring powerfully, "Perhaps some may ask 'Ought we not then inquire what is the will of God in all things? And ought not his will be the rule of our practice?' Unquestionably it ought. But how is a sober Christian to make this inquiry? to know what is the will of God" (Works 5:473)?<sup>5</sup> Living in

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<sup>4</sup> This addresses the already saved, the Christian; therefore, "works salvation" or "works righteousness" in no way applies. Rather, obedience as the natural outflow of God's redemptive grace clearly describes the intent.

<sup>5</sup> Hannah Whitall Smith and Cummings add emphasis to Wesley's question (qtd. in Job and Shawchuck 251; 134).

an age when the freedoms and rights of an individual provide the driving motive for society, perhaps dulls or diverts the Christian's desire to know and do the will of God.

During my seminary experience (1984-86) I came to appreciate, for the first time in my life, the biblical emphasis on the corporate setting, the people of God, the Church, and to see the individual valued as a part of this holy community. Therefore, the way the Church administers itself should express God's will for the corporate community. These newly discovered concepts resulted in a change of direction for the proposed project, a corporate approach to determining God's will or mission for the Church.<sup>6</sup>

Lyle Schaller points out, based on "studies by Val Clear, Gibson Winter and others, that religious organizations develop, grow, and function similarly to other institutions with little regard to, or influence by, ecclesiology. Pragmatic considerations win out over the theological factors [emphasis mine]" (Decision-Makers 79).<sup>7</sup> According to Henri Nouwen, the reason for the lack of spirituality in administering the Church lies in the fact that,

Few ministers and priests think theologically. Most of them have been educated in a climate in which the behavioral sciences, such as psychology and sociology, so dominated the educational milieu that little true theology was being learned. Most Christian leaders today raise psychological or sociological questions even though they frame them in scriptural terms. (Name of Jesus 65)

For the Church to function from an overall spiritual basis, it must first come to terms with finding or knowing the will of God, and then do it. After more than

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<sup>6</sup> The project grew out of inductive discoveries as I grew in "grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ" and His ways. The dissertation intentionally retains much of this inductive flow.

<sup>7</sup> Edge corroborated the point that the Church often bases its operation on a profit motive just like business (112). Miles identifies a corresponding lack of spiritual emphasis in the Church growth movement (qtd. in Slamp 80).

four years of research and reading, I find that the vast majority of books and articles published about the will of God take either the devotional or experiential approach or both. Few systematic or biblical theologies include teaching on the will of God (Knox 1). Gary Campbell, citing Kenneth Kinghorn, believes the current decline within his denomination results from a “failure to seek God’s direction” (13). Conceivably, the decline among many mainline denominations, including the Church of the Nazarene, may result from this failure to seek God’s direction.<sup>8</sup>

Four courses on spiritual formation, taken at Nazarene Theological Seminary and at Asbury Theological Seminary, and numerous books consulted for this research project, address spiritual formation primarily based on individual growth in relationship with God. None make application to life within the larger body, the Church, except at the individual level (125-171).<sup>9</sup> Richard Foster poignantly points out “all the teaching on divine guidance in our century has been noticeably deficient on the corporate aspect” (151). Corporate application comes through applying spiritual formative procedures to the life of the pastor, which could possibly help indirectly in the corporate arena through a “trickle down effect.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Foster concurs with this conclusion (151-53).

<sup>9</sup> Foster devotes a chapter each to “Confession,” “Worship,” “Guidance,” and “Celebration” (125-71). Confession, although addressed as a corporate discipline, is presented as a semiprivate exercise; while worship and celebration truly are corporate disciplines, neither addresses the administration of the corporate body (125-49, 163-71). This should not be surprising since Foster aims at building up the corporate community through spiritual growth of the individual. These disciplines could and probably should positively impact administration of the church indirectly. With one exception, the examples he uses as models of guidance (153-159) deal with corporate discernment of God’s will directed toward the individual. Although providing insight into corporate guidance, the author falls short of developing corporate discernment of God’s will.

<sup>10</sup> Peterson present two representative offerings in addition to Foster’s.

These discoveries resulted in the final direction for the project. Corporate discernment of God's will needs to be realized, not only in the mission of the local Church but also in the ensuing administrative processes.

### Basic Definitions

To help establish some boundaries for the project, three terms need defining.

#### Corporate

Corporate, as used, means both the body or organism and the organizational aspects of the local Church. The word corporate in its Latin form literally means body. This concept of corporate, as a living organism, receives emphasis over the organizational aspects.

#### Discernment of God's Will

Leslie Weatherhead correctly argues: "The Phrase 'the Will of God' is used so loosely, and the consequence of that looseness to our peace of mind is so serious. . . . There is nothing about which we ought to think more clearly; and yet, I sometimes think, there is nothing about which men and women are more confused" (9). Ladislav Orsy in his slim volume, Probing the Spirit, points us toward a definition of discernment: "The correct theological meaning of discernment is in the perception, or discovery, of a movement of grace, although the term is often used to include the procedural technique that best disposes a person for such discovery" (93). The early portion of this paper uses the second aspect of Orsy's definition most often; however, by the end of the third chapter, the first aspect of his definition dominates. The exact meaning should be clear from the context.

## Administration

Administration consists of the sum of all elements that determine policy and establish the course for the local Church, either formally or informally. Formal administration operates through the recognized official channels of boards and societies according to procedures described in the Manual/1989 (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. 77-92). Informal administration represents the leadership forces not recognized in the category of formal that affect the decision-making processes in the Church. Administration with its numerous possibilities, carries a broad, inclusive meaning ("Administration" Rodale; "Administration" American Heritage Dictionary).

## Assumptions

Two basic assumptions are included to place boundaries on the research and to also define some key areas of understanding upon which the project is based.

### Integration of Theological and Secular Concepts

James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller define three approaches to doing practical theology, called "types." Options for doing practical theology in ministry exist between two extremes. At the first extreme, the input from secular sources becomes the theology. At the opposite extreme, the theology develops totally apart from any consideration of secular knowledge, then judges all secular knowledge. These extremes represent "ideal types" unlikely to be found in the Church. Practical theology, in actuality, exists on a continuum between these extremes (Poling and Miller 29-60).<sup>11</sup> The location on the continuum determines how the Church approaches administration.

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<sup>11</sup> The authors develop six models for doing practical theology. Treated by the authors as an accurate description of existing models, these models more accurately describe points on a continuum.

Poling and Miller's "type III" best suits Wesleyan evangelicalism, including the high priority accorded tradition. While seeking to minimize influences alien to orthodox Christian theology, secular disciplines undergo scrutiny before integration (42).<sup>12</sup> Two orientations, identified as "A" and "B," depending upon the Church's response to society, further describe each type. Orientation "A" describes the Church that views itself as responsible for society, with a mission to enrich and transform social order by entering into the public dialogue. Orientation "B" represents the Church's struggles to be faithful in contemporary society by separation from the world, which limits its effectiveness in transforming society. Types IIIA and IIIB combine to provide the theological orientation for this project (Poling and Miller 29-60). The project aims to maintain a balance between the traditional evangelical position (orientation B) and the Wesleyan social emphasis (orientation A) (Poling and Miller 50, 53).

### Leadership Style

Does God reveal His will to an individual, the leader, or to a group of leaders? Who qualifies as the leader to whom God reveals His will? The contemporary Church purports to accept the clerical leader as the responsible individual to whom God reveals His will for the Church (Bruce W. Jones 157-76; Barna 17-25). However, a key layperson or group of laypeople sometimes control the leadership of the Church, thereby relegating the pastor to the priestly functions.

John MacArthur, based upon the plural use of the word elders (presbutérous) such as in Acts 14:23, presents a persuasive case that God leads through a group of individuals ("Pastoral Ministry" audiocassettes three and

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<sup>12</sup> The authors use the term, "Christian tradition." I prefer the term orthodox Christian theology, since it more specifically expresses that portion of Christian tradition with which this dissertation deals.

four; Neil T. Anderson 164; Foster 153). Current emphasis on participatory management and growing awareness of the corporate nature of the Church adds support for the concept of a body of leaders. The Nazarene Church uses group leadership in its structure, the Church board and the board of Sunday school ministries, which both include the pastor.

The assumption of leadership by a body of leaders eliminates the requirement to develop first a theology of leadership and then critically and theologically screen secular leadership models.

### Project Thesis

Uncertainties in my own understanding of the Church exist. The Church I find described in theological studies bears little similarity to either the historical Church or any other Church I know, including the one I now serve as pastor. Therefore, I have come to see the Church functioning in two separate and often mutually exclusive areas: administration, where pragmatic adoption of secular administrative and management practices dominates, and worship, where the Church strives to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Administrative procedures frequently dictate the nature of the Church's ministries, including worship. The Church, through indiscriminate or careless application of administrative procedures, may inadvertently hinder the Holy Spirit's guidance. This contributes to the confused, and often missing, sense of purpose and mission within local congregations.

The lack of a sense of purpose and mission in Levelland Church of the Nazarene evokes the following thesis: A correlation exists between the development and acceptance of a mission statement as representing the will of God and the spiritual growth within the congregation, especially among its leaders.

### Dissertation Overview



In determining a more precise way of discerning God's will, questions arise concerning an associated topic frequently encountered in research, "inner impressions." How do impressions relate to discerning God's will in contemporary Christian society (Dunning 88-9)?<sup>13</sup> What, if any, relation exists between inner impressions and hearing God? Further, surveyed literature generally does not address Providence, faith, reason, circumstances, or free will in its discussions of God's will. How, if at all, do these interact in discerning God's will? The results of investigation into these foundational topics constitute chapter two.

Chapter three develops an approach, consistent with the Wesleyan perspective, of discerning the will of God. This approach maintains a balance between the extremes, one where Scripture provides the sole source, and another that depends extensively on inner impressions as a principal source in discerning God's will. The concept developed relies on spiritually formative disciplines in developing a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. This chapter retains an emphasis on the individual.

Chapter four briefly examines ecclesiology from the biblical perspective. An examination of Church administration as practiced, both historically and contemporarily, reveals pragmatic implementation of secular practices virtually devoid of theological critique. Discerning Divine Guidance within the corporate body, the Church, completes the material presented in this chapter.

A discussion of the environment in which the project was carried out, followed by a review of the conduct of the project, constitutes chapter five. The project coincided with a self-study required by the denomination. Both the self-study and the project focused on the same basic aim, production of a mission

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<sup>13</sup> Dunning equates the appropriation of authority first to Scripture then to tradition, as the area of experience in the Wesleyan quadrilateral. The Wesleyan quadrilateral consists of scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as the four sources of authority.

statement that reflected God's will for Levelland First Church of the Nazarene. Therefore, the self-study, out of necessity, and perhaps even Providentially, became a significant aspect of the project.

Failure to respond to surveys about individual spiritual growth deterred evaluation of the thesis statement. However, research and Providential events occurring during the last half of the project, and the time following its completion, rendered several of the original premises invalid. These difficulties, although spelling the demise of the original project concept, resulted in new paradigms. Biblically supported and Providentially timed, these new disclosures provided fresh insights and personal direction in the area of Church administration.

## CHAPTER 2

### Foundations for Divine Guidance

#### Toward Defining Divine Guidance

For an individual, God's will begins with discerning it. Leslie Weatherhead advises that the issue may at times consist of attempting to get God's sanction for one's own will rather than discerning His (45). This poses a problem that will receive only superficial treatment in this dissertation.

Some find that the doctrine of the will of God receives only limited treatment in published systematic theologies (Knox 4).<sup>1</sup> Others claim no developed historical doctrine of the will of God for the individual exists. "Something very interesting occurs when one attempts to construct a historical foundation of the teaching of the ideal, individual will of God. There is none" (Friesen, "God's Will" 4).

While only a few systematic theologies address the subject of God's will for the individual, a great number of people have written on the subject, most developing his or her own terminology (Friesen, "God's Will" 7).<sup>2</sup> Encountered regularly among the list of terms are: the determined and the desired will used by J. Grant Howard (15-21); the prescriptive, permissive, and providential will of God used by Norman Giesler (82-4); and J. Herbert Kane's general and specific will of God (ctd. in Knox 62). Leslie D. Weatherhead divides God's will into three areas:

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<sup>1</sup> Knox found only Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology, 8 vols. published by Dallas Theological Seminary in 1948, that devoted three pages to the topic of the will of God for the individual. Oden's The Living God, adds another scholarly source.

<sup>2</sup> Friesen equates the two terms, "Divine Guidance" and "God's will" using them interchangeably. Surveyed literature generally uses "Will of God" or "God's will," which are retained for continuity through chapter 3. However, in chapter 4 and following, "Divine Guidance" becomes the term of preference because it better reflects the subject as addressed in this dissertation.

- The intentional will of God—God's ideal plan for men,
  - The circumstantial will of God—God's plan within certain circumstances, and
  - The ultimate will of God—God's final realization of his purpose.
- (20)

A more extensive breakdown comes from Oden who cites Thomas Aquinas' five marks or "signs" of God's will:

- operations—when God works to effect something
- permissions—when God allows something
- precepts—when God positively commands an action
- prohibitions—when God negates or negatively requires something not to be enacted
- counsels—when God teaches or advises but does not coerce an action. (The Living God 95-6)

Friesen adds to this arena of terms the sovereign, the moral, and the perceptive will of God as "clearly illustrated in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and Romans 2:18" (Decision-Making 35). He further states, "the sovereign will or plan is called by many titles. It is called the determined will of God and the decretive will of God" ("God's Will" 150, 160).

Ladislav Orsy seems to place his finger on the pulse of this vital topic summarizing as follows:

All that we can do is to sound some warnings. The "will of God" is one of the most complex terms in systematic theology [emphasis added]. It can mean God's positive and efficacious will: he does what he wants "For who can resist his will?" (Rm. 11:19). It can mean his permissive will, which allows evil to operate in this universe: he does not want any evil, yet he allows his creatures to revolt against his design. "For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" (Rm. 11:32). Between these two meanings of the term "God's will," there are many others. In any particular situation positive and permissive wills may be present in different combinations. How can a community sort them all out? (8-9)

Definitions of God's will appear in various forms, ranging from simple to complex. Some of the simple ones contain great depth when fully understood.

As Charles Cummings aptly points out, such understanding must be based on the teaching of Christ. “St. Augustine’s epigram, ‘Love and then do as you please’” provides a powerful example (Cummings 137; Orsy 44). On the other hand, Richard Knox’s statement, “By definition, God’s will is His desire and His design for His creation and His creatures,” possesses little practical value because of its extremely broad scope (63).<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Oden provides insight into an aspect of God’s will, adding excitement and anticipation to our endeavor:

In inquiring into the will of God, we encounter an aspect of . . . studying God’s qualities of personhood [emphasis added] in close conjunction with our own self-examination, with personal self-knowledge. . . . For what we mean by being a person is to some large extent precisely this: the capacity to will. (The Living God 91)

In a very real sense, to know the will of God means to know Him personally and to be known by Him. Although this surely includes a knowledge of theology, the personal dimension of relationship with God transcends the purely theological (Jn. 1:18, 14:5-10). Rather than affording an exhaustive definition of God’s will, the preceding discussion serves as a point of departure.

### Preliminary Matters

Before fully understanding discernment of God’s will one must first comprehend some preliminary or foundational matters.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cummings makes a similar statement (143).

<sup>4</sup> The fact that these preliminary matters are ignored in the discussion of God’s will in most consulted sources reflects an apparent lack of comprehensive thinking that contributes to a lack of continuity surrounding the discernment of Divine Guidance.

## Impressions

The term impressions includes commonly used terms such as "intuition" "inner impressions," and "inner witness." Consulted works contain varied terms, such as "the inner light," "the inner voice," "inner leadings," and "inner peace." T. B. Matson employs "following the heart rather than the head," and the "touch of the Spirit" (Friesen "God's Will" 23). Matson, as do others, uses the popular biblical terminology of 1 Kings 19:12, "a still small voice." G. Campbell Morgan refers to what we categorically identify as impressions as the "direct impression of the Spirit of God on the spirit of man" (Friesen "God's Will" 24). Our Quaker brothers and sisters seem to prefer the terms inner or divine light (Weatherhead 44). Parker Palmer provides a typical example, "Each of us has an inner, divine light that gives us the guidance we need but it is often obscured by sundry forms of inner and outer interference" (Palmer 38).

Many contemporary Christians describe inner promptings as an important part in following Christ. James Dobson reports, "From my discussions with Christians, it appears that God's will is most often determined by inner feelings and impressions. 'I just felt this is what God wanted me to do,' is a typical explanation" (115).<sup>5</sup> These arguments imply that God, in some manner, leaves an impression on the individual in an internal way rather than communicating through the normal senses of hearing, sight and touch. A sense of vagueness generally seems to characterize these impressions. Schoneberg Setzer reminds us that, "Men have credited both glorious and shameful deeds to inner promptings that they have interpreted to be divine revelations" (41).

Few people remain neutral concerning the validity of impressions, primarily because of their subjective nature. Although skeptics abound, many are less

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<sup>5</sup> Benson makes a similar statement (59-62).

than consistent in their skepticism. John Boykin perceptively attests, "When someone with whom we sympathize claims that such and such is God's will, we tend to go along: but when someone we mistrust claims that his idea is God's will, we smell a rat" (180).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, reports of success resulting from following inner impressions more readily receive acceptance as expressions of the will of God than do reports of failures. Since the omnipotent God cannot fail, failures must be attributed to humankind. Dobson, representative of Christians who accept impressions, also provides a strong cautionary warning. He writes, "I have come to regard the interpretation of impressions as risky business, at best" (115). Others qualify their cautions because impressions are subject to influence by external sources such as physical condition, health, confidence, emotional status, and even lustful desires (Knox 67-8; Strauss 109; Dobson 115-17).

Although God through the Holy Spirit finds acceptance as a source of inner impressions, Satan poses as an equally likely source (Dobson 115, 122; Strauss 109). Miriam Murphy enlightens us with her insightful assertion, "human consciousness can be an instrument for black magic or under the gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit, bringing us to the highest reaches of consciousness known to humanity" (20).

Friesen correctly identifies a major contributing source of the confusion surrounding impressions as when "subjective feelings replace sound exegesis" ("God's Will" 151). Wesley's stronger words seem to provide an understanding of where he stood on the issue of impressions:

To this kind of enthusiasm they are peculiarly exposed, who expect to be directed of God, either in spiritual things or in common

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<sup>6</sup> Benson supports this idea (59-62).

life, in what is justly called an extraordinary manner; I mean, by visions or dreams, by strong impressions or sudden impulses [emphasis mine] on the mind. I do not deny, that God has, of old times, manifested his will in this manner; or, that he can do so now: Nay, I believe he does, in some very rare instances. But how frequently do men mistake herein! How are they misled by pride, and warm imagination, to ascribe such impulses or impressions, dreams or visions, to God as are utterly unworthy of him! Now this is all pure enthusiasm; all as wide of religions, as it is of truth and soberness. (Works 5:473)

However, consistency on the matter wavers, even with the venerable Wesley, when only a page later in the same sermon we read:

Meantime, the assistance of his Spirit is supposed, during the whole process of the inquiry. Indeed it is not easy to say in how many ways that assistance is conveyed. He may bring many circumstances to our remembrance; may place others in a stronger and clear light; may insensibly open our mind to a concurrence of many circumstances of this kind, in favor of what is acceptable in his sight, he may superadd such an unutterable peace of mind, and so uncommon a measure of this love, as will leave us no possibility of doubting, [emphasis mine] that this, even this is his will concerning us. (Works 5:474)

Impressions garner considerable support as to their importance in discerning God's will (Barry 59; Boykin 103; Cummings 137; Gillquist 69; Ogilvie 112; Setzer 41, 44; Strauss 111; "The Holy Spirit" 17). Yet, impressions alone, however described, should be accepted, if at all, as Divine Guidance only with utmost caution and care (Friesen "God's Will" 147; Setzer 42). Dobson, citing Martin Wells Knapp's 1892 version of his book Impressions, writes, "When seeking God's will, Knapp recommends that each impression be evaluated carefully to see if it reflects four distinguished features: Scriptural . . . Right . . . Providential . . . Reasonable" (123-5). Blaine Smith puts the area of impressions into clearer perspective when he proposes: "While we should not close ourselves off to the possibility of supernatural guidance, and while we should have a proper respect for intuition, neither of these approaches should



take precedence over sound thinking” and even more importantly, over careful Bible study.(14).

### Hearing God

Although impressions and the speaking of God generally blend into an indistinguishable mist in published literature, they warrant separate treatment. While some point out that God spoke audibly in the Bible, others maintain that God does not speak audibly today (Knox 11; Strauss 80). Why can or does God not speak today? Larry Lea, in his popular book, The Hearing Ear: Learning to Listen to God, points out that the Old Testament never once records people like “Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and numerous others” as ever receiving impressions from God. They always heard God speak (11-22). This concept of the speaking God finds New Testament support for the Church as recorded in the book of Acts (Ac. 8:29; 9:4-16; 10:13, 15, 19-20; 13:2; 21:11). Although the Bible, throughout both testaments, refers repeatedly to God speaking to people, it never refers to inner impressions (Lea Hearing Ear 11-23).

Noted spiritual scholar, Richard Foster, speaks clearly when he writes, “If God is alive and active in the affairs of human beings, why can’t His voice be heard and obeyed today? It can and is heard by all who will know Him as present Teacher and Prophet” (19, 151-53). T. W. Willingham, former pastor, district superintendent and college president in the Church of the Nazarene, confirms,

The accuracy of such revelations, especially of future events, can be tested by history when fulfillment has verified them. When one has had occasion to check hundreds of such items over a span of years, and has found that 100 percent of them have been true, he becomes a firm believer in the spirit speaking. (11)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Strauss supports this contention (105).

Critics postulate that God spoke during the apostolic period because the canon remained open, and complete written revelation was not yet available. These critics justify their position by the argument that, since the canon is closed, for God to speak today would be tantamount to the addition of new revelation. Lea counters that nothing is being added; rather, God speaks to contemporary society to implement the purpose of the Bible (Hearing Ear 33). Lea employs the analogy of a father's words recognized but not understood by an infant child; as maturity increases, the degree of comprehension increases. He links hearing God speak clearly and intelligibly with a high degree of spiritual maturity.<sup>8</sup> While Lea does not rule out impressions, he cites impressions as often a sign of spiritual immaturity. Lea further qualifies God's speaking in the contemporary world as taking place inside, referred to as discerning the "voice of the Lord in your spirit." In biblical times speaking may well have occurred outside the person (Hearing Ear 7, 25).<sup>9</sup> Through biblical references Willingham similarly develops the point that God sounded like thunder to some people, while others heard something said and did not understand; and, finally, to some God gave a clear and distinct message. He, too, asserts, along with Lea and Foster, that the voice of God can be clearly and distinctly heard today by all who will listen (67-9). Jesus' frequent admonition, "He who has ears, let him hear" still rings true today (Mt. 11:15, 13:9, 13:43; Mk. 4:9, 23; Lk. 8:8, 14:35 and Rev. 2:7).

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<sup>8</sup> Maturity here takes the sense of developed, the state of optimum ability. In the spiritual realm maturity in this life never becomes a completed reality; potential for further growth always exists.

<sup>9</sup> Willingham and Grider agree that spiritual maturity plays a major part in the clarity with which a person hears God (67-8; 88-90).

Hearing does not come easily. According to Nouwen, hearing God is a matter of intense discipline (All Things New 67). St. Teresa of Ávila reports in her autobiography that she spent twenty years on the “stormy sea” before developing to the point of communication with her Lord (108-9). Albert Truesdale states, “Knowledge of Him is not gained through finite ingenuity. The free, holy God sets the conditions by which He can be known” (119). In short, as Jonathan Jenkins confirms, “God is God on his terms, not on ours” (64). God defines faith as one of these key terms.

### Reason

Understanding of reason helps us understand discernment of God’s will. Reason, along with Providence, helps define interaction between God and humankind. Oden provides an historical Christian perspective:

Reason (dialegomai, ratio), as classical Christianity understood it, includes all the capacities of the soul to behold and receive truth . . . . These include intellectual, emotive, and volitional (thinking, feeling, and willing) aspects of the self, insofar as all these faculties enter into the discernment and interpretation of truth. (The Living God 375)

Reason consists partially of “the capacity of the human intellect to carry out organized mental activity such as the association of ideas, induction and deduction of the inferences, or value judgments” according to Winfried Corduan (915). Duane R. Thompson points out that the power of reason extends beyond the simple mental activity of human intellect to include “the power of the person to experience order in the universe” (442).<sup>10</sup> In this age of great accomplishments based on the powers of human reason, we find it difficult to admit that reason has limitations and uncertainties (Corduan 915). Murphy adds a spiritual dimension when she contends, “In an era which until recently placed rea-

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<sup>10</sup> Weatherhead makes a similar observation (17).

son supreme over love, a vast number of Christians have understood God's intimate presence intellectually, rather than experientially" (60). The most basic of Christian tenets, salvation by grace alone, a supernatural event, falls outside the contemporary understanding of reason (Eph. 2:8-9). To fail to accept limitations on the power of reason places one in peril of error.

The human race's leap into sin drastically affected humankind's power of reason. Jeffrey G. Sobosan points out that it resulted in ignorance: "radical ignorance: ignorance which will never be [fully] redeemed or enlightened" (44). With faulty perception, humankind continues trying to exert control over the future based on our actions in the past and present. For the Christian, the problem of understanding reason becomes exacerbated because it implies, at least to some degree, knowing God well enough to understand what constitutes reason from His perspective.

Because of this reaction to the sin-wrecked environment, Christians continually attempt to repair or right what we perceive to be broken or wrong (Sobosan, 42-3). However, the fallen power of reason often leads us to define righted or repaired from the perspective of the one needing righting or repairing (Peterson Working the Angles 16). Need, then, becomes the cause, and righting or repairing the effect. This righting or repairing becomes commonly identified as service, ministry or practical work (Oswald Chambers 64). Such service may well fit every test of reason that can be applied, yet still be a competitor with the surrender of one's own will to God.

Abandonment to God is the command, not fixing or repairing (Mt. 6:33). What the world often calls broken, Jesus, using themes like taking up the cross and abandonment of family for His cause, calls truly fixed (Mt. 10:34-42. Ac. 14:22). However, humanity's fallen sense of reason sometimes leads to the belief that a prosperous, successful, healthy person does not require fixing;

while a poor suffering person does. The difficulty lies in trying to reason as God reasons.

Throughout the Bible, illustrations show how much God's reason differs from that of fallen humans. God's instruction to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to a land I will show you," at best stretches the tests of reason as applied by modern philosophy (Ge. 12:1). The story of Gideon in Judges, chapters six and seven, with his dismissal of over ninety-eight percent of his men just before a major battle against a large well equipped army, provides yet another example that fails the test of reason. This conflict between God's guidance and human reason continues in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul's steadfast pursuance of the will of God, even after suffering many hardships, hardly seems reasonable (2 Co. 6:3-12; 11:23-29). Robert L. Ramseyer concurs, "In the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul contrasts in stark terms reliance on the model of Christ and reliance on the powers of human reason" (306). Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon forcefully reinforce the point with their assertion:

Nothing in the Sermon on the Mount suggests that the way of the disciples is "rational." Jesus honestly admits that his way goes against about everything we have heard said, everything that comes naturally, rationally. . . . People who walk down this narrow way will be accused by everyone else of being "fanatical," irrational in the extreme, because they have given over their claims of reasonableness, independence, and goodness in their attempts to be obedient to a master who, like God, is "kind to the ungrateful and selfish." (99)<sup>11</sup>

Harold Myra confirms, "yet in a broken world . . . for the Christian, God's direct leadership frequently overrules our logic" (17).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ramseyer makes the same point (303).

<sup>12</sup> The following authors substantiate this point: Hauerwas and Willimon (32); E. Stanley Jones (53); Setzer (42); A. W. Tozer (95-8); and Weatherhead (42).

Reason encounters another difficulty in that “we are far more self-conscious than God-conscious” (Peterson Working the Angles 34). Paul, in the first letter to the Church at Corinth ( Co. 1:18-2:5), seems to imply that willingness to follow Christ, even in those areas where he seems to make no sense at all, becomes a test of our faith against reason or worldly wisdom, as he calls it (Ramseyer 306). H. Ray Dunning concurs with John Wesley’s contention that the primary function of reason for the Christian is the interpretation of Scripture (85-6).

The Christian should not discard, or even denigrate, reason as a way of discerning Divine Guidance; rather, for the Christian, the definition of reason becomes modified. Christianity demands that “all a person's ransomed powers” be used in service for God. Oden helps integrate the concept of hearing God speak with reason when he states, “Human reasoning, by grace, appropriates divine truth without ceasing to be human reasoning. When reason discerns the truth God speaks, it does not do so without God’s grace” (Oden The Living God 397). Thus, reason for the Christian, because of its conditioning by God’s grace, takes on an air of the mystical, at times putting it at odds with the secular definitions of reason.

This supports the theological contention that for the Christian “faith must come before reason. It is not that reason serves no function but that reason cannot function properly until faith gives it proper direction” (Demaray 16). Only in the interrelation between reason and the confirmation that comes from hearing from God, do we find a workable approach for the Christian in discerning Divine Guidance.

### Faith

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1). In a broad general sense, faith is defined in the New

Testament as living by the truth one receives; resting on God's promise, and giving thanks for God's grace by living to His glory (Packer "Faith" 400). Faith, for the Apostle Paul, represents more than simply accepting the free gift of God's grace; it also involves the continuing process life (Guthrie, 591-2). Faith in its many facets represents another rich and varied theological concept necessary for discernment of God's will. Faith, as God's gift (Ro. 12:3) used by the individual Christian to appropriate God's grace into his or her life, significantly impacts one's understanding of Divine Guidance.

The will of God as it converges with our ability and necessity to cooperate with His sovereignty accounts for much misunderstanding. In the domain of a Christian's faith interacting with God's activity, as in His answering prayer, Christians sometimes imply that God cannot act apart from an individual's faith. Faith is a necessary ingredient, but alone is not sufficient to cause God to act. In practice, this means that in His sovereign wisdom God chooses to allow humankind, through faith, to function cooperatively with His grace.

Faith, although necessary, often receives treatment as if it were both necessary and sufficient to cause God to act. As God interacts with a Christian, faith provides the door the individual must open for God to walk through. However, opening the door of faith never requires God to proceed through it.

An inherent confusion revolves around God's activity within the natural realm, whether by supernatural or Providential means, as it interacts with humankind through faith. Faith only relates to a person's ability to believe the doctrine of providence and in no way affects God's ability to act.

### Providence

John Wesley provides a beginning definition of Providence:

It may be expected that I should mention what some have accounted a Fourth sort of enthusiasm; namely the imagining

those things to be owing to providence of God which are not owing thereto. I doubt: I know not what things they are which are not owing to the providence of God; in ordering, or at least in governing, of which, this is not either directly or remotely concerned. I expect nothing but sin; and even in the sins of others, I see the providence of God to me. (Works 5:475)

The word Providence is theological. Although it does not appear in the Bible, the doctrine of Providence is “eminently scriptural.” Providence, one of the doctrines most commonly referred to in all major segments of the Christian Church (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christian), often lacks clear understanding (Oden The Living God 272). The scope of this doctrine, through its influence on virtually all other doctrines of the Christian faith, integrates the transcendence and the immanence of the holy personal God. It helps Christianity avoid the heresies of the pantheistic confusion of God with the world and the deistic separation of God apart from the world (Wiley 1:486-7; Metz “Providence” 427). God’s attributes involved in the doctrine of Providence, His righteousness, wisdom and power being the most prominent, extend insight into this extensive doctrine (Wiley 1:477). Christ, by definition and actuality, is the central focus of Christianity. Therefore, to call Providence one of the central doctrines of Christianity recognizes its Christological nature (Parker 890). Although Christological, Providence involves all of the “missions and economies” of the Trinity, according to H. Orton Wiley (1:474). He goes on to state that, “Providence is ascribed to the Father (John 5:17), to the Son (John 5:17, Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3) and the Holy Spirit (Psalm 104:30)” (1:477).

The activity of God as He interacts with His creation defines Providence (Wiley 1:477; Metz “Providence” 427; Oden The Living God, 270, 287). General Providence, which means the totality of God's care for all of creation, and Special Providence, which refers specifically to His care for the human race, broadly divides the subject of Providence (Oden The Living God 311; Wiley



1:477). When considering it from the aspect of the activity of God, He conserves, preserves, and then directs His creation to its final destiny. Implied in this definition are three elements of Providence, “namely conservation, preservation and government” (Metz “Providence” 427). Conservation explains God's sustaining activity in the realm of the inanimate physical universe. Preservation describes His work on behalf of the animate or living part of creation, excluding the human (Metz “Providence” 427-8). Therefore, government or administration, as God's work or active care of the human race becomes synonymous with Special Providence.

A complete understanding of doing the will of God demands we pay heed to the area of Special Providence, government or administration. Classical exegetes, as Oden identifies them, divided this aspect of Providence into four distinct areas. First, the area known as Permissive Providence exists “when we say that God permits any event” (Oden The Living God 300; 2 Ch. 32:31; Ps. 81:12-13; Hos. 4:17; Ac. 14:16; Ro. 1:24, 28). Second, Preventive Providence occurs when God supposedly prevents or restrains a person from committing certain acts (Hos. 2:6; Ge. 20:6; Ps. 19:13.). Third, in Directive Providence, God overrules the evil acts of an individual and brings from these evil acts consequences for His intended purposes (Ge. 50:20; Isa. 10:5; Jn. 13:27; Ac. 4:27-28). Finally, in Determinative Providence, God establishes the limits over sin and evil (Oden The Living God 300; Wiley 484-5; Metz “Providence” 428; Job 1:12; Ps. 124:2; 2 Th. 2:7; 1 Co. 10:13).

Richard Taylor adds a new dimension to the doctrine of Special Providence when he correctly contends that personhood dictates a dualistic nature of self, the brain and the higher “boss” of the brain, the person. Accepting this understanding of personhood, Special Providence then becomes person-to-person commutation. This exchange occurs between the

operative person of God, the Holy Spirit, and the person of the individual involved, the person's spirit. Divine Guidance as Spirit-to-spirit adds a relational dimension to Special Providence.<sup>13</sup> Taylor clarifies this interpersonal interaction: "We cannot insist too strongly that the Spirit is not in the business of supplanting personhood with Himself. . . . But perhaps we can say that the Spirit's action on the brain is primarily restorative healing, rather than a causative manipulation" (Taylor "Relation" 89).

In this interpersonal relationship, Providence moves from development and preservation of the lower life forms to the most complex interactions with the human race and only the human race. The doctrine of Providence describes a world, and specifically individual lives, as controlled not by mere chance or fate but by interacting on a personal level with God through His Spirit. The distinctly Christian nature of this doctrine grows in grandeur with comprehension of the grace that makes personal relationships with Christ a real possibility.

### Circumstances

Does Providence include the totality of all that happens in a Christian's life, as Wesley stated above (Works 5:475); or do the decisions and actions of others, as Boykin claims, account for what transpires among people (13, 28)? Investigation of circumstances in juxtaposition to Providence requires attention, even if briefly. In his book, Circumstances and the Role of God, Boykin identifies circumstances as what Wesley, along with classical theologians, designates as Providence (45). In simplest terms, he defines circumstances as "you name it—anything that happens" (14). Circumstances, according to Boykin, derive from external conditions which result from people's decisions. Therefore,

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<sup>13</sup> The apostle Paul in Romans 8:16 refers to such a personal interaction on a Spirit to spirit level.

most of what occurs in the life of a Christian results from our own decisions and the decisions and actions of others.

Boykin understands that God works not through external circumstances, but inwardly to change the very person, “the heart, what we are” (115-17, 202, 104-5, 77). When viewed as God’s internal workings, circumstances become a personal interaction between God and the individual. This view adds a spiritual aspect to the doctrine of Providence similar to Taylor’s insight about the interaction of Spirit and spirit. Typically, the classical theological development of Providence lacks this dimension of personal spiritual interaction between God and the individual.

Boykin goes on to say, “We are not very good at interpreting circumstances.” Therefore, it is difficult at best, and quite possibly even impossible, to distinguish between circumstances and Providence (74, 43). However, from Boykin’s perspective, being God’s person “wherever we may be and whatever our circumstances” supplants a requirement to discern God’s will before taking an action (187).

### Free Will

Carlos Valles’ assertion, “God works through circumstances,” points to an understanding that reflects a degree of balance between the extremes of Wesley, where every event in life stems from Providence (Works 5:475), and Boykin, where God does not providentially interact in human affairs (Valles 28). To recognize, as C. S. Lewis did, that God only hesitatingly, if ever, dictates human affairs adds to the already complex arena the issue of human free will. Speaking for himself Lewis states:

For He seems to do nothing of Himself which He can possibly delegate to His creatures. He commands us to do slowly and blunderingly what He could do perfectly and in the twinkling of an eye. . . . Perhaps we do not fully realize the problem, so to call it, of

enabling finite free wills to coexist with Omnipotence. It seems to involve at every moment almost a sort of “divine abdication.” (9).<sup>14</sup>

Jenkins, making the same point, states: “The will that creates the future [and the present] is not just ours, but first and last, the will of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (65).

To understand humankind’s free will properly one must at least consider the will of God. James Arminius, who promoted the doctrine of human free will, speaks of God’s will in three ways: “FIRST, the faculty itself of willing. SECONDLY, the act of willing. THIRDLY, the object willed” (2:343). Arminius further details the will of God as follows:

The will of God is borne towards its objects in the following order: (1.) He wills himself, (2.) He wills all those things which, out of infinite things possible to himself, he has by the last judgment of his wisdom [judicavit] determined to be made. . . . (3.) The third object of the will of God, are those things which He judges fit and equitable to be done by creatures who are endowed with understanding and with free will: In which is included a prohibition of that which He wills not to be done. (4.) The fourth object of the divine will is his permission, that chiefly by which He permits a rational creature to do what He has prohibited, and to omit what He has commanded. (5.) He wills those things which, according to his own wisdom, He judges to be done concerning the acts of his rational creatures. (2:343-4)

From Arminius’ understanding, one can conclude that human free will issues directly out of God’s will, specifically in areas three, four and five. Being able to cooperate with, or rebel against, the will of God in the freedom God bestows on his creatures, constitutes another aspect of this most important and mysterious realm between the Divine and His creature (von Balthasar 196). Steve Harper writes, “Someone once said the greatest blessing and curse ever given to man was his freedom to decide” (Prayer 13).

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<sup>14</sup> As might be expected, Boykin provides a different view when he states, “For God to ‘send’ circumstances would be a clumsy, ineffective way to accomplish His purposes since most do not learn spiritual lessons from their experiences” (201).

Robert Kopp provides a simple but insightful understanding:

There is the tendency to get hung up on that old predestination versus-freewill debate. The truth is that the Bible says we are predestined and free to choose. It's one of those mind-boggling paradoxes that keep us humble. We don't know everything. That's one of the differences between God and us. But we do know that while predestination is God's business, freewill is ours. We get to choose. And so instead of concentration on something like predestination, which we can never fully understand nor appreciate, it's better stewardship to concentrate on what we can understand and appreciate (viz., free will). We get to choose. And, as Christians, we want to make the right choices. We want to know and to do God's will. (34)<sup>15</sup>

Nothing we do or say can in any way detract from the Holy Being of the living God and His sovereignty (Knox 16).<sup>16</sup> Gustaf Aulen advocates, "to meet God as the Holy One is to be placed under a supreme compulsion, and to be confronted by a power advancing in sovereign majesty. . . . We are in his power, not he in ours" (in Truesdale 119). Still He has given humankind the freedom through faith to relate to Him on a personal basis. This interaction impacts both Providence and circumstances in ways seldom understood by human beings.

### Conclusions Concerning Preliminary Matters

Bill Treadwell aptly acknowledges the divine guidance "we are after is God's vision of the intelligent move, the wise choice—not our own. If the two coincide (what we think and what he thinks), that is fine. But if they do not, we are the ones who must adjust" (35). Hearing God can represent a clearer, more cognitive inward communication between the Holy Spirit and the human spirit. Since impressions are often vague, one's progress toward spiritual maturity is

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<sup>15</sup> Arminius, almost 400 years earlier, made virtually the same statement (2:344-5).

<sup>16</sup> According to Knox "The word 'sovereign' is not found in the Hebrew, Greek, or in the English of the KJV or NASB. 'Sovereign LORD' is used in the NIV OT when adonai and Yahweh occur together in the Hebrew text. 'Sovereign Lord' is used five times in the NIV NT to translate despotaor, Master."

perhaps the most significant factor influencing one's ability to discern God's guidance clearly. Lest we become enamored with discerning God's will as the means to the easy solution, Blaine Smith clearly cautions that, "God does not expect our decision-making to be any easier than it is for nonbelievers, in fact we may even find it more difficult" (13).

Special Providence may be trivialized by ascribing to it the actions resulting from human free will (Oden The Living God 309). Some decisions may result in circumstances outside the classical understanding of Providence, at least in the realm of the present. Decisions such as these, however, do not preclude God from working providentially through those circumstances even after the fact. At the same time, we must not think we can, by our freely wrought decisions, dictate the working of God. While accepting the classical explanation of Providence, the God-given freedom to make decisions and act out of our free will complicates the ability to discern God's activities in each circumstance.

When God causes an event, even outside the activity of any individual's faith, it is simply Providential activity. Yancey, quoting Bronislaw Malinowski, suggests a difference between magic and religion that proves helpful at this point. "Magic," he said, "is when we manipulate the deities so that they perform our wishes; religion is when we subject ourselves to the will of the deities" (27).

At the point where faith and reason intersect, we encounter the works of God in the realm of the mystical. For a happening to be religious, the submission of a Christian's will to the will of God allows His will to be manifest in mystical ways that go beyond reason without violating reasonableness. With sufficiency ascribed to faith, magic rather than religion becomes the result. The challenge remains for the Christian to accept the necessity and sufficiency of God's working in conjunction with the necessity, but not sufficiency of faith. This then, distinguishes the Guidance of God—even when it fails all tests of reason

such as God's call to Abram to travel to an unknown land (Ge. 12:1) or to sacrifice Isaac, his son of Covenant (Ge. 2:1,2); His call to Gideon to fight a large army with a small detachment of only 300 men (Jdg. 6, 7); His call to enter full time ministry in the first century as did the Apostle Paul (Ac. 9:31, 13ff; Gal. 1:11-24); or for that matter, to respond to the call to full time Christian ministry in the tenth decade of the twentieth century. Thus, Divine Guidance shrouded in mystical robes may exceed normal limits of reason, but with faith it becomes reasonable to the Christian.

Use of our faculties of reason always seems prudent, yet reason does not provide a foolproof test. Reason, a viable component when united with God's grace, conditions our faith. Within the Wesleyan quadrilateral the term "experience" seems best defined by integrating areas of Providence, circumstances, reason and human free will through the hearing of God by faith through grace (Dunning 77-94).<sup>17</sup>

Man's reason grapples with all the complexities. Consider this: Two objects, such as two letters of the alphabet, can be arranged in only two different orders. Add a third letter, and the number of possibilities becomes six. With the addition of a fourth letter, the possibilities increase to twenty-four. With the addition of each new factor, the complexity increases mathematically. Paralleling this thought with the theological, it is conceivable that complexity increases exponentially. Although the number of foundational factors addressed here exceeds limits with which normal human reason can grapple easily, they demand our attention. Ignoring these preliminary matters can pro-

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<sup>17</sup> Dunning provides a concise yet comprehensive discussion of the Wesleyan quadrilateral's, Wesley's four sources of authority—Scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

duce serious omissions or major errors in any attempt to comprehend the discernment of God's will.

Since we cannot completely grasp the complexities of the Divine mind even in these few areas, we must therefore operate in the realm of faith. Scripture, as always, provides the best conclusion, "We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Co. 5:7). Faith must be operative before any aspect of the foundational issues become meaningful. Yet, as Wesley in an affirmation of faith states, "How happy is it that there is a higher wisdom than our own to guide us through the mazes of life" (Works 10:230)



## CHAPTER 3

### Individual Discernment of the Will of God

#### Introduction

How individual Christians comprehend Divine Guidance depends primarily on their understanding of impressions, hearing God, reason, faith, Providence, circumstances, and free will. Their view of the authority of Scripture also represents a significant factor.

As recorded in the Old Testament, people typically received guidance in dreams, by test, by an angelic messenger, or directly by theophany (Leon Chambers 243). A commonly cited biblical example found in Judges, chapters six and seven, occurred when Gideon laid out his fleece. Philip Yancey contends that, "'Putting out the fleece' hardly seems an appropriate model for someone seeking guidance. It describes someone who knows exactly what God wants and still quakes before the task" (24). Yancey fails to recognize that God did respond to this method of verifying divine guidance, albeit guidance already received. Therefore, to rule it out limits the Christian's understanding of God's ability to respond to an earnestly seeking person. On other occasions, God communicated information to both Joseph and Daniel in dreams (Ge. 37, 40; Da. 2).

In the New Testament, the casting of lots to select Matthias to replace Judas as an Apostle records the last biblical instance where guidance occurred other than through an angel or more commonly through the Holy Spirit (Ac. 1:21-26). The Holy Spirit provided guidance in a variety of ways. He spoke to Philip, directing him to go and stay near the Ethiopian's chariot (Ac. 8:29). Saint Paul received a vision of the Macedonian man calling him to Europe (Ac. 16:6-10). Instances also occur where the results of communications appear without any indication of the means God used (Ac. 16:6).

Today, however, most writers hold that Divine Guidance through angels, visions, trances, dreams, and audible voices does not represent the normal experience. Perhaps it never did. The Bible spans some two millennia. Multiple millions of people inhabited the earth during these centuries. The Bible records God's direct communications with individuals throughout, portraying it as a frequent and common form of communication. In actuality, these communications represent rare occurrences when considered in the context of historical possibilities.<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, although skeptical of such means, did not absolutely deny their possibility in some "rare instances."

How frequently do men mistake herein! How are they misled by pride, and warm imagination, to ascribe such impulses or impressions, dreams or visions to God, as are utterly unworthy of him! Now this is . . . all as wide of religion, as it is of truth and soberness. (Works 5:473)

Scripture provides the foundation of Divine Guidance for those who today rely on its primacy. Primacy of Scripture, however, does not imply that God uses the Bible as a "magical oracle" or "in a superstitious manner." It provides a basis of authority upon which to build a foundation for Divine Guidance (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. Manual/1989 30).<sup>2</sup>

Over the centuries, rather than initiate new methods, the Church modified its understanding of God's methods of Divine guidance as recorded in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, an increasing realization developed

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<sup>1</sup> The ten occasions during the 100 years of Abraham's 175 years of life when God communicated with him yield an average of approximately ten years between communications. Adding the five occasions when God communicated with Abraham's "associates," Hagar, Lot and Abimelech, reduces the time span to an average of approximately once every seven years. What appears to be almost constant communication between God and the people of Abraham's time assumes a different hue, considering the years spanned and the large number of people involved.

<sup>2</sup> This work documents the primacy of Scripture within the Church of the Nazarene, maintaining full harmony with the Wesley quadrilateral: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

regarding the Holy Spirit as the operative agent of the Father and Son. Beginning with the baptism of the Church with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and throughout the remaining New Testament accounts of the Church, knowing God's will tends to be linked with being Spirit-filled (Ac. 2:1-13). Being Spirit-filled implies some degree of control by the Spirit, without such control overcoming the volitional capability of the individual (Taylor "Relation" 88).<sup>3</sup> The cooperation of the Spirit-filled individual with the Holy Spirit in discerning God's will should always remain foremost in our consideration because:

If there is no agent capable of cooperating with the Spirit . . . or resisting . . . then our traditional (and I believe Biblical) concept of personhood disappears. All that is left is the thing being acted upon, with results unavoidable and predetermined. (Taylor "Relation" 90)

The problem, however, remains, how does a Christian discern the will of God (Metz Studies 186-7; Leon Chambers 243)? Hannah Whitall Smith in her classic book, The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life, asserts,

God's promise is, that He will work in us to will as well as to do of His good pleasure. This of course means that He will take possession of our will and work it for us, and that His suggestions will come to us, not so much as commands from the outside, as desires springing up within. They will originate in our will; we shall feel as though we wanted to do so and so, not as though we must. (qtd. in Benson and Benson 227)

This leads to the conclusion that the person who has committed her or his life to doing God's will finds him or herself doing exactly what she or he most enjoys (Gasque 15-17).<sup>4</sup> If such were truly the case, then doing God's will would be a nonexistent issue since it would be automatic. Ross A. Lakes provides a

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<sup>3</sup> Taylor appeals for support to Eph. 5:18, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."

<sup>4</sup> This statement, while true, has the inherent danger of being taken to imply a cause and effect relationship, which goes beyond the intent of either this paper or its author.

warning from the opposite extreme when he writes, “If we think we hear something from God that is already a heartfelt yearning of our own, a warning light should flash: This needs extra verification [emphasis mine]” (113)!

Other writers maintain, “the moral law that we ascribe to God is the expression of His will” (Truesdale 119).<sup>5</sup> Although correct, this view proves unsatisfactory because of its incompleteness. The day to day decisions of life lead to the conclusion that either doing God’s will is not automatic for the Spirit-filled Christian, or “the moral law ascribed to God” is not as self-evident as necessary for clear and unambiguous decisions (Jenkins 64). Some people who clearly know the moral will of God as prescribed in the Bible may take the proverbial ostrich approach, and bury their heads in the sands of intentional ignorance, refusing to admit their responsibility for their decisions (Jenkins 64).

A more common reason that uncertainty exists in knowing God’s will stems from not having a clear understanding of what Christians mean when speaking about God’s guidance. In order for the serious Christian to attain a sense of divinely approved purpose in his or her life, the concept of Divine Guidance, although fraught with complexities and opposing views, demands clarification.

### Approaches to Discerning God’s Will

Although several approaches to discerning God’s will exist they generally can be placed into two categories herein identified as the popular method and the modern model. A third approach, outlined in this paper, lies between the two existing approaches and is more amenable to the Wesleyan perspective.

#### The Popular Method

The popular method frequently used throughout the Protestant Church, and especially among the evangelical Protestant segment, incorporates three

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<sup>5</sup> Friesen repeatedly reiterates this point (“God’s Will” 150, 13, 18, 100, 149, 157).

aspects: the revelations contained in God's written word, the application of reason, and direct guidance by the Holy Spirit (Friesen "God's Will" 8).

Impressions supplies the most common terminology used to explain the commutation between the Holy Spirit and Scripture and reason. Some Christians accept impressions as the principal means employed by God to communicate His will. Raymond Hurn enjoins, "Expect an inner confirmation by God's Spirit" (Hurn 97)

Further, and perhaps more commonly, "the popular view holds that God has formulated an ideal plan for each individual believer as the basis of guidance" (Friesen "God's Will" Abstract 1, 39).<sup>6</sup>

Only one road will bring us in touch with all the people he wants us to meet and influence for him. Only one direction will include all the circumstances he wants us to use to mold and enrich our lives. We function best when we stick to his game plan, when we walk the path he has mapped out for us and do the things he has planned for us in advance. (Strauss 16)

Popularly known as being in "the center of God's will," God's plan for individuals also appears as "God's perfect will." Friesen further defines this as follows:

To be in God's perfect will means more than general obedience to the commands of Scripture. To be in God's perfect will means that a person is doing the right thing at the right time. The term perfect comes from Romans 12:2. As used by the popular view the term perfect is distinguishing God's perfect will from His general will for all Christians. ("God's Will" 13)

Precisely, the popular view holds that Divine Guidance more specific than the Bible exists, but never Guidance that contradicts the Bible (Friesen "God's Will" 23, 33-5, 32). This latter term derives from the theology of Providence and lies within the concept of God's permissive will (Tozer 46; Friesen "God's Will"

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<sup>6</sup> Others agreeing with Friesen's assertion: Harrison (9); Merton (116); Maxwell (114-5); Strauss 1(5-17, 38).

14-16). For a Christian to miss the center of God's will implies that the person lives in the arena of "God's second best," a concept foreign to the Wesleyan understanding of the Christian living in the fullness of God's grace.

Two additional tools or methods contribute to discerning Divine Guidance in the popular method. Counsel occupies an important and perhaps even an indispensable place in the process (M. Blaine Smith 111, 114; Campbell 11; Conrad 353). This postulate finds biblical support in the admonition that safety exists in many counselors (Pr. 11:14; 15:22). Obedience to Divine Guidance already received constitutes yet another condition necessary to receiving further Divine Guidance (Friesen "God's Will" 10, 36, 45-6; "The Holy Spirit" 18).

Using Lady Hellen Oppenheimer's Incarnation and Immanence, Yancey suggests that in seeking guidance from other people an insight into discerning Divine Guidance may be obtained.

(1) "We ask some people's support of the decision we are already leaning toward" (25). While this may actually be true in specific instances, this model hardly represents a valid technique "for asking advice of God."

(2) "We go to some people because we truly want to be told what to do" (25).<sup>7</sup> This reasoning places responsibility for decisions on another while the individual avoids accepting responsibility.

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<sup>7</sup> Yancey seems to develop his position dependent upon a concept of the sovereignty of God. It seems he believes that if a person knows the will of God in a specific instance, then to fail or refuse to do it constitutes a violation of God's absolute sovereignty. In his own words, he concludes "there would be no meaningful opportunity for faith or obedience if I knew the inevitable result of taking one sort of action and not another. Human freedom would dissolve." God's known will is for all to avoid eternal punishment through repentance (2 Pe. 3:9); therefore, if the combined effect of God's Sovereignty and knowing His will breaches the individual's freedom of choice, we only need to make every person aware of God's will for their salvation in order to carry out total world evangelization. Since one can know God's will and refuse to comply, human free will must be the problem. God's sovereignty is not challenged by man's freedom to reject God's will.

(3) “Sometimes we simply want a chance to think aloud, in the presence of a friendly listener” (25).

Option three, the “friendly listener,” approaches what at times takes place under the facade of prayer (Yancey 25). People seldom go to someone to talk with him or her as a “friendly listener” without the expectation of response. When incorporating the principle of “response,” option three converges, and becomes synonymous with either option one, where the desire to have support for a decision already made becomes the motive, or option two, where the expected feed back becomes the decision. Thus, option three represents only an illusion of a model. Avoiding responsibility represents a human tendency which negates seeking counsel, whether human or divine.

Since Divine Guidance, as understood by advocates of the popular method, relies to some degree on impressions, it is not without its opponents. In part, this is due to the subjective nature of impressions. Failure to insure that all guidance received through impressions complies with the dictates of common sense or reason makes the popular method an easy target for criticism. The danger lies in relying on impressions alone. To do so may result in an unbalanced life for which God takes the blame for poor or even ungodly decisions of individuals. Can the popular method avoid these criticisms through a balanced approach?

Several approaches have been proposed to help avoid the pitfalls of irresponsible subjectivity. Everett L Cattell suggests an apparent order of priority:

First, Is the impression Scriptural? . . .  
 Second, Is it right? . . .  
 Third, Is it providential? . . .  
 Fourth, Is it corroborated by trusted and Spirit-led friends? . . .  
 Fifth, and finally, Does the impression become an ever more weighty conviction? (ctd. in Metz Studies 187)

Rene Pache suggests the following:

Normally the Spirit guides us by means of God's word. When Scripture fails to supply sufficiently clear guidance, the Spirit will lead us . . . by circumstances [original emphasis]. The Spirit can also guide us in a negative fashion, by closing a door before us. The Spirit can lead us, for our own good, along the path of temptation and suffering. (ctd. in Metz Studies 187)

John Wesley, centuries earlier, said substantially the same thing (Works 5:37-8, 473-5, 10:229-42). Perhaps the best known expression in this regard is:

A sincere questioner uses such resources as the Bible, the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit, and external circumstances to descry God's will. "Line up those three like harbor lights" a popular analogy advises, "and your ship safely glides in." Some add a fourth harbor light: the wise counsel of fellow Christians. (Yancey 24)

Hannah Whitall Smith similarly wrote, "there are four ways in which He reveals His will to us—through Scripture,—through providential circumstances,—through the convictions of our own higher judgement,—and through the inward impressions of the Holy Spirit on our minds" (qtd. in Benson and Benson 226).

Subjectivity may represent the most common criticism of the popular method of discerning God's will. However, the most severe limitation commonly levelled against the popular method is the lack of sound biblical exegetical support. Although word studies find some limited use in developing the popular model, development of the contextual basis of supporting passages seldom appears in literature. Proof texting, on the other hand, provides the most prominent method of integrating biblical support.

The popular method, while advocating a personally tailored divine plan or will of God for each person, finds biblical support primarily in the area of fulfilling the great commission (Mt. 28:18-20). Extending this concept, the conservation of converts already made seems to warrant a higher priority than initiating new



work as the Apostle Paul indicates by passing up an “open door” to evangelism, at least temporarily, to check on Titus (2 Co. 2:12ff).<sup>8</sup>

The popular model, using impressions as an important aspect of Divine Guidance, has always claimed among its advocates some highly respected Christians. Oswald Chambers stated in a sermon, “If once you receive a commission from Jesus Christ, the memory of what God wants will always come like a goad; you will no longer be able to work for Him on the common-sense basis” (64).<sup>9</sup> Friesen reports this view of inner impressions at times finds a place in scholarly works. For example, J. I. Packer’s Guidance and Wisdom which “carefully speaks of the factor of God-given prompting and inclination, whereby one is drawn to commit oneself to one set of responsibilities rather than another, and finds one’s mind settled in peace as one contemplates them” (qtd. in Friesen “God’s Will” 25).

### The Modern Model

This model for discerning God’s will for the individual relies exclusively on the Bible and reason. Yancey correctly assesses the ideas of Gary Lee Friesen, perhaps the leading contemporary proponent of this school. Friesen, according to Yancey, “concludes that God has a moral will, fully revealed in the Bible. Where no specific command or principle is given, the believer is free and responsible to choose his or her own course of action. Friesen devotes 452

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<sup>8</sup> Although “open doors” frequently appear in literature as a means of Divine Guidance within the popular method, it gains its entire biblical support from this one passage (2 Co. 2:12ff). In this passage the Apostle Paul declines the open door to preach the gospel in order to follow up on Titus. Frequently, “open doors” applies biblical language in an attempt to spiritualize the concept of circumstances by converting them into Special Providence. Based on the meager biblical support for the concept of open doors it does not receive separate treatment in this paper.

<sup>9</sup> For further support of this concept see: Ogilvie (5); Weatherhead (40).

pages [of his book Decision Making and the Will of God: A Biblical Alternative to the Traditional View] to proving his point" (25).<sup>10</sup>

According to this model, in simplest terms the will of God for every person is conversion and sanctification (2 Pe. 3:9; MacArthur "How to Know God's Will;" Strauss 14).<sup>11</sup> Once a person experiences conversion and becomes a believer, knowing God's will consists of discovering the Biblical teachings and applying them according to the best powers of reason. At times, John Wesley appears to belong to this school. In opposing "Enthusiasm" he responded to the question, "how is a sober Christian to make this inquiry? to know what is the will of God" (Works 5:473).

Not by waiting for supernatural dreams; not by expecting God to reveal it in visions; not by looking for any particular impressions or sudden impulses on his mind: No; but by consulting the oracles of God. "To the law and to the testimony!" This is the general method of knowing what is "the holy and acceptable will of God." . . . How many impute things to him, or expect things from him, without any rational or scriptural ground! Such are they who imagine they either do or shall receive particular directions from God, not only in points of importance, but in things of no moment; in the most trifling circumstances of life. Whereas in these cases God has given us our own reason for a guide. (Works 5:473-4)

Where the popular model allows for irresponsible subjectivity the modern model errs in the opposite direction, failing to account for Special Providence and supernatural working of the Holy Spirit. In the extreme case, the modern model moves dangerously toward the heresy of Deism by ignoring the orthodox

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<sup>10</sup> MacArthur also claims that the sanctified believer has total freedom to do anything not specifically prohibited in the Bible ("How to Know God's Will"). The Manual/1989 in its statement "that whatever is not contained therein [the Bible] is not to be enjoined as an article of faith" seems to commit the Nazarene Church to this understanding (30). However, its prohibition against use of tobacco (322-3), dancing (323), etc. modifies the application of the principle.

<sup>11</sup> While recognizing that different theological interpretations of the terms conversion and sanctification exist, the broad general application adopted here renders these differences irrelevant.

doctrine of the immanence of God. Ironically, fundamentalists, who pride themselves on strict orthodoxy through right theology, seem most likely to embrace the modern model. Theologians of spiritual formation like Steven Harper warn against this extreme, where correct thinking turns into cold legalism, killing spirituality. He quotes Wesley who calls this “dead orthodoxy” (Embrace 13).

### A Balanced Way

The popular method and modern model, as types, represent extremes in methods of discerning God’s will. It is not that either right belief of the modern model or right experience of the popular method are wrong, rather incomplete (Harper Embrace 14). Perhaps John Wesley’s attempts to develop a more balanced way account for his apparent vacillation between the two extremes represented by the popular method and the modern model.

From the tension between the two extremes, the popular method and the modern model, emerges a balanced way. The term way attempts to represent a broader and more encompassing approach to the discernment of God’s will. The balanced way incorporates elements of the rational, biblical, and hearing; then relies on God to tailor it to each individual. The most difficult in defining the balanced way is to assess what part the supernatural or mystical aspect plays. The experience of the reality of God adds meaning to the entire concept of the mystical as it integrates with the rational (Ben Campbell Johnson 8).

Those who claim alliance to one of the others may in practice belong to the balanced way. By way of illustration, John Wesley, although warning against the excess inherent with the popular method, always carefully allowed for the impressions on the mind by the secret workings of the Spirit (Works 5:473, 10:233).

The excesses of the mystical or supernatural are to be avoided through growth toward spiritual maturity. Leon Chambers declares:

The mature are not led away by imagination, sudden impulses, or strong impressions. . . .The Spirit does guide through inner impressions of revelation, but always in harmony with the Scriptures and with providence. If in accord with the Scriptures the impression will also be in accord with righteousness. There is also in true guidance an inner reasonableness. The criteria of Scripture, providence, rightness, and reason enable us to judge whether our impression is truly of the Spirit. (244)

Through the Spirit, God uniquely communicates His will to each individual in a fashion as delicately tailored and balanced as the spirituality of the individual with whom He works. This way is not only uniquely individual, but also dynamic in that it changes as the person grows toward maturity.

#### The Biblical Basis for Addressing How to Know God's Will

Elwell's Topical Analysis of the Bible lists 124 Bible passages dealing with the will of God, not including related topics such as Providence and free will (171-4). Knox provides the most comprehensive word study encountered, addressing thirty-three terms commonly associated with guidance (12-23). He also exegetes forty-seven biblical passages commonly cited as proof texts for Divine Guidance (25-57). Obviously, only a superficial approach can be entertained within the scope of this paper.

#### Old Testament Word Studies

One of the major themes of the Old Testament is the Guidance provided by God to His people. A primary Hebrew word, nachah, which means "to lead, to guide," frequently appears when referring to Divine Guidance (Leon Chambers 243). Nachah appears thirty-five times in the Old Testament. Each time it expresses guidance, specifically in the sense of shepherding toward righteousness (Harris 2:568-9; Goodrick and Kohlenberger 1541). The two other words commonly used to depict Divine Guidance, nahag, and nahal, also convey a

sense of shepherding. Nahal adds the sense of loving care for the helpless. Isaiah indicates this loving care will not be fully understood or recognized until the eschaton (Harris 2:558-9).<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Old Testament establishes a clear pattern of God guiding His people.

### New Testament Word Studies

The New Testament Greek noun hodegios means "leader or guide" and its verb form, hodegeo, "to lead" (Leon Chambers 243). Figuratively, it also carries the sense of "to show the way" and "to instruct." The exact understanding of the word is ambiguous in its figurative use, yet represents the sense most applicable for the purposes of this research since it literally means "the way" in the sense of the road or path (Michaelis 670-1). "Show the way" and "teach" are synonymous, at least for this research. In spite of the ambiguity, it seems clear that the New Testament teaches one to expect to be shown the way and taught in the ways of God.<sup>13</sup>

### Passage Analysis

Cain's insolent question to God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" perhaps records the first case of humankind asking God a question. God's resounding answer, His guidance, constitutes a major theme running throughout the remainder of the Bible (Ge. 4:9).<sup>14</sup> God's guidance of His chosen people was not limited to the moral law given at Mount Sinai, but includes repeated instances of direct Divine Guidance in the affairs of the nation (Yancey 27). The people of Israel, as recorded in the "Song of Moses," clearly understood and

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<sup>12</sup> Harris cites Isa. 40:11 and 49:10 as supporting scriptures.

<sup>13</sup> Both Friesen, "God's Will," and Knox provide opposing positions developed from similar, and in Knox's case, more extensive word studies.

<sup>14</sup> The emphasis rests on the Guidance God provided since it is doubtful that Cain was sincerely seeking Guidance.

expected direct Divine Guidance from God (Leon Chambers 243). “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed” (Ex. 15:13).

Perhaps the most outstanding single body of writing on the Divine Guidance of God in either the Old or New Testaments is the Psalms. Yancey includes all 150 Psalms in his list of primary Biblical texts on Guidance (27). King David displayed great confidence in the mystery of Divine Guidance, and in faith humbly submitted to it (Leon Chambers 243). “Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me” (Ps. 31:3). In the New Testament, Guidance also often finds expression in terms of the moral imperative toward God, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” and toward humankind, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Mt. 5:48; Lk. 6:36).<sup>15</sup>

As Wesley reiterated, Jesus taught His disciples, and attempts to teach contemporary Christians, to seek Divine Guidance actively by praying, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Works 5:337; Mt. 6:10). “The joy Our Lord had lay in doing what the Father sent Him to do, and He says—‘As My Father hath sent Me, even so am I sending you’” (Oswald Chambers 65).

The history of the early Church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, bears ample witness to the testimony of God's continued guidance. When Philip encountered the Ethiopian's chariot, the Spirit directed him, “Go to that chariot and stay near it” (Ac. 8:29). On another occasion, “while Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them’” (Ac. 10:19-20; Metz Studies 186). The exam-

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<sup>15</sup> Exegesis of these texts reveals both “being perfect” and “being merciful” have a double emphasis of being directed toward God and mankind. Both passages, in their context, strongly imply that the moral imperative toward God be accomplished through relationships with people.

ples from Acts belong to the category of morally neutral decisions. They are day-to-day decisions of life, “what to do” and “where to go,” and fall outside the realm of moral law.

Lest there be any doubt, the Apostle Paul gave these instructions, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25; Gasque 15). Construing this to imply that we can expect the Holy Spirit to follow us as we do our own thing, even if not directly forbidden by Scripture, totally misses the intention. On the contrary, it clearly states that Christians must order their lives according to the way of the Holy Spirit. “The Bible is consistent in its recognition of the need for Divine Guidance” (Leon Chambers 244).<sup>16</sup> Further, the Bible also reveals God’s willingness to provide it.

The Spirit relates Himself to the believer in a multiplicity of exciting and rich ways; as Guide, Comforter, Reprover, and Enabler. “In summary, it is clear that He can communicate” to the individual believer, otherwise, those functional titles represent only meaningless empty words (Taylor “Relation” 89). Yet, knowing that God provides guidance and knowing the importance of Divine Guidance fails to answer the question, “How can an individual discern God’s will for himself or herself?”

### Discerning God’s Guidance

Almost as many ideas of how God reveals His will to the Christian exist as people who have devoted thought to the subject. The view of two writers, Richard S. Taylor and Donald S. Metz, prominent Nazarene theologians from the Wesleyan theological perspective, provide diverse responses to discerning the will of God. Taylor expects Divine Guidance to be clear. He writes:

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<sup>16</sup> Friesen and Knox both made their thesis the opposing view.

It is clear that He [the Holy Spirit] can communicate to the self by spiritual impression, by emotional incitement, by creating thoughts, by arousing the conscience. . . . Jesus said the Holy Spirit would teach, i.e., make truth clear, and enable this understanding. But does this include the impartation of truth cognitively? Yes, for “he will tell you what is to come,” Jesus said ([Jn.] 16:13). This means the Spirit can impress the mind communicatively; He can impart new information. (“Relation” 89)

Metz, on the other hand, argues, “It is not always possible to receive clear-cut directions from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the direction of the Spirit is as clear as a rainbow in the sky. At other times the leadership of the Spirit is like a shadowy form on a misty morning” (Studies 187). To preclude the seeker from placing limits or restrictions on God through his or her limited comprehension, one must exercise care.

### The Way

The time finally comes to look specifically at ways a Christian can know God's will in specific situations. In discussion of the popular method, it should not be surprising that only generalities have been stated. Yet these generalities adequately describe the broad, and sometimes loosely understood, popular method. The principles of the modern model, so called, also convey the biblical message interpreted through the reason of man without allowing sufficient benefit of active interaction with the Holy Spirit. The balanced way uses specific biblical examples of Divine Guidance such as “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 22:39, 19:19). Yet, a vagueness exists as to what God's will may entail for the situations of day to day life.

For individuals to integrate dynamically with their Lord and Savior “every Christian has to partake of what was the essence of the Incarnation, he must bring the thing down into flesh and blood actualities and work it out through the



finger tips” (Oswald Chambers 66).<sup>17</sup> We find Divine Guidance occurring in the context of a committed relationship between a Christian and his or her Lord, Jesus Christ.

The way of the Spirit. “Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. . . . You, however, are controlled . . . by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you” (Ro. 8:5-9). “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come” (Jn. 16:13). Divine Guidance for our age, as expressed in the New Testament, comes from God the Son to the individual through God the Holy Spirit (Leon Chambers 243). Only through constantly being reminded of the absolute necessity for a relationship with the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Jesus, and dependence on Him, will the trap of personal adequacy be avoided (Harper Prayer 12). The New Testament fulfills this Old Testament doctrine of the prophets: “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty” (Zec. 4:6).

The Divine Guidance of God demands a life controlled by the spirit. One need not slip into the belief that the leading of the Spirit brings the individual irresistibly under His control, thus negating freedom of choice. The Greek language identifies the Holy Spirit as the “Parakletos, one called alongside to help, not to work the machinery” (Taylor “Relation” 88). Oswald Chambers reminds us that to avail oneself of this “alongside help” the Christian must ultimately

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<sup>17</sup> McKenna devotes five chapters to developing the Incarnation principle based upon John 1:14 (Power 18-73). While he applies the principle to Christian leadership, I believe it applies to each Christian since each Christian fulfills leadership responsibilities in some capacity of life at some time.

come to know Jesus as more than personal savior (65). The Christian must also know Jesus as Lord and Companion in all aspects of life.

How, then, does one develop this “more than personal Savior” relationship with Jesus that will provide Divine Guidance? The short, simple answer becomes through the Holy Spirit. However, even when examined superficially we see the inadequacy of the short simple answer, as Yancey aptly explains:

Questions about guidance, the “how-to’s” are misdirected. They are the typically impatient demands of us Americans who want a short-cut to the “magic,” the benefit of relating to Almighty God. There is no short cut, no magic—at least not that anyone can reduce to a three point outline. There is only the possibility of a lifetime search for intimacy with God [emphasis mine]. (27)

It is this intimacy with God that defines the way of Divine Guidance. It adds substance, moving into the personal realm of relationship between the individual and the Holy Spirit.

The way of relationship. In response to the question of how one gets to know God, Gasque replies, “The answer is found in the Bible, the written Word of God, for it is here that God has chosen to reveal himself” (15). Although indispensable in developing the relationship with God, the Bible, by itself, can produce only dead theology and never a living relationship with the living Christ. The way of relationship involves intimacy with God, especially an intimacy with the Living Son of God, Jesus Christ. As the previous section pointed out, the way of this relationship with Jesus is through His Spirit. Since the Spirit says only what He hears, and does only what He is told, references will be to the relationship with Jesus. Jesus is the person of the Trinity, because of the Incarnation, with whom an interpersonal relationship can exist (Taylor “Relation” 84-91). This interpersonal relationship evolves from the concept that the individual, the human person, is an embodied spirit; therefore the interpersonal relationship takes place on a Spirit to spirit level. Undoubtedly a correct

understanding, this concept implies that strictly human interpersonal relationships also occur at a spirit to spirit level. In actuality, however, the conscious level of understanding normally cannot be separated from the physical person. Therefore, to think in terms of Jesus, as opposed to the Holy Spirit, facilitates understanding the process of relationship development.

In attempting to explain this relationship and the mystery of grace, the apostle Paul uses the analogy of marriage.<sup>18</sup> Marriage exists both as a state and as a relationship. A state of matrimony exists even when a married couple find themselves separated by distance and time. The excitement, joy, and truly, all the dynamics in a marriage, derive directly from an intimate relationship growing out of the interpersonal exchange.

Extending the analogy of marriage and grace, the order in which the relationship develops follows the same general pattern. In marriage, a relationship normally develops through the process of courtship before entering into the state of matrimony. The state of "courtship" grace, known within the Wesleyan perspective as prevenient grace, precedes conversion, the analogical counterpart of marriage. A real and present danger exists when entering into the state of grace without developing a relationship. Participation in a wedding ceremony, without building an intimate relationship with the spouse, constitutes a legal state of matrimony. This state may fulfill all the legal requirements, but lacks the companionship or fellowship necessary for personal relationship (Gasque 15-17). As long as duty, obligation, and habit define the interaction with Christ, cold legalism looms as a real possibility, leaving little likelihood of an intimate relationship (Harper Embrace 21). The Wesleyan emphasis on the

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<sup>18</sup> Grace as used here refers only to saving grace and the continuing, or preserving aspects of grace involved with the regenerate. The grace of God always finds expression since God extends prevenient grace even to the unregenerate.

relational aspect, as expressed in perfect love resulting from the filling with the Holy Spirit, provides the balance required to prevent the state of grace from becoming cold legalism (Dunning 47). Interpersonal relationship with Jesus adds the reality of the mystical, tempering the legal state that looks only to the next life for the reality of life.

Divine Guidance seems to center in our American tendency to see it in terms of technique, method or program, rather than as a normal outgrowth of a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus. A review of the Bible reveals “very little specific advice on the techniques of guidance, but very much on the proper way to maintain a love relationship” with Jesus. The emphasis of Divine Guidance must shift from technique to relationship (Yancey 26-7). The focus of this relationship can never be self. It must always focus on Jesus who, through the relationship, provides Divine Guidance, transforming the self (Harper Embrace 30).

### Conclusions Concerning Discerning God's Will

The more mature the Christian the better she or he understands the intimate and personal guidance of Jesus (Leon Chambers 243). J. Kenneth Grider points out the interconnectedness between the ability to hear God speak through the Holy Spirit and the spiritual maturity of the listener (87-90).

Growth in relationship with Jesus toward Christlikeness results in balance, avoiding the excesses and extremes of either the popular method or the modern model. Growth in a relationship keeps it alive and exciting; however, even when a good relationship stops growing it becomes stale and begins to die. The popular method with emphasis on experience, or as John Wesley called it, enthusiasm, can lead to excessive emotionalism and subjectivity in respect to Divine Guidance (Works 5:467-78). Growth in relationship with Jesus also

protects the balanced way from the lifeless dryness of the modern model dependent totally upon the Bible, avoiding any mystical experience. Steve Harper aptly warns against thinking that the closeness of relationship can supplant a regular devotional life (Embrace 72-3). A growing relationship, among other characteristics, builds trust. Trust can turn the alone times, the desert experiences into periods of growth or formation, rather than allowing them to become times of destruction or deformation. Growth toward maturity or Christlikeness, from the Wesleyan perspective, ultimately results in entire sanctification and the heightened growth that follows. Wesley fondly called this sanctification perfect love, stressing the relational nature (Plain Account 27, 33, 38, 39, 43, 50, 57, 58, 59, 63, 114).<sup>19</sup>

The incorporation of the interpersonal relationship with Jesus creates the tendency to think in religious terms. Only through allowing the relationship with Jesus to pervade every aspect of life can a Christian's life be truly formed. Relationship, in everyday terms, means that in an interpersonal relationship with Jesus, work and worship become inseparable (Gasque 16).

Growth toward Christlikeness, synonymous with spiritual formation, ideally should produce a "total lifestyle—indeed, a new way to live" (Harper Embrace 66). Understanding Divine Guidance in terms of relationship as a total lifestyle provides the means of avoiding the misconception "that spirituality is an entity in itself, somehow divorced from the rest of life" (Harper Embrace 14).

Gasque declares, "The will of God for man, then, is not fundamentally some lofty, otherworldly vocation, involving a withdrawal from the world, but rather the service of God and man in the world" (15-6). Scripture describes this

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<sup>19</sup> Referenced pages provide but a partial list that would include almost every page if his synonym "pure love" were added.

as man enabled through worship for service. Jesus, in Acts 1:8, defined service as the building of the kingdom by a believer being His powerful witness through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. This applies to the individual for determining the will of God; however, how does the Church, specifically the local congregation, come to know the will of God?

## CHAPTER 4

### Toward Understanding Corporate Discernment

#### The Church

The Bible describes the Church by various metaphors such as the Body of Christ, the flock of God, and the living temple of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pe. 5:2; Eph. 2:21 and 1 Co. 3:16ff).<sup>1</sup> Hans Küng asks, “how are we to understand the scriptural image of the Church? . . . The Church is the work and the tool, a sign and a witness of the Spirit of God which fills it. It is . . . reigned over by the Spirit” (Küng 224).<sup>2</sup> Howard Snyder expands this vital concept when he observes, “Virtually all biblical figures for the Church emphasize the essential, living, [emphasis mine] love relationship between Christ and the Church” (55, 40, 193). Bruce Larson, quoting Dr. John Mackay, emphasizes that the Church biblically is “like no other institution” (49). The natural conclusion, that the Church as a creation of God receives its direction from God, begins to surface (Torrance 199-200; Parrott Future 35).

New Testament books, written primarily to the Churches and not to individuals, apply God’s guidance almost universally to the corporate setting of the Church.<sup>3</sup> In considering the importance of the corporate nature of the Church, one should always remember that, although corporate in essence, the Church consists of individuals (Pattison 3).<sup>4</sup> Thus, the corporate and the individual

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<sup>1</sup> Küng astutely points out that Paul, in 1 Co. 3:15ff, addresses the Church collectively, and not as gathered individuals, where the emphasis would be on the individual (224-6).

<sup>2</sup> Barth makes a similar point (280).

<sup>3</sup> Of the gospels, only Luke addressed his to an individual, as was his second volume, Acts. The other gospel writers, as commonly accepted, wrote for a corporate setting of a Church or Churches within the area of their destination. The Apostle Paul addressed all his epistles to Churches, with the exception of Philemon, which carried a secondary address to the Church that met in his home (Phm. 2). The general epistles, although less specific, carry addresses to groups of people and in some instances specifically to Churches.

aspects of the Church appear much like the two sides of a single coin (Pattison 1). The individual child of God attains his or her highest sense of value only in the corporate body of Christ, the Church.

Perhaps more than anything else one must always maintain the understanding that the Church as God's creation finds its purpose in the will of its Creator (Wynkoop 51; Larson 27).<sup>5</sup> Traditionally, the Church generally understood its mission to "seek and to save what was lost" (Seamands 15; Lk. 19:10).<sup>6</sup> To accomplish the task of finding the lost and being the instrument of their salvation, the Church must live and function in this world. The dualistic nature of the Church abounds in the variety of expressions employed. Ray Dunning uses at least three pairs of terms: "empirical and eschatological," "visible and invisible" and "essence and form" (517-18, 535).<sup>7</sup> Seamands adds, "institution and instrument" and "organization and organism" to this milieu (14). These pairs of terms reveal a tension that exists between the worship (the spiritual) and the administrative (the functional) aspects of the Church. More simply, a tension exists within the Church between mission and means.

Surveyed theologies of the Church generally fail to develop a theology of Church administration needed to integrate the Church's spiritual mission with secular administrative procedures.<sup>8</sup> This dearth of material leaves pastors and

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<sup>5</sup> Larson stated it well when he wrote, "We have been saying that if the Church belongs to the Holy Spirit, that person of the Trinity who is among us and with us, then we have access to God in the same way that first century disciples did. How then do we understand His mind and will? We are not some organization dedicated to perpetuating the memory of Jesus." To make Larson's statement distinctly Christian, the emphasis on the Holy Spirit should be more properly focused on the person of Christ.

<sup>6</sup> McKenna further develops Luke 19:10 as a statement of Jesus' vision to the Church (77-91).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly K  ng uses these same terms (224-8, 23-4).

<sup>8</sup> Two major works; K  ng, The Church with 622 pages, and Melvin E. Dieter and Daniel N. Berg, eds. The Church: An Inquiry into Ecclesiology from a Biblical Theological Perspective with



Church administrative bodies largely on their own. Many, therefore, use the existing Church administrative material that tends to adopt, with little or no evidence of critical theological assessment, secular management procedures.<sup>9</sup>

Few have attempted to integrate the Church's mission with the means of accomplishing it. H. Richard Niebuhr, in his classic work, Christ and Culture, develops five descriptions of the Church, directing all at the ethical aspects of mission. David L. Smith, in his development of ecclesiology from a Wesleyan perspective, develops a combination of the patterns or models based on Niebuhr and Dulles. Smith concludes that administration of the Church is not fixed and pragmatism provides the Church with its administrative approach to accomplishing its mission (2:592-620).<sup>10</sup>

In more recent years, theology of ministry, or practical theology, the theology of the Church and its mission, returned to occupy a place of prominence in the Church. Surveyed material retains the focus on ministry, to the exclusion of administration, thus leaving the theological void in Church administration undisturbed (Neuhaus; Oden Pastoral Theology; Smart).<sup>11</sup>

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498 pages, comprise a total of 1120 pages. Church administration receives only 123 pages. Paul Bassett's two essays, contained in Dieter and Berg, address Church administration historically as it affected the Church's performance of its mission. These 123 pages are far short of a comprehensive theology of Church administration. Gillquist suggests, without support, that the Eastern Orthodox Church does better in this area of theological assessment of Church administration (30). Dulles, Models of the Church developed five models of the Church, providing theological models of how the Church views its mission with respect to the world. Theological assessment of administrative procedures is not a part of this work.

<sup>9</sup> Carnahan, Creative Pastoral Management; Mead and Allen, Ministry by Objectives; Kilinski and Wofford, Organization and Leadership in the Local Church; Lindgren, Foundations for Purposeful Church Administration; and Barth Smith, A Pastor's Handbook of Church Management are unanimous in their theological method. They typically used uncritical adaptation of secular procedures to Church administration. Surveyed literature did not produce a single exception. Dunning openly endorses the pragmatic approach (536).

<sup>10</sup> Dunning supports this contention (536).

<sup>11</sup> Of these three typical sources on theology of pastoral ministry, only Oden addresses administration of the Church. Even so, Oden limits the discussion to a single chapter that, with its focus on mission, ignores administrative procedures (153-65). Therefore, administration as presented in these sources represents little more than a process necessary to support the

Within the Wesleyan perspective, as already noted, pragmatism reigns as the theology of administration of the Church. John Seamands summarizes the state of affairs quite clearly:

To most people, the Church is the building down on the corner, where a group of people meet for an hour on Sunday morning, sing a few hymns, listen to a lecture, and then go home for lunch. We need a new concept of the Church in scriptural terms if the Church is to be what it ought to be [emphasis mine]. . . . The Church of Jesus Christ is not a click-clack, a man-made organization, but a lub-dub, a Spirit created organism that throbs with life and imparts life. Of course there will be organization in the Church, but this will be only a means to an end, and not an end in itself or a substitute for life and mission [emphasis mine]. (14)

### Survey of Church Administrative Procedures

How does the Church integrate the Holy Spirit's guidance into its use of secular administrative tools and do so in a theologically sound manner? How can the Church administrators know the will of God as they seek to administer the affairs of the local Church? Can the concept of Divine Guidance for the individual be extended to the corporate setting? Answering these questions represents a major task facing local congregations today.

### Biblical and Theological Insights

Although not as specific or detailed as perhaps desired, the Bible records much about administration. The lack of detail drives the Church toward discernment of principles, avoiding some of the traps of legalism inherent with blindly applying detailed instructions.

The Old Testament. Even from the time of creation, administration and organization represent God's ordained approach. The first command God gave to man required that he rule over all the other creatures, implying at least some

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accomplishment of the Church's mission. This leads to the situation where the end, mission, justifies the means, administrative procedures.

degree of administration (Ge. 1:28). Administration certainly existed in some form to allow for the recording of the “table of nations” (Ge. 10).

With the Abramic covenant, a distinctive administrative element, the participation of God begins to emerge. Three times in this initial covenant we find God saying “I will” (Ge. 12:1-3). Administration, as established in the early biblical accounts, clearly includes God's direct intervention. At the same time, humankind actively participated in the administrative process. The Bible clearly records this interaction of God and His people, in the account of Abraham's descendants being transformed into the Nation of Israel at the base of Mount Sinai, an example of administrative processes (Ex. 19-24). The degree of God's participation stands out clearly in the directions for establishing the religious system administered by the Aaronic priesthood (Ex. 25-30).

Although the Old Testament frequently records events implying administration, specific administrative principles are not readily discernible. Rather, it seems administration changed to meet the needs of the situation. The implication clearly remains, however, God participated in the administrative process to maintain order among His people.

The New Testament. Clear cases of administration continued to be employed to facilitate the accomplishment of God's purposes. Jesus, in using Judas Iscariot as treasurer, employed administrative procedures. The account of the feeding of the five thousand records the organization of the people into groups (Mk. 6:30-44; Lk. 9:10-17). Jesus employed administrative procedures when he organized the twelve and the seventy-two into twos, and provided them with instructions before sending them out on a preaching mission (Lk. 9:1-9, 10:1-24).

The early Church also employed administrative procedures. Soon after its formation, the Church elected a group of seven to administer, while the apostles

devoted themselves to “prayer and ministry of the word” (Ac. 6:1-7). The apostle Paul, from time to time, recognized some degree of organization and administration in his letters by recognizing different types of administrative as well as spiritual positions (Oden Pastoral Theology 65-72).<sup>12</sup> In his letter to the Church at Philippi, the Apostle Paul recognized the bishops or overseers and the deacons. The letters to Timothy and Titus reflect Paul's understanding of the need for administration.

Oden seems to equate administration to the functions of pastors and teachers from the list in Ephesians 4:11. He further sees these functions as belonging exclusively to the laity (Pastoral Theology 153-64). Although laity should be included in the administrative processes, this should not restrict or preclude the pastor or other clergy from administrative roles. The administrative processes belong to the entire Church, with emphasis on leaders, both lay and clerical.

As with the Old Testament, the New Testament provides numerous insights into administration of the fledgling Church. However, it fails to provide a single set of clear cut examples whereby one can dogmatically say this is the biblical example of administrative procedures to be employed by the Church. Although the linking between God and the Church appears at every juncture, there remains a mystery concerning exactly how this interaction occurred. The procedures found in the New Testament Church, according to Dunning, come from the existing socioculture (535-37).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Oden presents one view of these offices with emphasis on the spiritual aspects of ministry. The other offices that Paul lists, apostles, prophets, and evangelists, Oden considers almost exclusively as spiritual or mission oriented (Eph. 4:11-16).

<sup>13</sup> It seems that Dunning does not agree that the divine interaction extends into the administrative arena, but rather remains limited to missions. Again this supports the contention that the end justifies the means.

Historical. The Church developed its administration over the centuries believing, much of the time erroneously, that it followed a “complete and generally well-known understanding of the nature and role of the Church” (Bassett 128). This facilitated pragmatic appropriation of administrative and organizational procedures from the early centuries of the Church that generally continues to the present. Beginning with the Apostle Paul, the Church freely borrowed administrative procedures from both Jewish and pagan or secular sources (Bassett 129-30).

During the early years, perhaps beginning with Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 120), Church administration began to develop its form based on the organizational structure within the Church (Bassett 131-3). By the second century, “Bishops were too often tempted to overlook their representative character and their servant role and become autocratic” (Bassett 135). The institutional relationship caused the Church to tend toward an external focus, rather than a “heartly commitment of life” (Bassett 135). This early trend toward consolidating the power in the institution resulted in the clerical hierarchy having almost exclusive administrative responsibility for the Church (Bassett 185-8). During the Protestant Reformation, the laity again became active in the administrative structure of the Church.

Nothing, however, changed the pragmatic approach to Church administration. This brief examination of history leads to the conclusion that:

The functional nature of the Church takes priority over the form of the Church and dictates the institutional characteristics. In the Early Church, practices were adopted that furthered mission, and those that did not were abandoned. . . . The same principle should be applied to all Church organization today. . . . The principle of pragmatism may be appropriately applied in this area. Whatever system of organization best works to achieve the goals of the Church is in divine order, so long as it is consistent with those goals. (Dunning 536)

Pragmatic administrative practices of the Church extend from the first century to the present and receive endorsement as the official theology of administration for The Church of the Nazarene and perhaps other denominations as well. Taken literally, and to the extreme, this adoption of pragmatism justifies any means as long as the means contribute to accomplishment of the desired end.

Historically, the danger of an uncritical application of pragmatism in Church administration haunts the Church. Both the Christian Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the Spanish and Roman Inquisitions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries afford mind-boggling and conscience-wrenching examples. To the credit of the Church, such extremes rarely occur. These extremes, to some extent, may originate in the dualistic nature of the Church when mission accomplished by standards of the world receives more emphasis than does the spiritual nature of the Church.

#### Contemporary Approaches to Church Administration

The secular world of business management provides the contemporary language most frequently used by the Church to discuss its mission objectives, programs or routine business affairs. Terms such as: Management by Objective (MBO); Organization Development or Organization Design (OD); Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT); Planning, Budgeting, Evaluation (PBE); and Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems (PPBS) come directly out of the board rooms of the secular business world. These represent only a portion of the myriad of management procedures now finding a place in Church administration (Hutcheson 15-16). A brief look at a select few of the latest management technologies to be integrated into the administrative practices of the Church will serve to illustrate the point.

Organizational sociology. Classical theory of organizational sociology developed in three schools, rational, natural and open systems. The rational and natural appear to be adaptable to parachurch organizations but seldom find advocacy at the local Church. Of these schools, the open system—which leads to the systems approach—appears most promising for the local congregation because it takes into account the local environment which the others fail to consider (Scott 82-92).

Within the context of the evangelical Church, the system allows for the inclusion of the environment outside the Church as it interacts with the Church, and as the Church attempts to bring conversion to the society as a whole.<sup>14</sup> Four main characteristics of the highly structured organization, “hierarchical authority,” a clear cut “division of labor,” “rules and precedents recorded in writing,” and “incumbency of officials based on technical qualifications and competence,” serve as the key identifying features of the systems approach (Hutcheson 43).

There are two major drawbacks with the input of organizational sociology theory as embodied in the systems approach. First, the theory, developed on the basis of nonvolunteer structures, when applied to the Church, a volunteer organization, requires further study and adaptation (Mintzberg 112, 293-97). Second, the inherent complexities exceed the capability of many small Churches to comprehend and implement.

Organizational sociology relies primarily on changes in structural design as the principal means to enhance mission accomplishment (Hutcheson 42). The decline of the mainline denominations where the organizational approach

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<sup>14</sup> Dulles and Niebuhr provide ten models of the Church interacting with society in what might be loosely described as a systems approach.

has been implemented could cause one to question its means of insuring success within the Church (Johnston 185-7).<sup>15</sup>

The human relations movement. People oriented, this movement affords “one method of bringing about organizational change through emphasis on the people in the organization, the reorientation of their values, and the facilitation of their self-fulfillment. It remains a popular managerial tool” (Hutcheson 42, 47). This movement grew out of humanistic psychology from such patriarchs as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rodgers. It directs great emphasis toward the realization of human potential and “has its roots in a system of values relative to mature, productive [emphasis mine] and right relationships among people” (Hutcheson 46-53).

Because of its high value on the individual, the human relations movement is very attractive to the Church. Its prime deficiency rests in the ease with which it can become manipulative, using the individual as a means to accomplish the organization's purposes. The organization that expresses care for the individual may be self-centered since its primary purpose in caring for the individual rests on the individual's potentially increased productivity for the organization. The individual thus becomes the means to an organizational end. This misses the theological truth, derived from Christ's atoning work, that the individual never represents a means to an end; rather the individual always constitutes an end in her or himself.

Management science. Hutcheson contends, “Enlightened business management in recent years has shown great interest in the people who carry

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<sup>15</sup> Johnston, although failing to provide a conclusive answer (185-7), provokes thought as to what the definition of success within the Church should be (77-150). The definition of success for the Church, although having a direct bearing on this paper, is beyond its scope. Let it suffice to say that from within the assumed theological perspective it must include the area of interaction between humankind and God in obedience to the will of God.



on its activity. But its interest in the outcome of their activity—products, sales, and profits—has remained its primary focus” (Hutcheson 54). Within this context, management by objective (MBO) represents one of the secular world’s most popular contributions to the contemporary Church management arena.

Hutcheson correctly claims, “Prioritizing is another concept borrowed from business management. The major assumption upon which business management rests is that organizations exist to achieve goals” (Hutcheson 55). Within this framework, the distinctive contribution of business management to the managerial thinking of the Church lies in the stress on goals. Biblical goals, though measurable, are not always countable as required by modern management theory. Goals such as “preaching the good news to the poor” and proclaiming “release of the oppressed” are measurable (Lk. 4:18-19). It can be determined whether they are being achieved or not. However, it may not be possible to measure them by count to be compared against a goal. Further, “To seek and to save what was lost” could represent such a goal but the obvious conclusion is that it will not ever be totally achieved as Jesus himself indicated in the sermon on the mount when he pointed out the broad gate and the large number entering through it (Lk. 19:10).<sup>16</sup>

Administration within the Church. Pragmatic borrowing, in varying degrees, from secular administration and management procedures, provides the Church with tools that assist in mission accomplishment. Much of this administrative borrowing occurs with little evidence of critical theological evaluation.

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<sup>16</sup> McKenna provides a good illustration of measurable goals that are not countable in the traditional sense (99-100; Mt. 7:13).

Much of this adaptation of secular administrative techniques by the Church relies on proof texting rather than critical theological evaluation. The team of Ted Engstrom and Edward Dayton, representative of some of the better known early contemporary “Church managers,” adapt the offerings of secular management and support them with biblical proof texting (Dayton i, iv, 1, 3, 6, 9, 15; Engstrom and Dayton 23, 25; Mead and Allen. 8, 9, 11, 12, 23).<sup>17</sup> These administrative adaptations resulted in an increased emphasis on the Church as an organization, moving it toward becoming an institution in the worst sense of the word institution. Following the general lead of society, this resulted in a move toward professionalization of the clergy (Gray 1-33; Hutcheson 39-41; Mead and Allen 7-10).

Not surprisingly, the contributions to Church Administration literature for The Church of the Nazarene follow these patterns of proof texting. Roy Carnahan and Barth Smith refer to the Scriptures in an almost incidental manner. Leslie Parrott, while making liberal use of the Bible, at the same time builds administrative structures based upon the offerings of the secular field (Carnahan 11-21, 89-96; Barth Smith 5, 141-48; Parrott Building 11-24). Evidence of critical theological evaluation escapes detection in these books.

An interesting and alarming phenomenon occurs when one substitutes, in the sources cited above, the name of any civic or social organization for the references to Christ and His Church and finds the change undetectable! Clearly, the unique nature of the Church has been lost. Wholesale baptism of secular management procedures by the Church, without benefit of critical theological

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<sup>17</sup> Proof texting as used here consists in the use of isolated scriptures to support a point without regard to the context of the selected passage. Failure to attempt to understand the total biblical teaching with respect to the point being made appears to be another shortcoming.

analysis, leads to the possible conclusion that the end does justify the means, once again bringing the crusades and inquisition to memory.

### Conclusion Concerning Church Administration

Among organizations, the Church alone depends upon Christ as its founder and sustainer. This should boldly highlight its unique administrative requirements. As already stated, the Bible does not oppose administrative procedures; to the contrary, it virtually demands their use. At the same time, it fails to define what administrative procedures the Church should use. Historically, from the Church described in Acts and up to the present time, the Church borrowed administrative procedures from the culture in which it lived. Pragmatism provided the principal evaluative criteria; if the administrative procedures support accomplishment of the mission, use them.

In practice then, the Church recognizes that it belongs to Christ, yet approaches its decision-making processes like secular organizations. With his emphasis on the practical aspects as they are more apt to apply to day-to-day life, John Wesley provides an appropriate summary of the state of affairs as contemporary as if written today:

It seems worldly prudence either pursues worldly ends,—riches, honour, ease, or pleasure; or pursues Christian ends on worldly maxims, or by worldly means [emphasis mine]. The grand maxims which obtain in the world are, The more power, the more money, the more learning, and the more reputation a man has, the more good he will do. And whenever a Christian, pursuing the noblest ends, forms his behaviour by these maxims, he will infallibly (though perhaps by insensible degrees) decline into worldly prudence . . . using guile, or disguise, simulation or dissimulation; either seeming to be what he is not, or not seeming to be what he is. By any of these marks may worldly prudence be discerned from the wisdom which is from above. (Works 5:231)

Although directed at the individual, Wesley's statement applies equally well to the corporate community, the Church.

Even Hutcheson and Parrott who recognize the Holy Spirit as an essential participant in the administrative procedures employed by the Church—if the Church is to be the Church—fail to address how the Church can intentionally incorporate the interaction of the Holy Spirit into its administrative process.

The theology of the Church adequately describes the mission of the Church, even with its different ways of applying practical theology. The biblical mission in its broadest interpretation—making disciples of all nations and teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded—exceeds the capability of any one local congregation. Therefore, since each local Church constitutes but a segment of the universal Church, the issue becomes one of subdividing the mission.

The contributions of the secular administrative offerings may provide major support for the Church to assist in the accomplishment of its mission. However, application by the Church, devoid of critical theological examination, may result in the Church's violating some of its own theological axioms. This is particularly true from the Wesleyan perspective with its high emphasis on the relational aspects of theology and the value of humanity as seen through reconciliation (Dunning 43-52).

### Corporate Discernment of God's Will

Most surveyed material on spiritual formation, like material on discerning the will of God, addresses the individual largely to the exclusion of administrative processes in the corporate body. Specifically, within the body of literature surveyed no known instances of theologically sound, tried and validated models existed where the corporate body, the Church, practiced corporate discernment (Campbell 22; Foster 153-9; Palmer 37-40).<sup>18</sup> Even in the small group

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<sup>18</sup> Campbell reports that even the exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, based on recent studies, aim toward individual discernment of God's will. The Quakers used corporate procedures

context the emphasis rests on individual growth in a limited community setting and only indirectly on the spiritual growth of the community as a whole.

The research, although providing much data, still leaves unanswered the basic question: "How does the Church discern the will of the God?" Since the Church encourages the individual to order his or her life around knowing and fulfilling God's will, should not the Church also live in the world by this principle (Somerville 2)?<sup>19</sup> The Church, at least in theory, subscribes to the premise that God will provide guidance and make His will known, not only through the Scriptures, tradition, and reason but also through experience (Friesen "God's Will;" Friesen with Maxson Decision Making; Knox).<sup>20</sup>

The Bible lends support to hearing as an expression of "experience," thus leading the Church to expect to hear the continuing voice of God through the Holy Spirit. Each of the messages to the seven Churches concludes with, "let the Church hear what the Spirit says" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). The Greek word, legei, in the present tense translated as "says," implies the Spirit will say more to the Church than contained in each of the messages. Otherwise the past tense, "said," would be more appropriate.

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to discern God's will for the individual. Only isolated incidences of application to the corporate administrative process were discovered. Foster lists some examples which he refers to as models. Out of eight specific examples seven reported corporate discernment of God's will for decisions of individuals or couples. The eighth instance, while moving, possibly shows a one time case. This one instance probably occurred because the people involved were already accustomed through a tradition of corporate discernment on behalf of individuals. This would support a theory of transference from individual spiritual formation through the spiritual disciplines into a corporate setting. Palmer further develops the idea of the clearness committee as a corporate heritage of seeking God's direction for individuals.

<sup>19</sup> I have opted to use the term "live" rather than "operate" or "function," as does Somerville, as a reminder that the Church, while existing as an organization in its capacity of the Body of Christ, is more than an organization; it is also a living organism.

<sup>20</sup> These authors, who notably develop a position on discernment for the post apostolic Church totally dependent upon the Scriptures, fail to allow for experience. They base their justification on the belief that God spoke His final word with the completion of the Bible. This leads ultimately to functional Deism.

The First Jerusalem Council readily accepted Peter's report of his hearing the Holy Spirit without any apparent need for interpretation of the events (Ac. 15:1-28; Barry 99-100).<sup>21</sup> In this, perhaps one of the clearest examples of discerning God's will in the New Testament, no imperative Greek verbs appear, although imperative verbs abound elsewhere throughout the New Testament (Campbell 45). Any such supernatural hearing, however, as Barry points out, depends upon first developing a personal relationship based on an open revelation of ourselves (55). Noteworthy, discernment of God's will comes as an invitation to personal relationship with Jesus, not as a command.

For Levelland First Church of the Nazarene to progress, it must advance on the basis of an agreed upon mission (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. Manual/1989 77). To enhance the certainty that such a mission statement leads toward the building of God's Kingdom, it must reflect the will of God for this local Church. Otherwise, it may reflect nothing more than the collective wisdom or even opinion influenced by secular training in management and leadership. The knowledge of God's will should come through discernment based on understanding and application of corporate practice of Spiritual Disciplines, especially prayer. These disciplines should lead the community, beginning with the smaller community, the Church board, into a corporate relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>21</sup> Barry suggests reporting of supernatural events as a contemporary model.

## CHAPTER 5

### Toward Corporate Discernment of the Will of God at Levelland First Church of the Nazarene

#### Contextual Situation

The project, designed to fit into the local ministry setting and discern God's will as expressed in a mission statement for Levelland First Church of the Nazarene, drew on the materials of chapters two, three and four.

During my initial interview with the Board of First Church of the Nazarene, Levelland, Texas, I informed the board members of my involvement in the doctor of ministry program and of some of the specific implications for the Church. I read them the description of the duties of the Congregational Review Committee (CRG) and asked if they would be willing to serve in this capacity, should I be called as pastor. Through teachings on the Holy Spirit and prayer and an increased congregational emphasis on the practice of prayer, I hoped we could discern the leading of God for the Church. The board would be expected to provide exemplary leadership for the Church in this direction. Knowing the purpose or mission of God for the Church would enable us to construct a budget that would facilitate future decision making. I sensed a degree of excitement at the prospect, or at least so I thought.

#### Description of Ministerial and Project Placement

The city of Levelland lies approximately 30 miles west of Lubbock, Texas on the vast Texas High Plains. The economy of this region depends primarily on farming, oil field maintenance and expansion and ranching.<sup>1</sup> Traveling in any direction from this town of slightly under 14,000 people, the view remains

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<sup>1</sup> The local economy depends on oil field expansion, while oil production only indirectly affects the economy.

monotonously unchanged—flat farm and ranch land with neat rows of oil well pump-jacks and drilling rigs cropping up where one might expect to see trees. The nickname, “Oil Patch USA” reflects the exaggerated importance placed on the oil industry.

Affluent owners of large farms with oil wells, as well as common laborers earning minimum wages, represent the economic span found among the Church’s membership of 76. The Church’s economic status historically reflects that of the community. For the ten years preceding the project (1978-1988) the Church spent approximately 86% of its income on local interests, using only 14% for outside interests such as budgets assigned by the district and the denomination.<sup>2</sup> This meant the Church paid approximately 49% of its assigned budgets for the ten years.

Dedication of current physical facilities occurred following completion of construction in 1981. These facilities consist of a sanctuary with seating capacity for 144, Sunday school facilities for approximately 80, a study for the pastor, a moderate residential style kitchen, and a gymnasium that also serves as a fellowship hall. The Church’s red brick exterior presents an attractive, yet simple appearance, blending well with the upper middle class residential neighborhood surrounding it. Easy access to ample parking enhances the ideal location at the intersection of two of the five highways entering Levelland.

I began this assignment the last Sunday of April 1988, the fifth pastor to serve the Church since 1977. The longest pastoral tenure during this period

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<sup>2</sup> Assigned budgets in the Church of the Nazarene are the equivalent of apportionments in the United Methodist Church.



was three years and nine months.<sup>3</sup> Two of these five pastors held earned doctoral degrees.<sup>4</sup>

The Church board and the board of Sunday school ministries administer the Church (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. Manual/1989 50-87). During the period of the project the Church board, presided over by the pastor, consisted of five lay members occupying nine offices. Elected annually according to The Manual, the term of office is one year without restriction regarding reelection (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. Manual/1985 48).<sup>5</sup> This board administers the Church, making all financial decisions. The Sunday school ministries board functions in the area of ministries and programs; however, it requires prior approval from the Church board for financial expenditures. The Chairman of the Sunday school ministries board, the Sunday school superintendent, serves as an ex officio board member.

Through both official theology and popular understanding, The Church of the Nazarene professes that the Church functions as God's instrument for accomplishing His purpose in the world (Dunning 514-15; Richey 474-6). The Church identifies itself by the characteristic marks of "Unity, Holiness, Catholicity (universality), Apostolicity, the Word rightly preached and the Sacraments. . . . They are not the result of organization or administration but are the creation of the spirit" (Dunning 529). Most members of First Church of the Nazarene,

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<sup>3</sup> This also represents the second longest tenure by any pastor in the church's 41 year history. The longest, approximately five years, occurred between 1949 and 1954 by the first regular pastor.

<sup>4</sup> This represents a very high educational level within the church of the Nazarene, especially for a small church.

<sup>5</sup> The Manual specifies qualifications as summarized in paragraph 38 that reads, "We direct our local churches to elect as church officers only persons who are clearly in the experience of entire sanctification; who are in full sympathy with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who support the local church faithfully with tithes and offerings."

Levelland, perhaps would not fully realize the implications of this description of the Church and its mission. The majority, however, would never openly disagree with it.

Distilled to its essence, Levelland First Church of the Nazarene generally fits the description of the typical small Church. Division of the Church into three factions appeared to be the one major complicating factor. The first faction, the affluent members of the congregation and their families, provided more than 80% of the Church's finances.<sup>6</sup> A large percentage of the money they gave came designated for specific purposes. This possibly indicated a lack of trust in the ability of the board as a whole to administer properly the Church's financial affairs. Consistent with this, a lack of emphasis on the necessity for policies and planning existed. "Do not spend unless absolutely necessary and the treasury contains the money" expressed the fiscal policy of this group.

The second group consists of blue collar workers who participate actively in the administration of the Church and accomplish much of the physical labor necessary to keep the Church operational. Their philosophy finds expression in "living by faith and trusting God to meet the needs of the Church." They support payment of the assigned budgets with funds in the treasury, trusting God to provide for the mortgage payments that come due later in the Church year. They, too, seem to see little need for planning or policies by which to conduct the standard operations of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> One family during recent years has contributed almost 50% of the total income of the Church. The people identified with this group contribute approximately 85% of the total income of the Church, while they comprise only about 12% of the membership.

<sup>7</sup> Planning of this nature, including policies, seems to represent an infringement on the freedom of the Holy Spirit to lead the Church; therefore, plans and policies represent a lack of trust in God's ability to meet the needs of the Church.

The third group consists of people who faithfully attend services and actively participate in Church services without becoming involved in the ongoing power struggle between the other two groups. The people in this third group refuse to hold offices or serve on the board.

### Description of Personal Ministerial Background

Before coming to Levelland, I served a 35 member, independent, interdenominational Church, Church of Hope. I began the Church of Hope assignment in 1985 while pursuing the Master of Divinity degree at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Before attending seminary, my wife and I served for nine months as co-directors of children's ministries in a Church of over 500 members.

During the approximately twenty years before becoming pastor for Church of Hope, I served five Churches and in two overseas Army chapel programs in varying lay capacities on their boards and in administrative positions.

I received training and employed various management techniques during my more than 20 years in the Army before entering seminary. My natural inclination prompts me to apply these techniques to Church administration.

Academic training to date includes Bachelor of Science in Chemistry, 1972; Missile Science Officers Course, 1974;<sup>8</sup> Command and General Staff College, 1982;<sup>9</sup> and the Master of Divinity from Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1986.

By training and personality, I tend to align philosophically more closely with group one; however, theologically, I agree in principle with the second group. Rather than operate on the basis of blind faith, however, I understand a

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<sup>8</sup> This program compares with a master's degree program in aeronautical engineering.

<sup>9</sup> This program compares with a master's program in military management.

more appropriate approach depends on obtaining the direction of the Holy Spirit in decision-making.

### The Project

Although I initially planned to begin the project at the end of my third month at Levelland, I delayed almost a year, using this time to become better acquainted with the setting. Since a project within a ministry setting never starts with a zero base, I used this time to develop a foundation for the project.

#### Foundation Stage within the Ministry Setting

Upon arrival at Levelland First Church of the Nazarene, I began a series of sermons in the Sunday morning worship service based upon Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. This series principally developed one of the major themes of the epistle, the necessity for unity of purpose as the harmonizing element within the Church (Martin 40-42). Next followed a series of sermons focusing on the person of Jesus, taken from the Gospel of Mark. This series, aimed at heightening relationships with Jesus, explaining the life of discipleship as taught and demonstrated by Jesus. The Church as the body of Christ should know in an intimate and personal way its Head whom it expects to provide direction (Col. 1:18ff).

Sunday evening sermons for the first year dealt with the fifteen articles of faith and the special and general rules as contained in the Manual/1985 of the Church of the Nazarene (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. 23-48). Articles three, "The Holy Spirit," and four, "The Holy Scriptures," received additional emphasis. Reconciling the doctrines of The Church of the Nazarene to their biblical basis served as the aim of this effort.

The Wednesday evening service emphasized prayer. This aimed at bringing the pastor and Church to a more uniform and deeper understanding of communication between God and His people, both individually and collectively

(Lea with Doyle Tarry One Hour; Wiersbe Something Happens; Merton Praying).<sup>10</sup> Increased congregational interest in prayer resulted in an increase in attendance from an average of ten or fewer in the Wednesday evening prayer and praise service to an average of thirty-one. With the initiation of the project, the emphasis switched from study about prayer to praying. The attendance of the Wednesday evening service steadily declined throughout the time of the project, averaging only about sixteen when the project concluded.

Out of the Wednesday evening teaching on prayer, a time of devotional listening or meditation was integrated into the Sunday morning worship service. This devotional listening, or meditation, constituted a new experience for most of the congregation. The practice began with a short period (usually less than one minute) of meditation following the scriptural call to worship. The time gradually increased to about three minutes, the time required to play a meditation hymn.

In what I choose to believe to be Providential, the General Superintendents' quadrennial address at the 22nd General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene designated 1990 as a sabbatical year emphasizing prayer. "In short, may the year 1990 be a period of 365 days in which we will call upon God, without undue encumbrances of program and promotion. May it be a time of true prayer and intercession, not only a time when we pray to Him but also a time when He speaks to us, corporately and individually" (Jerald D. Johnson, et al. 14). Thus, the denomination encouraged the local Churches to pursue prayer, an area of spiritual formation key to the project.

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<sup>10</sup> These books were covered in the sequence listed, attempting to enhance spiritual formation and depth of prayer. One of the key spiritual leaders, a retired elder and former pastor who had been a part of this congregation for over twenty years, led in the rejection of a fourth book, Murray's With Christ, as being nothing more than the teaching of man and too difficult to understand.

### Conduct of the Project

Enhancing the spiritual awareness of the congregation, especially the Church board, constituted a primary objective of the project. The thesis of the project assumed that a Church's perception of God's will increases as it grew spiritually. Increased spiritual growth should, therefore, more readily result in the Church's acceptance of a mission, and support of such routine administrative practices as budget preparation. Preaching, implementation of corporate prayer times, combined with study of specified topics as described below, served as the means of enhancing spiritual growth within the Church.

The active phase began 15 October 1989 with the first meeting of the Church board serving as the Congregational Review Committee (CRG). The major item of business during this first session focused on the purpose of the project. The CRG generally agreed it would be highly beneficial for them to meet weekly for prayer. The prayer time would aim toward an increased sense of God's direction for the Church. The CRG designated Friday evening, from seven until nine, as the time for prayer.

One week later, 22 October, the secretary of the board, who had originally agreed to serve as the secretary of the CRG, formally declined this responsibility. All other members of the board also refused the responsibility; therefore, with the approval of Dr. Reg Johnson, I assumed this duty.

Also on Sunday, 22 October, following the morning worship service, the "Mystical Experience" and the "Supplemental" surveys were distributed to the thirty-four adult members and friends of the Church present.<sup>11</sup> During the following week three more sets of surveys were hand delivered to influential members of long standing who were not present in the morning service. Over

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

the next two weeks only one of the five completed surveys came from a member of the Church board/CRG. Attempting to determine the reason for the low response consumed many hours time. The responses varied from “the surveys were too hard to understand” and “they represent pagan foolishness” to a general statement that it required too much work. A second, mid-project round of surveys, attempted in January 1989, failed to yield a single returned survey.

The primary tool for increasing the congregation’s awareness of God’s interaction with His people consisted of twelve planned teaching sessions, one and one half hours each, on the Holy Spirit, using "Chic" Shaver’s Living in the Power of the Spirit. Following the introductory session several people, some of them board members, reported that they did not like the study and wanted to continue on with the studies on prayer. Further investigation revealed a primary reason for not wanting to continue the study was that personal responses were required.<sup>12</sup>

With the CRG’s support we proceeded to determine a common basis from which to begin. This effort resulted in adaptation and use of the eight studies on Divine Guidance from E. Stanley Jones’ devotional book, The Way (299-306).<sup>13</sup> The devotion used was passed out at the beginning of each session. Each person read the material silently and then a member of the CRG read it aloud. The session began with an opportunity for open discussion that failed to occur in any session.

In the second session, using the devotion titled “God Guides in Seven Ways,” Jones attributes Scripture as the primary way God provides guidance. I

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<sup>12</sup> I came to believe that the principal objection centered on what the people perceived as an invasion of privacy. I later attempted to use some studies from Lyman Coleman, et al. eds. Serendipity New Testament for Groups and encountered a similar resistance.

<sup>13</sup> Appendix C contains questions used to guide the discussion during initial sessions.

noticed there seemed to be some hesitance to accept this, yet I failed to elicit a response that might identify any specific area of concern.

During the sixth session, "Guidance through Conscience and the Inner Voice," the question surfaced again about how the Bible fits within the overall context of Divine Guidance. The leader of group one stated that if every major decision of the Church required verification with the Bible then there would always be a deadlock because every one interprets the Bible his or her own way. Considerable discussion ensued, resulting in the conclusion that the CRG efforts toward discerning God's guidance failed to accomplish anything constructive and that the Church board should revert to doing business as usual. The members unanimously failed to attend subsequently scheduled CRG meetings.

The General Assembly in June 1989 passed a resolution changing the pastoral recall from a congregational recall to one involving the pastor, the Church board, and the District Superintendent. The resolution directed that a self-study be conducted by the Church board to provide data to support pastoral review. In November, review of the various options for doing the self-study began. The denominational Headquarters and the District each provided alternative surveys to be used in the self-study. Tom Floyd, a member of the commission that recommended the new procedure to the General Assembly, also offered an extensive package containing several options. After review of the various options, the Church board, supported by my recommendation, opted to use the Floyd packet (P.I.P.[Pioneer Implementation Procedures]).

District policy designated the secretary of the Church board to chair the self-study in order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality between the individual board members and the pastor. The secretary of the Church board refused the directorship of the self-study. The Church board approved as direc-



tor of the self-study a former board member and respected member of the Church and community, the president of a local bank. They decided that the self-study director and I should select the specific material to be used in the study. Work proceeded through the holidays to design the self-study to evaluate the status of the Church as perceived by the board members. A survey designed to determine the expectations of the board for a pastor followed.

In the first session, on 13 January, six hours of diligent work went into the first phase of the study, the collecting of the data. The self-study director spent the next two weeks compiling the data in summary form. On 27 January, the Board met again and collected a second set of data using the surveys provided by the district. This set of surveys contained an evaluation of my performance as their current pastor. A discussion of the data collected two weeks earlier followed. After almost four hours of discussion it became apparent that a systematic assessment of the data could not be accomplished in the forum of the total board. At the board's request, I agreed to review the summary data.

On 10 February we met again to review some preliminary findings and to develop a mission statement. This session resulted in ratification of the mission statement drafted during the first session, confirming their belief that it represented the will of God for Levelland First Church of the Nazarene. The mission statement adopted at this time stated, "Our mission is to teach each believer how he or she can lead others to become disciples; searching to find the lost while reaching out to other believers to sustain them in the faith."<sup>14</sup> Using this

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix D contains the final report of the Self-Study with summary data and preliminary analysis.

mission statement the board approved a budget designating funds for local evangelization.<sup>15</sup>

During my daily devotional time on Monday, 15 January, seemingly unrelated distractions kept coming to mind. In keeping with my practice, I jotted them down and continued with my devotions. Upon completion of this devotional time I reviewed my notes and found, to my amazement, a rather complete outline for implementing small group Bible study ministries as an outreach. Also included were several reasons why this would work with my personal strengths of organization and administration while circumventing my lack of charismatic personality. I immediately prayed, thanking God for this insight, and asked for confirmation. As I left the Church to go across the street to get a cup of coffee, I noticed that the sidewalk leading from the front door to the parking lot and laterally in each direction for about twelve to fifteen feet was wet while the remainder of the sidewalk remained dry. Without a cloud in sight I could find no explanation for the wet portion of sidewalk. Feeling perhaps like Gideon of old, I recorded these events in my journal and called my wife so I would not conveniently forget them, yielding to my skeptical nature.<sup>16</sup>

The Church board accepted the completed report on 21 February, and provided a copy to the District Superintendent, Reverend Charles Jones, for use in the pastoral review. On Sunday, 11 March following the evening service Reverend Jones led the review.

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<sup>15</sup> Except through special revival services, this appears to be the first time in the forty-one year history of Levelland First Church of the Nazarene that evangelization at the local level received formal recognition as a part of the Church's mission.

<sup>16</sup> Barry recalls for his reader that Peter, in explaining his roof top experience (Ac. 10:9-22), only reports the experience without attempting to interpret its meaning for either the circumcised believers (Ac. 11) or the Jerusalem Council (Ac. 15:1-21). He goes on to propose reporting supernatural happenings without explanation or interpretation as an integral part of corporate discernment of God's will (103).

With the pastoral review issue settled and many lessons learned, I turned to implementing them. Since nothing further could be accomplished by attempting to continue the project, I officially declared the project closed on 1 May 1990.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion: A New Direction Charted

#### Thwarted Efforts

A statement of mission expressing the perceived will of God; a budget reflecting the mission statement; and spiritual growth as measured by the “Measure of Mystical Experience” survey represent the three major products anticipated from the project. The limited response of five returned “Measure of Mystical Experience” surveys signaled a potential difficulty. At least four explanations may account for this unexpected failure to respond.

First, from the responses received during follow-up interviews I concluded that perhaps the surveys represented too high a level of sophistication.<sup>1</sup> The second reason for lack of response, inclusion, the extent that a party desires to take part in a survey, may merely explain the first reason above. (Stewart and Cash 9). The “Measure of Mystical Experience” survey used an interval scale with five responses ranging from minus two to plus two. Although never mentioned during the follow-up interviews, a key layman expressed a strong dislike of the Likert interval scale used in the “Pastoral Expectation Survey” portion of the self-study.<sup>2</sup> He stated that, “people do not evaluate life based on a scale of five or six.” He went on to suggest a scale ranging from one to two. With the exception of one board member and the moderator, all other board members agreed that the Likert interval scale failed to realistically express their way of

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<sup>1</sup> Three people, two women, including my wife, and one man, responded to me rather clearly that this represented their assessment. Others seemed frustrated in any attempt to define their failure to fill out the surveys, expressing a vague sense of distrust; whether in the survey, the process, or myself, I could not determine.

<sup>2</sup> The Pastoral Expectation Survey contains a scale ranging from one (least desirable) to six (most desirable) representing perhaps a simpler approach than the range of minus two to plus two on the “Measure of Mystical Experience.”

expressing values. The high percentage (78%) of responses in the five and six range suggests the likely possibility that the board operated with just such a narrow range of values.

Third is the possibility of lack of affection (Stewart and Cash 10).<sup>3</sup> Levelland First Church of the Nazarene, after forty-one years of existence, and perhaps because of frequent pastoral turnover, appeared hesitant about following the leadership of a new pastor.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after arriving in Levelland, I knew that change needed to take place in the worship service to help usher the people into the presence of the Living God. Our worship services lacked any sense of purpose, seeming more like dreary performance of ritualized duty than a celebration of God's living presence through worship. With the Church board's authorization, I formed a worship committee of the key people involved with the structure of the service. While agreeing we needed change, they expressed a reluctance to make any changes.<sup>5</sup>

The two factions described in the previous chapter shared leadership through a key layman from each group. This type of lay leadership

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<sup>3</sup>The authors define affection as the degree of warmth between the parties involved in a data gathering process.

<sup>4</sup> The longest pastorate in the past 35 years was three years and nine months, from February 1981 to November 1984. My tenure of three years, five months was the second longest with only one other reaching three years, the pastor between us. Although it appears that pastoral tenure may be lengthening, the Church forced the District Superintendent to relocate the man with the longest tenure, while my immediate predecessor retired early after developing heart problems associated with the high stress of the situation.

<sup>5</sup> The extent of this resistance to change came into the open between 10 and 12 July 1991; the leader of every family actively involved in the Church contacted me and requested that we return to the way things were done before my arrival. They stated they understood the need for change but did not desire to participate. I sense that these pleas originated out of concern and love and were in no way malicious or personally directed at me. After consultation with Reverend Jones, the District Superintendent, we arrived at the decision to relocate me to my current assignment in Perryton, Texas.

characterizes small Churches (Cushman 4; Dudley 70; Schaller The Small Church 28, 44).

The key layman from group one frequently stated that he did not like change. However, in the twenty years that he managed the large family farm they switched from growing grain to growing cotton, in itself a major change. He also expanded the farm from some 500 acres to approximately 3,000 acres. As a Church board member he, as with all board members, in the installation service pledged himself to "be present at the regular Sunday School, the Sunday morning and Sunday evening preaching services, and the mid week prayer meeting of the Church, unless providentially hindered" (B. Edgar Johnson, et al. Manual/1989 254). He and his family, however, only attended Sunday services. Toward the end of the project, during the spiritually formative time at the beginning of each regular Church board meeting, board members were asked to testify concerning their devotional practices and desires for future growth. He stated that he seldom read anything except the local newspaper, and that he prayed two or three minutes in his pickup several times each week on the way to one of his field work locations. He concluded that this met his needs for forty years and he saw no reason to change now. These inconsistencies characterized his actions toward changes in the Church. Yet, it was obvious that he possessed a deep commitment to the financial welfare of the Church. As Peter J. Surrey indicates, these inconsistencies between the changes in this man's personal life and his resistance to change in his Church are characteristic of leaders in small town Churches (30-6).

The key leader from the second group worked in the oil fields. During the time of the project he received a substantial promotion to foreman with responsibility for a small crew of men. After several weeks he voluntarily took a demotion that relieved him of supervisory responsibility. However, in the Church he

quickly assumed positions that needed filling. A hard and faithful worker, he sometimes procrastinated in getting tasks accomplished. These delays often occurred because he took on more responsibility than he could accomplish. This man and his wife were the most outspoken members of the board, at times being considered offensive by members of the other faction. They were generally faithful givers, with possible breaches during the Christmas holidays and at vacation time each year.

Although a power struggle existed between these two men and their respective "parties," a strong loyalty existed. Strong expressions of love, characteristic of typical family relationships, described the nature of board relationships. Yet, some lack of trust with respect to both motives and ability seemed to exist between the two men and their followings. True to family relationships, the outsider always put him or herself at risk for interfering.

Therefore, rather than hostility, a lack of commitment to a new effort representing change probably contributed to a lack of affection, creating a feeling of apathy toward the project in general and specifically to the surveys. Another indication of a lack of affection appeared among board members when they expressed their opinion that the project and self-study made the administration of the Church excessively complex.<sup>6</sup>

The fourth possibility for the lack of response brings the question of whether the results of spiritual activities can be measured at all. Dr. Daniel R. Hinthorn, Professor of medicine in the Infectious Disease Division, Department of International Medicine at the University of Kansas, summarized the results of a study reported by Randolph Byrd, M.D. in a 1989 Southern Medical Journal. The study, conducted in the coronary care unit (CCU) at the San Francisco

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<sup>6</sup> Appendix D, 159.

General Hospital, used volunteer patients. These patients were randomly assigned to one of two groups, the control group contained 201 persons who were not prayed for, and the test group consisted of 192 who received regular prayer. The group who was prayed for suffered less than one third the cardiac arrests of the control group, a one in 10,000 chance occurrence. According to this report, prayer has been scientifically proven to be effective, thus supposedly validating a claim for measured spiritual activity (Hinthorn 13).

If such proves that spiritual changes can be measured, then one can extrapolate to the amount of prayer necessary to prevent coronaries. This approach ultimately could expand to determining the amount of prayer necessary to prevent any fatal or terminal illness. Such an approach implies the sovereignty of humankind's prayers. C. S. Lewis writes quite lucidly from a theological perspective:

If all the things that people prayed for happened, which they do not, this would not prove what Christians mean by the efficacy of prayer. For prayer is request. The essence of request, as distinguished from compulsion, is that it may or may not be granted. . . . And if an infinitely wise Being listens to the requests of finite and foolish creatures, of course He will sometimes grant and sometimes refuse them. Invariable "success" in prayer would not prove the Christian doctrine at all. It would prove something much more like magic—a power in certain human beings to control, or compel, the course of nature. . . . Other things are proved not simply by experience but by those artificially contrived experiences which we call experiments [emphasis mine]. Could this be done about prayer? I will pass over the objection that no Christian could take part in such a project, because he has been forbidden it: "You must not try experiments on God, your Master." Forbidden or not, is the thing even possible? . . . Our assurance is quite different in kind from scientific knowledge. It is born out of our personal relation to the other parties; not from knowing about them but from knowing them. . . . There can be no question of tabulating successes and failures and trying to decide whether the successes are too numerous to be accounted for by chance. . . . He allows soils and weather and animals and the muscles, minds, and wills of men to co-operate in the execution of His will. (4-9)



While efforts to measure changes in a person's or Church's spirituality fall short of attempting to measure the Holy Spirit, they, in fact, attempt to measure at least secondary effects of the Holy Spirit. Scripture seems to indicate that such measurements are possible. For example, Jesus informed Nicodemus that he could sense the results of the Spirit, as in sensing the effects of the wind, even though unable to see the Spirit (Jn. 3:8). Although this allows for seeing some of the effects of the Holy Spirit—perhaps even measuring them, analogous to measuring wind velocity—a sense of mystery continues to surround the activities of the Holy Spirit. Thus, as with Lewis and Nicodemus, a sense of frustration and subjectivity represents the norm when attempting to measure the result of spiritual activity. At least it certainly proved true in this project.

#### Production by an Unanticipated Means

The Church board entered into the self-study without abandoning the premise that God would lead us as a group into the discernment of His will for the Church. The consensus of the board expressed that it was God's divine working to bring the requirement for the self-study about at this time. The Church board/CRG appeared more willing to enter into the self-study than into the attempts at spiritual formation as part of the project. I attempted to ascertain why they were more willing to enter into this type of approach. Again, they failed to articulate their reasons. I sensed the self-study represented a tangible approach rather than one centered on spiritual disciplines, even disciplines as common as prayer and witnessing through personal testimony. As we moved further into the self-study, some of the anxiety reappeared, perhaps because of apprehension over the surveys.

Tension seemed intense during the time of the "Discussion Survey."<sup>7</sup> The members of the Church board seemed more ready to identify the negative aspects of the Church than they were to speak of its many positive strengths. This caught me by surprise since I knew of the people's strong commitment and the many positive features of this Church. A relatively strong financial standing, perhaps the strongest of the more than seventy other small Churches in the district, their good location and attractive facilities describe some of the attributes of this Church. Data from the "Opinion Survey" confirms that the Church suffered from deflated morale (Schaller The Small Church 58-61; Dudley 20).<sup>8</sup> These two surveys indicated a high degree of awareness of a lack of strong relationships among the people. Although a serious factor, I perceived considerable cohesiveness, with the negative aspects corresponding to the petty bickering that frequently occurs within family settings.

Using the evaluation of the summary rating on the "Pastoral Expectation Survey," as opposed to the summary rating of each section, the Church board listed time management as their highest expectation of the pastor with a slight emphasis on family time.<sup>9</sup> Second in priority came people relational skills followed closely by leadership style. In short, they responded in a manner typical of small Churches, expecting their pastor to be a "lover" rather than a leader or manager (Dudley 57; Schaller The Small Church 44; Walrath 57). On the other hand, they expected less in the areas of professional growth and worship, areas where they tended to rate me the highest. The lack of confidence expressed by

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix D, 122-27.

<sup>8</sup>These authors identify low morale or poor self esteem as a trait characteristic of the small Church. In a society where big defines success, the small Church sees smallness as a definition of failure.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix D, 127-40.

the split vote becomes understandable, considering the lower scores assigned in the pastoral evaluation.<sup>10</sup> A mismatch existed between their expectations and my gifts and graces. This further explains the lack of affection as a significant factor in the limited response to the project and the “Mystical Experience Survey” in particular.

Evangelism ranked seventh of the twelve areas surveyed in pastoral expectations. This seemed surprising, considering the emphasis placed upon it in the mission statement.<sup>11</sup> Members believe that the God assigned and Bible validated mission of the Church requires evangelistic outreach (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Ac. 1:8). On the other hand, they lacked training in personal evangelism, which may account for the relatively low ranking given to evangelism. It may also indicate why the frustration level dramatically increased. That negative feelings did not find stronger expression now seems surprising. This reflects the true Christian character and commitment to Christ and His Church of the people who made up the board and served on the CRG.

### Changing Directions

In January 1990, four events began to unfold that changed my understanding and brought me to my current comprehension regarding corporate discernment of God’s will as applied to Church administration. Each of these events occurred in such a way that to classify them as chance puts chance into the category of possessing intelligence to make choices and the

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<sup>10</sup> I believe the pastoral evaluation reflected a relatively accurate portrayal of both my performance and my strengths and weaknesses.

<sup>11</sup> The mission taken from the self-study, appendix D reads, “Teach each believer how she or he can lead others to become disciples; search to find the lost while reaching out to other believers to sustain them in the faith.” Campbell noted a similar discrepancy between his Church’s stated mission involving evangelism and the people’s commitment to it (3-5).

power to carry them out (Sproul). Therefore, I believe that God worked Providentially through this series of circumstances.

A Theological Model for Administration. In January, I attempted one final effort to enhance understanding of the role of Christian leadership. To do this, I preached a series of ten sermons adapting material from David McKenna's book Power to Follow. Grace to Lead. McKenna developed the Incarnate Christ as our model of Spirit filled Incarnation. The concept of the "priesthood of all believers," expands the "Incarnate Model," based on John 1:14, to include not only the recognized leaders of the Church, but also every individual Christian (McKenna 18-33; Küng 473-95; Weigelt 417).<sup>12</sup> The first six of these sermons developed an extensive foundation of the Incarnate Priesthood of all believers. I hoped that members of the congregation, especially the lay leaders, would come to a better understanding of the importance of leadership within the Church.

The final four sermons in the series developed the concept of vision and mission closely following McKenna's paradigm (76-107). At the time, I entertained the idea that perhaps the concept of vision and mission as presented by McKenna were reversed, but I decided to retain McKenna's terminology. These sermons affected me greatly. For the first time, a theological understanding of the mission portion of Church administration began to develop. First comes a vision, then development of a mission that meets the criteria of "mandate," "method," "message," "market," "measure," and "mood" (McKenna 76-107). Finally, a means existed to evaluate secular administrative tools theologically

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<sup>12</sup> Küng develops the concept of the Priesthood of all believers that places each believer in the position of being a priest for someone else, and each believer needing a priest. This is in juxtaposition to the popular Protestant view of each believer's serving as his or her own priest.

and biblically and integrate them into the administrative functions supporting a ministry-centered mission statement.

Biblical leadership, a revised concept. At this point, I remained convinced of the premise that God would reveal His will for a local Church through a body of leaders. During early March 1990, a pastor friend, John Donnerberg, expressed his belief that God revealed His will through the pastor as God's called leader. After some discussion, He asked if I knew of any instances in the Bible where God revealed His guidance to a group of people. For the next few weeks, I reviewed cases of leaders of God's people as recorded throughout the Bible. Throughout the Old Testament, it seemed that God always led through a single person, revealing His desired will to a person, relying on the chosen individual to communicate God's will to the people. The Old Testament message of God's people deliberately refusing His instructions becomes all too familiar, yet sadly unchanged even in today's world. Does this establish the pattern for God's leaders today? Could this contribute to the lack of affirmative project participation?<sup>13</sup>

Recorded in the book of Acts, we find one possible exception to God's revealing His will to a single leader among His people (Ac. 13:1-3). The account fails, however, to make it clear whether God revealed his will to a single individual, or to Paul and Barnabas, or to the entire group through the Holy Spirit (Bruce 244-5; Stott 216-7).<sup>14</sup> I concluded from this study, late in the project, that a body of leaders similar to Moses' seventy elders, Jesus' twelve

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<sup>13</sup> On several occasions during the time of the project, the leader of group one expressed that the Church knew what needed to be done but refused to do it.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce expressed his belief that the Holy Spirit revealed His will to only one among the Church. Stott, on the other hand, argues that the Holy Spirit spoke to the entire Church; however, he allows that one of the prophets may have served as God's spokesman. Thus, it seems likely that here, too, the guidance came to a single individual.

apostles, and Paul's group of associates provides a biblical model (Ex. 18; Mt. 10:2-4ff; Mk. 3:16-19ff; Lk. 6:14-16ff; Ro. 16:22-24). God worked through a single called leader who in turn employed others to assist in carrying out His guidance for the larger community. This corresponds with Nazarene polity of the pastor's leading the congregation as a whole through the Church board and board of Sunday school ministries.

At this point, one of the basic premises on which the thesis of the project rested, faltered. Biblical examples tend toward God's imparting His vision to the leader, which in turn would be passed on to the second line of leaders. Attempting to force the Church into a structure of leadership lacking biblical support could further aggravate the tendency toward lack of affection.

The right question. I still believed that God could reveal His specific mission for Levelland First Church of the Nazarene. Now, however, I expect it to come through me. In September 1990, while reflecting on the failed attempt to measure spiritual growth, I remembered something I had heard. We ask God to tell us "what" when the Bible already provides the answer. The Bible does not, however, address the question of how we should proceed to accomplish what God has already assigned. This speaker said that many of the greatest frustrations in our Christian lives result from asking the wrong question, "what," rather than "how."<sup>15</sup> He went on to say that the Holy Spirit stands poised to willingly provide the answer when we ask the right question.

It dawned on me that, throughout the time of the project, both the Church board and myself recognized our God-given mission as evangelism. We expressed it in our mission statement in two parts, disciple-making and locating

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<sup>15</sup> I have been unable to track down the source of this concept but I believe it came from Thomas Merton.

the lost. The struggle and ensuing frustration came because of a hope of finding the answer to a question already answered. At the same time, we failed to inquire concerning God's will of how to go about accomplishing the mission of making disciples already revealed in the Bible. It suddenly occurred to me that God had answered, at least partially, the "how" on 15 January when I received the plan for small group ministries. God had already provided the sought after guidance and we, as a Church, were already in the process of implementing that guidance through executing a comprehensive training seminar for all Church board members and the teachers and leaders of the Sunday school.

The Source. Thomas Kelly emphasized that it is not so much that God dictates a single course of action but that he limits His people to a few central tasks (qtd. in Harper Embrace 120). Oswald Chambers entreats Christians to ignore the demands for service along other good and valid lines (65). St. Paul similarly prays that we might be able to discern God's best from many good options (Php. 1:10). This conflicts with the concept of a mission statement supported by goals as the means of doing God's will unless the mission statement truly represents God's will.

In July 1992 I received a copy of George Barna's book, The Power of Vision. Deeply involved in writing this dissertation, I tossed the book aside. However, after a couple of weeks, I could no longer resist previewing the book. In supplying empirical support for McKenna's theology of administration, several aspects of what Barna wrote profoundly impacted me.

The Church today lacks a clear understanding of vision, according to Barna (11-12). In many ways Barna's detailing of vision paralleled McKenna's description of the Church's mission as "Incarnate Strategy." Barna strongly communicated the necessity for the vision to come from God, a point also implied by McKenna (Barna 28-39).

Often a God-given vision exceeds the limit of possibility and seems unreasonable (Barna 99-100). However, once the leader discerns God's vision for a Church and communicates it, first to the leaders, then outward to the others of the congregation, administration becomes a matter of making and implementing the decisions that best support that vision while maintaining theological integrity. This is using reason in its best sense. Barna points out that God-given vision often extends beyond the life of the initiating leader (142-6). A leader's faulty perception of a God-given vision may require modification, such as when God changed Paul's direction from Asia to Europe (Ac. 16:6-10). Barna appropriately treats this as a modification or refinement of the vision rather than discerning a new vision. Spiritual growth might be another way of understanding such modifications, requiring continued sensitivity to hearing the Holy Spirit (100-1).

For the first time since beginning the project for the Doctor of Ministry program, I feel reasonably comfortable with Church administration. I concur with Thomas Oden's explanation that administration should be viewed from its old English name of "administry" as that which "contributes to ministry or leads toward ministry," thus intensifying ministry (Pastoral Theology 153-55). The thesis statement of the project failed from the aspect of measuring spiritual growth, but in its place a different model began to come to life. Through the changed understanding of how God guides His Church, my understanding of Church administration continues to increase. The unfolding of events leading to these changes increases my confidence in God's ability to work through people who willingly allow Him to overcome their preconceived biases. The inductive flow by which this new paradigm continues to evolve presents a beautiful expression of God's grace through spiritual formation experienced in a practical aspect of ministry, Church administration. Without documentary verification, my



experience supports the contention that a God-given vision may also become a part of a pastor's lifetime ministry, accompanying him to each new pastorate. This increases the importance for both pastor and Church to understand their respective missions and find compatible matches.

### Some Conclusions.

The dynamics of the Levelland environment vividly remind me that the Church is unique among organizations. Not only the universal Church, but also each local congregation, is unique. It is not surprising then that the Bible records God's leading of His people in unique ways, not repeating some prescribed process or basic set of steps. God, by grace, responded and continues to respond to individuals and corporate communities of His people according to each specific situation. The model of discerning God's will can be seen in the development of the events to date at Levelland.

First, He led through developing an awareness of the need for a different format of worship, one that would facilitate members of contemporary society to enter His presence in praise and worship and to be prepared for a life of service. Could the moving of members of the worship committee who resisted the change also be an expression of God's guidance to facilitate accomplishment of His will? I, therefore, conclude that one means of discerning God's guidance centers around the need for an environment conducive for spiritual growth or formation.

Second was the development of small groups. The mystical means, during a time of spiritually formative devotions, that God used to disclose the details of the small group ministries revealed yet another method that God may utilize to provide guidance. As a God without limits, He can never be confined to any single, or even any long list of ways of communicating His will to His child

or His Church. It seems that such communications should be expected to be unique as expressions of God's infinite grace and love.

As a minister of God's grace, I have a personal mission to help his people identify God's purpose for their lives in terms of "how" they can best serve the process of disciple making. Once God's purpose is identified, my responsibility becomes to support, assist and enable His people to attain all He wants them to be. Based upon my experience and research to date I conclude that guidance will most likely be given, not while seeking it, but rather as we seek to grow in intimacy and love with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## APPENDIX A

### Measure of Mystical Experience<sup>1</sup>

#### Mysticism Scale

(Items listed under each criterion from which they were operationalized and numbered according to actual scale position)<sup>2</sup>

The instructions for this scale are as follows:

The attached booklet contains brief descriptions of a number of experiences. Some descriptions refer to phenomenon that you may have experienced while others refer to phenomenon that you may not have experienced. In each case note the description carefully and place a mark in the left margin according to how much the description applies to your own experience. Write +1,+2, or -1,-2 or ? depending on how you feel in each case.

+1: This description is probably true of my own experience or experiences.

-1: This description is probably not true of my own experience or experiences.

+2 This description is definitely true of my own experience or experiences.

-2: This description is definitely not true of my own experience or experiences.

?: I cannot decide.

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph W. Hood, Jr., "The Construction and Preliminary Validation of a Measure of Reported Mystical Experience," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 14 (1975): 29-41. Wood, 31-2, provides documentation of the validation of this survey below

<sup>2</sup> The surveys passed out to the congregation were rearranged sequentially with the criterion information omitted.

Please mark each item trying to avoid if at all possible marking any item with a ?. In responding to each item, please understand that the items may be considered as applying to one experience or as applying to several different experiences. After completing the booklet, please be sure that all items have been marked—leave no items unanswered.

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**EGO QUALITY (E):** Refers to the experience of a loss of sense of self while consciousness is nevertheless maintained. The loss of self is commonly experienced as an absorption into something greater than the mere empirical ego.

- 3. I have had an experience in which something greater than myself seemed to absorb me.
- 4. I have had an experience in which everything seemed to disappear from my mind until I was conscious only of a void.
- 6. I have never had an experience in which I felt myself to be absorbed as one with all things.
- 24. I have never had an experience in which my own self seemed to merge into something greater.

**UNIFYING QUALITY (U):** Refers to the experience of the multiplicity of objects of perception as nevertheless united. Everything is in fact perceived as "One."

- 12. I have had an experience in which I realized the oneness of myself with all things.
- 19. I have had an experience in which I felt everything in the world to be part of the same whole.
- 28. I have never had an experience in which I became aware of a unity to all things.

30. I have never had an experience in which all things seemed to be unified into a single whole.

**INNER SUBJECTIVE QUALITY (Is):** Refers to the perception of an inner subjectivity to all things, even those usually experienced in purely material forms.

8. I have never had an experience in which I felt as if all things were alive.  
 10. I have never had an experience in which all things seemed to be aware.  
 29. I have had an experience in which all things seemed to be conscious.  
 31. I have had an experience in which I felt nothing is ever really dead.

**TEMPORAL/SPATIAL QUALITY (T):** Refers to temporal and spatial parameters of the experience. Essentially both time and space are modified with the extreme being one of an experience that is both "timeless" and "spaceless."

1. I have had an experience which was both timeless and spaceless.  
 11. I have had an experience in which I had no sense of time or space.  
 15. I have never had an experience in which time and space were non-existent.  
 27. I have never had an experience in which time, place, and distance were meaningless.

**NOETIC QUALITY (N):** Refers to the experience as a source of valid knowledge. Emphasis is on a nonrational, intuitive, insightful experience that is nevertheless recognized as not merely subjective.

13. I have had an experience in which a new view of reality was revealed to me.  
 16. I have never experienced anything that I could call ultimate reality.  
 17. I have had an experience in which ultimate reality was revealed to me.  
 26. I have never had an experience in which deeper aspects of reality were revealed to me.

**INEFFABILITY (I):** Refers to the impossibility of expressing the experience in conventional language. The experience simply cannot be put into words due to the nature of the experience itself and not to the linguistic capacity of the subject.

- 2. I have never had an experience which was incapable of being expressed in words.
- 21. I have never had an experience which I was unable to express adequately through language.
- 23. I have had an experience that is impossible to communicate.
- 32. I have had an experience that cannot be expressed in words.

**POSITIVE AFFECT (P):** Refers to the positive affective quality of the experience. Typically the experience is a joy or blissful happiness.

- 5. I have experienced profound joy.
- 7. I have never experienced a perfectly peaceful state.
- 18. I have had an experience in which I felt that all was perfection at that time.
- 25. I have never had an experience which left me with a feeling of wonder.

**RELIGIOUS QUALITY (R):** Refers to the intrinsic sacredness of the experience. This includes feelings of mystery, awe, and reverence that may nevertheless be expressed independently of traditional religious language.

- 9. I have never had an experience which seemed holy to me.
- 14. I have never experienced anything to be divine.
- 20. I have had an experience which I knew to be sacred.
- 22. I have had an experience which left me with a feeling of awe.

APPENDIX B  
Supplemental Survey

Please fill in the blanks.

1. I spend an average of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes per day reading the Bible.
2. I spend an average of approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each day praying.

Please read carefully each statement and place a mark in the left margin according to how strongly you agree or disagree with the question.

+2 I strongly agree with the statement.

+1 I agree with the statement.

0 I neither agree or disagree.

-1 I disagree with the statement.

-2 I strongly disagree with the statement.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. God provides guidance for His people only through the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. God provides guidance for His people in addition to that contained in the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. God provides specific guidance for the church mostly through the pastor.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. God provides guidance for both individuals and His Church.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The best way for an individual to please God is through application of sound business principles to his or her life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I have in the past received guidance which I believe was from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I have in the recent past received guidance which I believed was from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I believe that the Church should receive its guidance from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. If something is God's will, everyone in the church will agree concerning it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. If I feel easy at heart after praying about a decision for myself or the church, I know without a doubt it is God's will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. If I feel uneasy after praying about a decision even if other people feel good about it, I doubt if the option is God's will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I believe God's will will be done regardless of the decisions a church or an individual makes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I believe God will bring people to the church that need to be here.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I believe if God wants the church to do a certain thing, He will show it an open door and give church leaders a desire to enter.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I trust my instincts in knowing God's will for myself and the church more when I have been praying a lot and reading my Bible regularly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. When a worthwhile project is being discussed and I feel checked inwardly, I say nothing because it is a good idea, even if I don't "feel good" about it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I believe if something is God's will, He will always provide the way and means to accomplish it.

Answer the following questions by circling only one - always, frequently, rarely, or never.

20. I believe that Levelland First Church of the Nazarene does the will of God.

always, frequently, rarely, never

21. I believe, as a church, we can put out a fleece, to determine God's will.

always, frequently, rarely, never

## APPENDIX C

### Discussion Questions for CRG Sessions

#### Discussion Topics:

#### Session 1: The Way is the Way of Guidance<sup>1</sup>

Scripture Reference: Psalm 16:7-11

We come now to the question of guidance. The Way is the way of the God guided life.

1. Of the six methods listed as the usual ways of guidance for Christians which, if any, are most commonly used to guide us: Individually? As a church?
2. Why is spontaneity an aspect of God's guidance?  
What are the implications of this for an Individual? A local church?  
What about character?
3. If we determine a certain course of action to be God's guidance for us should it not also address the question: How will I/we grow for or through this?
4. What relationship, if any, exists between God's guidance and His will?

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<sup>1</sup> E. Stanley Jones, The Way: 364 Adventures in Daily Living, Festival ed. (Nashville: Abingdon , 1984), 299.

5. What relationship, if any, exists between God's will and our wills?
6. Does a church have a collective will?
7. What are the implications of this for the church board (the Sunday School Board)?

### Session 2: God Guides in Seven Ways<sup>2</sup>

Scripture Reference: Psalms 25:9, 12, 15; 32:8

The will of God is our freedom and our fulfillment. How do we find that will?

1. If God's will is our "freedom and fulfillment," why don't we know more about it?
2. If this list of seven items were put into priority according to Nazarene doctrines, in what order would they appear, if any?
3. Is discerning the guidance with respect to "the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Scriptures" limited to the four gospel accounts?
4. How do other parts of the Bible contribute to the guidance of God?

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<sup>2</sup> E. Stanley Jones, The Way: 364 Adventures in Daily Living, Festival ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 300.

5. In seeking God's will, what does E. Stanley Jones mean that "the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Scriptures" is God's general guidance?
6. Can we be sure that the girl's dream was truly subconscious mind and not the revealed will of God?
7. What does the Bible say about our being able to know the will of God?
8. What are the implications for our church of discerning God's guidance, at least in part, through the Scriptures?  
Have we been practicing this?

### Session 3: Guidance Through Collective Experience<sup>3</sup>

Scripture Reference: Acts 15:28; 13:2-4

1. How many times in the Bible are you aware that God guided/spoke through dreams and visions?
2. What constitutes the Normal with respect to Jesus' life and ministry?
  - a. Relationships with His Father? With others?
  - b. Actions toward others? Self?
  - c. Decisions about life and ministry?

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<sup>3</sup> E. Stanley Jones, The Way: 364 Adventures in Daily Living, Festival ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 301.

3. Can the Church ever pronounce damnation upon an individual? Why or why not? Does the Bible address this?
4. What is the difference between the Church and the church, or is there any?
5. Is the Church infallible? What about the church?
6. Is there any way to test the guidance from the church and society to make sure that it is valid?
7. Where does guidance through collective experience fit in relation to guidance through the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in scriptures?
8. Is saying that we want to know God's will, and meaning it, the same thing?
  - a. What is the difference?
  - b. What specific actions must be taken to know God's guidance for either of these first two ways?

## Session 4: GOD GUIDES THROUGH OPENING OPPORTUNITIES<sup>4</sup>

Acts 16:9-10; I Cor. 16:8-9

We continue to look at the methods of God's Guidance:

1. Must a person be a Christian to be considered as good?
2. When guidance is received from an individual, should this source ever be used alone?
3. Is the subconscious a reliable guide to God given opportunities?
4. In which case would it probably be safest to consider opportunities or open doors as a source of guidance?
  - a. For guidance that is of a personal nature?
  - b. For guidance that would be of benefit to someone else and of no consequence to yourself?
  - c. Why?
5. How can you experiment and verify God's guidance through opportunities?
6. Have you ever known any one who acted on God's guidance through "open doors" that did not work? If so, what does this say with respect to this method of obtaining Guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> E. Stanley Jones, The Way: 364 Adventures in Daily Living, Festival ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 302.

7. Opportunities arise from which the experiment would seem valid, at least from a worldly perspective. Can you name some?
8. Where does guidance through "advice from good and intelligent people" fit in relation to guidance through the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in scriptures?
9. Make the same comparison for "opening opportunities and needs."
10. What specific actions must be taken to know God's guidance for either of these ways?

**APPENDIX D**

**FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

**LEVELLAND, TEXAS**

**914 Sundown Highway**

**Levelland, Texas 79336**

**(806) 894-7257**

**Pastor**

**Reverend B. Jarrell "Bill" Johnston**

**SELF-STUDY**

**AND**

**PASTORAL EVALUATION**

**February 21, 1990**



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## DIRECTION OF OUR CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Our Mission statement:

Teach each believer how they [sic] can lead others to become disciples; search to find the lost, while reaching out to other believers to sustain them in the faith.

### 2. Our priorities to reach that mission are: (in order of priority)

Teach [ourselves]<sup>2</sup>

Search [for others, who are non-believers.]

Sustain [All who come into the faith]

### 3. Our Goals are:

Establish harmony

Unify efforts for better communications.

Develop teaching classes for discipling and human relationships.

Develop programs to help in dealing with others (Our own fellowship and newcomers.)

Develop visitation programs.

Develop effective prayer groups.

### 4. Our methods to accomplish goals are: [To be determined as self study continues.]

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>2</sup> All additions contained in brackets editorially added by Pastor Johnston.

5. During initial working group session January 13, 1990, the board removed from the mission statement the segment that stated serving others above self and agreed that this should be the vision that overarches all that Levelland First Church of the Nazarene undertakes.

Mottos: "There is no limit to the good one can do for the church if he doesn't care who gets the credit."

"Place service above self."

Based upon an emphasis of keeping everything simple, Pastor Johnston proposed the following be placed on the church's stationery as a motto that embodies the mission and goals of the church, not only to those within the church, but to those we are trying to reach:

"Worshiping Simply, Simply to Serve."

## OPINION SURVEY ON CHURCH<sup>3</sup>

1. If I could change one thing about my church it would be:<sup>4</sup>

- a. Overall attitude.<sup>5</sup>
- b. Improve lines of communication.
- c. Music program.
- d. Greater love for one another.
- e. Improve attitudes in general.
- f. Greater love.
- g. Add choir or singing worship.
- h. Commitment.
- i. Attendance.

2. When I think of my church, I think of:

- a. A refuge from the world.
- b. My church family.
- c. Duty of worship, duty to God.
- d. People of family.
- e. Who cares?
- f. The burden of our lack of success.

3. When my church reaches \_\_\_\_\_ it will be too large.

\_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>4</sup> Responses throughout the study recorded as provided by study director.

<sup>5</sup> All data reproduced in same form and format as received from the self-study director.

- a. 200
- b. 200
- c. 125
- d. 185
- e. 200
- f. 250

4. The best way for my church to grow is:

- a. Get serious about the church work.
- b. Unity.
- c. Involvement.
- d. Prayer ministry.
- e. Maintain spiritual feelings and develop spiritual growth.
- f. Get committed members going first - not just spectators.
- g. Personal preparation.
- h. Personal evangelism.

5. My vision for my church is:

- a. Reach out to people.
- b. A growing church with God outstanding.
- c. A growing church with God first.
- d. Change overall attitude.
- e. Christ like.
- f. Go to service with people feeling like they are free to say or do what they want.
- g. Meeting the needs of the people in the church.
- h. Reaching people for God.

- i. Reaching out to people.

6. My personal spiritual goal is:

- a. Being all that God would suit me to be.
- b. To do better.
- c. Rededicate myself to service above self.
- d. Get more in tune with God.
- f. Feel like I have been with God.
- h. To be willing to give time when someone needs me.
- i. Be like Jesus.
- j. Ultimate compassion and concern for people without any strings.

7. Recent successes of my church are:

- a. Becoming more open with one another.
- b. Good attendance at board meetings.
- c. Respond to loss in the fellowship.
- d. Good fellowship - Good people.
- e. Payment of budgets and other obligations.
- f. Visiting bereaved.
- g. Keeping the doors open.

8. Recent obstacles we have overcome as a church are:

- a. Continue to operate church after losing workers.
- b. Overcoming financial problems.
- c. Started talking to each other about church problems.
- d. Attitudes about budgets.

9. What do we need to do as a church to be successful in your opinion?

- a. Pray more for God's guidance
- b. Work together.
- c. Love one another:
  - 1. Kinder to each other.
  - 2. More involved with each other.
  - 3. Not talk about each other negatively.
- d. Reestablish God first, opinion second.
- e. Evaluate self.
- f. Establish goals and explain policies.
- g. Establish prayer line.
- h. Communicate follow up.
- i. Participate in all programmed services and activities.
- j. Help members do what each one can do with his or her own abilities.
- k. Promote better communications to get more people here.
- l. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
- m. Reach out to all people, Christian and non-Christian.

10. How can this be accomplished?

- a. Be more open to what God directs.
- b. Be more sensitive to those who attend.
- c. Pray more.
- d. Be more positive in the way we do things.
- e. Telephone calls, cards, contacts.
- f. Choir.
- g. Advertisement of services.
- h. Discipleship training.

- i. Be a Christian all day every day.
- j. Be stirred by God.
- k. Fellowship in home.
- l. Bible studies.
- m. Fellowship at church.

11. What is the spiritual condition of your church.

- a. So-so.
- b. Status quo.
- c. Why Basic!
- d. On Hold.
- e. Stalemate.
- f. We need leaders to get and stay committed to God personally then to the church.
- g. Cool.
- i. At a stand still.

12. How do you perceive your church's community in people-type (economic, ethnic, education income, age range, etc.)?

- a. Mostly middle class or below.
- b. Visitors are usually poor. Two or three families are upper middle-class.
- c. Middle-class.
- d. White.
- f. Educated.
- g. Middle-aged or younger.



## DISCUSSION SURVEY OF CHURCH<sup>6</sup>

Discussion time:

1. What is it that our church does best?
  - a. People seem to show love to each other most of the time.<sup>7</sup>
  - b. Friendly.
  - c. Friendly - but no follow-up.
  - d. Care.
  - e. Maintains itself regularly - regular services, etc.
  
2. What are the three greatest strengths of our church?
  - a. God First.
  - b. Good leadership. Good spiritual leaders.
  - c. Meet most needs.
  - d. Church always open.
  - e. Meet obligations well for our size (financial and otherwise).
  - f. Godly people.
  - g. Initial friendliness.
  - h. Worship God in services.
  
3. What are the three greatest weakness of our church?
  - a. Lack of harmony.

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<sup>6</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>7</sup> All data reproduced in same form and format as received from the self-study director.

- b. Jealousy in personal relationships.
  - c. Lack of commitment of members.
  - d. Lack of communications.
  - e. Lack of “stroking,” truly caring for one another.
  - f. Lack of empathy for one another.
  - g. Lack of regular systematic attendance to church and activities.
  - h. Saying too much that is not correct (Gossip).
  - i. Members not faithful.
  - j. Lack of follow up in:
    - 1. Discipleship training.
    - 2. Fellowship efforts.
  - k. lack of compassion for needy or lonely.
  - m. Church and Sundays seem like work day.
  - n. No care attitude.
  - o. Criticism of one another without foundation.
  - p. Back biting.
  - q. Power struggle.
4. How do we best involve new people into our church community?
- a. Greeting.
  - b. Invited back.
  - c. Fellowship responsibility.
  - d. We don't
    - 1. need to invite people to our homes to eat.
    - 2. need church parties.
    - 3. need to play golf or go places together.

- e. We don't do much.
5. What are the barriers that new people feel when they walk in?
- a. Stress.
  - b. Over-welcoming.
  - c. Lack of follow up.
  - d. No church involvement or activities to interest new people.
  - e. Scared of some people here.
  - f. Don't have right people talking to new people.
  - g. Actions of adults and youth in service.
  - h. Small church stuff (atmosphere and attitude).
6. How do we best project to other what our church does best?
- a. Tell others what we do in church.
  - b. Friendly (at first).
7. If you lived within a twenty-five mile radius of our church, what would get you to attend here?
- a. Encouragement.
  - b. Excitement of the people (about serving God and the church).
  - c. Observe people serving God and others.
  - d. Special Love for me.
  - e. Feel Spirit of God when I walk thru the door.
  - f. Programs for children, youth, all ages.
  - g. Church members asking about me.
  - h. Cozy attractive place to worship.
  - i. A feeling of belonging.

- j. Genuine interest in me as a person.
  - k. A place where there was something going on.
  - l. Excitement and enthusiasm in people.
8. If I was not a Christian, but the usual unchurched, non-responsible sinner, working my garden, racing my boat, escaping into my weekends, what would it take on the part of our church to:
- . . . get my attention.
  - . . . show me my need
  - . . . convince me of the Christian Way
  - . . . get my allegiance and loyalty to the church?
- a. See the members being happy and confident about their lives and wonder where they got it.
  - b. Show that person how much more important God is than non-constructive week-ends.
  - c. Friendliness.
  - d. Joy in the Christian life-style.
9. As a member of the church, what are the things our church has going that makes me want to get as many people as possible into our fellowship?
- a. Teaching of church responsibilities of winning souls.
  - b. Good Sunday School Teachers.
  - c. Good music program.
  - d. Nice facilities.
  - e. Good nursery.
  - f. Love of God.

- g. The way the Spirit of God and the people is felt during the service (usually).
- h. Love God and wanting others to share this experience.
- j. Sunday School.
- k. Not much:
  - 1. disappointment in the way people respond to new comers.
  - 2. we do not exemplify God's love for others when trying to accept new people in the fellowship.
  - 3. we lack commitment.

PASTORAL EXPECTATIONS OF CHURCH BOARD<sup>8</sup>

Circle a score from 1 (least important) to 6 (most important) for each trait, as you believe it should be embodied in your pastor. Please do this assessment individually, without discussing with anyone else. If you have questions please ask the church board secretary or the moderator.<sup>9</sup>

|                                  | Least <sup>10</sup> |   |      |      | Most      |      |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|---|------|------|-----------|------|
|                                  | Important           |   |      |      | Important |      |
| A. Preaching:                    |                     |   |      |      |           |      |
| 1. Uses the Bible.               | 1                   | 2 | 3    | 4    | 5(1)      | 6(5) |
| 2. Uses illustrations from life. | 1                   | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1) | 5(1)      | 6(3) |
| 3. Has intellectual integrity.   | 1                   | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1) | 5(2)      | 6(2) |
| 4. Uses good language.           | 1                   | 2 | 3(2) | 4(2) | 5         | 6(2) |

<sup>8</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>9</sup> The board members were provided additional oral instructions to respond on the basis of what they expected in a pastor and not based on the current or any other pastor's performance. At least one individual expressed that the scoring was too broad and confusing, that it should be limited to a range of 1 to 2.

<sup>10</sup> Numbers in parenthesis ( ) reflect the number of board members responding with associated score. Six of the seven board members were present and participated in this portion of the self-study.

|                                    | Least<br>Important |   |      | Most<br>Important |      |      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---|------|-------------------|------|------|
| 5. Makes good use of:              |                    |   |      |                   |      |      |
| a. Voice.                          | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4(2)              | 5(1) | 6(2) |
| b. Gestures, mannerisms.           | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1)              | 5(2) | 6(2) |
| c. Facial expression.              | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4(2)              | 5(2) | 6(1) |
| d. Eye contact.                    | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(2) | 6(2) |
| 6. Provides information.           | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2)              | 5(1) | 6(3) |
| 7. Supports church's traditions.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(3)              | 5(1) | 6(2) |
| 8. Prophetically calls for change. | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(3)              | 5(1) | 6(2) |
| 9. Stimulates personal commitment. | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5    | 6(6) |
| 10. Summary rating for Section A.  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5(3) | 6(3) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

**B. Teaching and Education Ministry:**

|   |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. Enables ministry with children<br>and youth to take place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(2) | 5(2) | 6(2) |
| 2. Develops lay education leadership.                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(2) | 5(2) | 6(2) |

|   | Least<br>Important |   |      | Most<br>Important |      |      |
|---|--------------------|---|------|-------------------|------|------|
| 3. Promotes educational ministries of the church.                 | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(3) | 6(2) |
| 4. Encourages the use of approved curriculum resources.           | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(2) | 6(3) |
| 5. Participated in planning and evaluating the church school.     | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1)              | 5(1) | 6(3) |
| 6. Provides time for teaching, seminars, workshops, etc.          | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(2) | 6(3) |
| 7. Uses the sermon and worship service as teaching opportunities. | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2)              | 5(2) | 6(2) |
| 8. Summary ratings for Section B.                                 | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(3) | 6(2) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

C. Evangelism:

|   |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. Regularly visits new attenders and new community residents and organizes congregation to help. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(1) | 6(4) |
|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|



|    |   | Least<br>Important |   |      |      | Most<br>Important |      |  |
|----|---|--------------------|---|------|------|-------------------|------|--|
| 2. | Provides for membership classes on regular basis.   | 1                  | 2 | 3(2) | 4    | 5                 | 6(4) |  |
| 3. | Recruits new members.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(1)              | 6(3) |  |
| 4. | Provides for personal cultivation and assimilation of new members.                                  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(3) |  |
| 5. | Seeks the uncommitted through special ministries, prison, street, nursing homes, service club, etc. | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(2)              | 6(2) |  |
| 6. | Models soul-winning.  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5                 | 6(5) |  |
| 7. | Equips the laity with skills and resources for evangelizing.  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5                 | 6(4) |  |
| 8. | Summary rating for Section C.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(1)              | 6(3) |  |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

|    |                                    |   |   |      |      |      |      |  |
|----|------------------------------------|---|---|------|------|------|------|--|
| 1. | Provides atmosphere of expectancy. | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4    | 5(1) | 6(3) |  |
| 2. | Involves laity in worship.         | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(2) | 6(1) |  |

|   | Least<br>Important |   |      |      | Most<br>Important |      |  |
|---|--------------------|---|------|------|-------------------|------|--|
| 3. Uses a variety of resources.                                       | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4    | 5(3)              | 6(2) |  |
| 4. Integrates music into the worship<br>and leads in praise.          | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(2)              | 6(2) |  |
| 5. Provides meaningful pastoral<br>prayers.                           | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(2)              | 6(3) |  |
| 6. Reads the scripture meaningfully.                                  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(3) |  |
| 7. Administers the sacraments,<br>weddings and funerals meaningfully. | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(2) |  |
| 8. Summary rating for Section D.                                      | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(3) |  |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

#### E. Denominational:

|  |   |   |   |      |      |      |  |
|--|---|---|---|------|------|------|--|
| 1. Promotes and assumes responsibility<br>for support of district and general<br>church budgets. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(3) | 6(2) |  |
|--|---|---|---|------|------|------|--|

|    |  | Least<br>Important |   |      |      | Most<br>Important |      |
|----|--|--------------------|---|------|------|-------------------|------|
| 2. | Promotes and assumes responsibility for the district and general programs.               | 1                  | 2 | 3(2) | 4    | 5(3)              | 6(1) |
| 3. | Participates responsibly in life of district and general church.                         | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4    | 5(4)              | 6(2) |
| 4. | Administers the provisions of the MANUAL.  | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(3) | 5                 | 6(3) |
| 5. | Creates a climate of understanding and enthusiasm for church of the Nazarene in general. | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1) | 5(2)              | 6(3) |
| 6. | Challenges the congregation to be more involved in the wider mission of the church.      | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4    | 5(3)              | 6(3) |
| 7. | Summary of rating for Section E.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(2)              | 6(2) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

F. Visitation, Pastoral Care and Counseling:

|    |                               |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|-------------------------------|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Visits the sick and shut-ins. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(1) | 6(4) |
|----|-------------------------------|---|---|---|------|------|------|

|    |   | Least<br>Important |   |   |      | Most<br>Important |      |
|----|---|--------------------|---|---|------|-------------------|------|
| 2. | Provides time for pastoral care of persons..                  | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(4)              | 6(2) |
| 3. | Is acquainted with families and maintains awareness of needs. | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(5) |
| 4. | Counsels adequately as needs arise.                           | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(3)              | 6(2) |
| 5. | Demonstrates caring and support.                              | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(1)              | 6(5) |
| 6. | Organizes congregation for lay visitation.                    | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(1)              | 6(4) |
| 7. | Summary rating for Section F.                                 | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(3)              | 6(3) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

**G. Community and Social Ministry Issues:**

|    |   |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Participates in community organizations, events, and ecumenical agencies. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(2) | 5(3) | 6(1) |
|----|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|

|   | Least<br>Important |   |   | Most<br>Important |      |      |
|---|--------------------|---|---|-------------------|------|------|
| 2. Identifies and responds to community needs and justice or moral issues.                      | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(2)              | 5(3) | 6(1) |
| 3. Provides information concerning social issues and their relationship to the Christian faith. | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(2)              | 5(1) | 6(3) |
| 4. Encourages and supports laypersons to assume responsibility in community life.               | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1)              | 5(1) | 6(4) |
| 5. Influences the church program to be more concerned with social and moral issues.             | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1)              | 5(3) | 6(2) |
| 6. Summary rating for Section G.  | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1)              | 5(3) | 6(2) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

#### H. Management and Administration:

|   |   |   |   |   |      |      |
|---|---|---|---|---|------|------|
| 1. Holds self and others accountable for balance in ministry. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(3) | 6(3) |
|---|---|---|---|---|------|------|

|    |   | Least<br>Important |   |      | Most<br>Important |      |      |
|----|---|--------------------|---|------|-------------------|------|------|
| 2. | Responsible in answering messages and mail.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5(3) | 6(2) |
| 3. | Accepts appropriate responsibility for financial matters, official records and reports. | 1                  | 2 | 3(1) | 4                 | 5    | 6(5) |
| 4. | Challenges, enlists, and develops lay leadership.                                       | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4(1)              | 5    | 6(5) |
| 5. | Follows through on commitments.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5    | 6(6) |
| 6. | Involves others in decision making.   | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5(1) | 6(5) |
| 7. | Utilizes the skills and time of others, volunteer and paid.                             | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5(3) | 6(3) |
| 8. | Understands and encourages lay persons in goal setting, planning and self-study.        | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5(1) | 6(5) |
| 9. | Gives proper leadership to board as to policies, goals and programs.                    | 1                  | 2 | 3    | 4                 | 5(2) | 6(4) |

|                                   | Least<br>Important |   |   |   | Most<br>Important |      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|------|
| 10. Summary rating for Section H. | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(2)              | 6(4) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

I. Relating to People:

|   |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|---|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. Is easy to know.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(2) | 6(4) |
| 2. Listens effectively.                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5    | 6(6) |
| 3. Speaks effectively in conversations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(2) | 6(4) |
| 4. Is supportive of persons.            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(1) | 6(5) |
| 5. Is readily available for all people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5    | 6(5) |
| 6. Summary rating for Section I.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(1) | 6(5) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

J. Leadership Style:

|                                |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. Effectively enables others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(2) | 6(3) |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|------|------|------|

|   | Least<br>Important |   |   |   | Most<br>Important |      |
|---|--------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|------|
| 2. Is effective as an initiator.                      | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(1)              | 6(5) |
| 3. Works cooperatively with:                          |                    |   |   |   |                   |      |
| a. staff.   | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(3)              | 6(3) |
| b. volunteers.  | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(2)              | 6(4) |
| 4. Is flexible in decision making.                    | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(1)              | 6(5) |
| 5. Inspires enthusiasm and self-confidence in others. | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(2)              | 6(4) |
| 6. Summary of rating for Section J.                   | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(2)              | 6(4) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

K. Self-awareness and Professional Growth:

|   |   |   |      |   |      |      |
|---|---|---|------|---|------|------|
| 1. Provides time for personal and theological reflection. | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4 | 5(2) | 6(2) |
| 2. Recognizes strengths and weaknesses.                   | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4 | 5    | 6(4) |



|    |   | Least<br>Important |   |   |      | Most<br>Important |      |
|----|---|--------------------|---|---|------|-------------------|------|
| 3. | Seeks for continuing education opportunities for skill, knowledge and spiritual growth. | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(3)              | 6(1) |
| 4. | Continues to develop in theological, Biblical and spiritual understanding.              | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4    | 5(1)              | 6(4) |
| 5. | Summary rating for Section K.   | 1                  | 2 | 3 | 4(1) | 5(3)              | 6(6) |

Comments and Observations: NONE SUBMITTED

**L. Family, Personal and Work:**

|    |   |   |   |   |   |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|------|------|
| 1. | Provides sufficient time for family.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5    | 6(6) |
| 2. | Provides sufficient time for personal self to assure good ;health, energy and attitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(1) | 6(5) |
| 3. | Provides sufficient time for work.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(1) | 6(5) |
| 4. | Summary rating for Section L.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5(1) | 6(5) |

Comments and observations: NONE SUBMITTED

## ANALYSIS

### PASTORAL EXPECTATIONS<sup>11</sup>

|   | Summary <sup>12</sup> |      | Aggregate <sup>13</sup> |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|------|
|   | Score                 | Rank | Score                   | Rank |
| A. Preaching                                | 5.50                  | 5    | 5.01                    | 10   |
| B. Teaching and Education Ministry          | 5.17                  | 7    | 5.17                    | 6    |
| C. Evangelism                               | 5.17                  | 8    | 5.17                    | 7    |
| D. Worship                                  | 4.5                   | 11   | 4.44                    | 11   |
| E. Denominational                           | 5.00                  | 10   | 5.12                    | 6    |
| F. Visitation, Pastoral Care and Counseling | 5.50                  | 6    | 5.49                    | 5    |
| G. Community and Social Ministry Issues     | 5.17                  | 9    | 5.11                    | 9    |
| H. Management and Administration            | 5.67                  | 3    | 5.58                    | 4    |

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<sup>11</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>12</sup> Summary score is the average of the score in the final summary rating for each section. The lower the rank the higher the priority placed upon this overall area.

<sup>13</sup> Aggregate score is the average of the score for an entire section including the summary score. The lower the rank the higher the priority placed upon this overall area.

|    |  |      |    |      |    |
|----|--|------|----|------|----|
| I. | Relating to People                     | 5.83 | 1  | 5.78 | 2  |
| J. | Leadership Style                       | 5.67 | 4  | 5.64 | 3  |
| K. | Self-awareness and Professional Growth | 4.12 | 12 | 4.4  | 12 |
| L. | Family, Personal and Work              | 5.83 | 2  | 5.88 | 1  |

## PASTOR'S COMMENTS

The high degree of correlation between the average score of the summary section and the total for the section lends credibility to using the rankings for evaluative purposes in spite of the generally small differences. Two anomalies in the areas of preaching and denominational interests exists between rankings of the summary scores and the total scores. Preaching seems more important when thought of in a general or overall sense than when broken down into the listed components. The people seemed to perceive that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in overall priority." Denominational interests, when considered from the perspective of total importance, appears low in priority, yet when viewed from the perspective of the individual areas, the importance of denominational interests increased. Here, the "sum of the parts exceeds the whole." Perhaps more likely the term "denominational" remains vague, while the individual areas convey areas of importance, not necessarily perceived as denominational priorities.

The entrenched small church, according to works by Schaller<sup>14</sup>, Dudley<sup>15</sup>, Cushman<sup>16</sup> and others, identifies the chief function of a pastor as one who loves the people and whom they can love. Thus, one would anticipate high expectations in areas such as personal relations and leadership style. The same sources state that since small churches tend toward poor self images, high expectations in the areas of administration and management for the pastor and

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<sup>14</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, The Small Church is Different! (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982).

<sup>15</sup> Carl S. Dudley, Making the Small Church Effective. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978)

<sup>16</sup> James E. Cushman, Beyond Survival: Revitalizing the Small Church (Parsons, West Virginia: Mclain Printing Co., 1981).

need for a “nice” church facility are also predictable. The small church typically does not place a great emphasis on evangelism and teaching. Again, the results here are typical, presenting no surprises.

The results of the pastoral expectations, coupled with the comments concerning the church’s evaluation of itself, fits First Church of the Nazarene well within the parameters of the typical small entrenched church. Furthermore, the proposed mission statement containing the stated priorities of the church as teaching and evangelism also fits within expectations. This disparity between the perceived priorities of the church, and the internalized priorities of the leaders tends to lead to conflict between any factions in the church or between the church and the pastor. If growth occurs, the pastor’s time becomes diverted away from the existing congregation, thus inhibiting his ability to be the desired lover. Perception of the “new” people as either intruders or as threats may worsen the situation. If growth does not occur, then the congregation tends to feel like failures and blames the pastor for a lack of proper leadership. The history of Levelland First Church of the Nazarene over the past twelve years tends further to verify this evaluation.

I believe the least threatening way to bring growth in a healthy, non-threatening manner exists in the form of small group ministries. The existing congregation will still be at risk if they fail to become actively involved in this ministry. Before the pastoral review on March 11, 1990, the church board will receive an overview of an ongoing ministry based on this concept and asked for input and their willingness to make active commitments to its support.

## PASTORAL EVALUATION DISCUSSION<sup>17</sup>

### by Church Board

1. What has been the pastor's greatest strength this past year?<sup>18</sup>
  - a. Increased pastoral theology studies.<sup>19</sup>
  - b. Start growth program for the church as a whole.
  - c. Motivating others to set goals for themselves and the church.
  - d. Visiting shut-ins and being at the church when needed.
  - e. Education - Biblical knowledge.
  - f. Live for God and willing to serve Him.
  - g. Hard working.
  - h. Much in prayer.
  - i. Good preacher.
  - j. He is starting to listen to people.
  
2. What strengths do you perceive that the pastor has that are especially needed in this church?
  - a. Leadership.
  - b. Will not give on a project.
  - c. Works to get and keep people moving on things.
  - d. Organization and education.
  - e. Shows a lot of concern.

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<sup>17</sup> Tom Floyd, auth./ed., P.I.P. (Pioneer Implementation Procedures): Building Dynamic Leaders and Great Churches (Glendale, AZ: Banner Publishing Co., 1989), n. pag.

<sup>18</sup> Questions in this portion of the self-study were responded to on the basis of the current pastor, Reverend Bill Johnston.

<sup>19</sup> All data reproduced in same form and format as received from the self-study director.

- f. Hard to discourage.
- g. Not easily pushed around.
- i. As hard headed as a West Texan.

3. What area or skill do you hope the pastor will work to improve?

- a. Listening.
  - b. Self-esteem.
  - c. Communication skills with all types of people.
  - d. Style of communication.
  - e. Willingness to listen more to what people have to say.
  - f. Not talk too much.
  - g. Getting along with people better.
  - i. Not coming on so hard in certain areas - some people can't handle this very well as church members.
9. Localize his thinking.

CHURCH BOARD SELF-EVALUATION SURVEY<sup>20</sup>

Rating Scheme:

- “1” indicates “unsatisfactory”
- “2” indicates “mediocre, needs improvement”
- “3” indicates “satisfactory, average, could be strengthened”
- “4” indicates “above average, better than expected”
- “5” indicates “excellent, superior, outstanding”

Church Board Performance<sup>21</sup>

- |    |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Cooperative: the board works with the Pastor to set and achieve goals               | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5    |
| 2. | Teachable: board demonstrates a willingness to learn, grow and try new methods.     | 1 | 2 | 3(4) | 4(1) | 5    |
| 3. | Responsible: board members are serious about accomplishing the church’s objectives. | 1 | 2 | 3(2) | 4(2) | 5(1) |
| 4. | Vision: board members see the big picture and work toward the good of the whole.    | 1 | 2 | 3(2) | 4(2) | 5(1) |

<sup>20</sup> Burnie Burnside, “Pastor-Board Review Instrument,” West Texas District Church of the Nazarene, 1990, 9-10.

<sup>21</sup> Numbers in parenthesis ( ) reflect the number of board members responding with associated score. Six of the seven board members were present and participated in this portion of the self-study.



- 5. Leadership: board members demonstrate sanctified, spiritual leadership. 1 2 3(2) 4(2) 5(1)
- 6. Generosity: this church is exemplary of the way it cares for its pastor. 1 2 3(1) 4(2) 5(1)
- 7. Board meetings are characterized by professionalism, accountability, and cooperation. 1 2 3(2) 4(3) 5
- 8. The church strives for excellence in all of its ministries. 1 2 3(3) 4(1) 5(1)
- 9. What is your understanding of this church’s mission: NO RESPONSE.
- 10. What are the church’s specific, measurable goals for accomplishing its mission? NO RESPONSE.

ANALYSIS OF CHURCH BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

[Scale ranged from 1 (low) to 5 (high)]

|  | MEAN<br>SCORE |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Cooperative                         | 3.8           |
| 2. Teachable                           | 3.2           |
| 3. Responsible                         | 3.8           |
| 4. Vision                              | 3.8           |
| 5. Leadership                          | 3.8           |
| 6. Generosity                          | 3.2           |
| 7. Conduct of board meetings           | 3.6           |
| 8. Church strives for excellence       | 3.6           |
| 9. Over-All Board Self-Evaluation Mean | 3.6           |

REVIEW OF PASTOR SURVEY<sup>22</sup>

Rating Scheme:

- “1” indicates “unsatisfactory”
- “2” indicates “mediocre, needs improvement”
- “3” indicates “satisfactory, average, could be strengthened”
- “4” indicates “above average, better than expected”
- “5” indicates “excellent, superior, outstanding”

CHARACTER TRAITS<sup>23</sup>

|    |  |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|--|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Personal appearance is appropriate for a minister. | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5    |
| 2. | Manners and graces are appropriate for a minister. | 1 | 2 | 3(2) | 4(3) | 5    |
| 3. | Assimilates well into the church fellowship.       | 1 | 2 | 3(3) | 4(2) | 5    |
| 4. | Exhibits spiritual maturity and depth.             | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(4) | 5(1) |

<sup>22</sup> Burnie Burnside, “Pastor-Board Review Instrument,” West Texas District Church of the Nazarene, 1990, 3-8.

<sup>23</sup> Numbers in parenthesis ( ) reflect the number of board members responding with associated score. Six of the seven board members were present and participated in this portion of the self-study.

- |    |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 5. | Is disciplined and self-controlled.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3(3) | 4(2) | 5    |
| 6. | Initiative: ability to be a self-starter.                             | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(5) | 5    |
| 7. | Dependability: keeps word on commitments<br>is faithful and reliable. | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1) | 5(3) |
| 8. | Exhibits integrity and honesty.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(3) | 5(2) |

### PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- |    |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Knowledgeable and competent in area of<br>ministry.                         | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(2) | 5(3) |
| 2. | Keeps abreast of new developments, methods<br>and practices.                | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(3) | 5(2) |
| 3. | Perceived as fully committed to the church,<br>its people and purposes.     | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(3) | 5(1) |
| 4. | Appears to plan and work by established<br>priorities.                      | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(1) | 5(3) |
| 5. | Is a "team player," not a "lone-ranger."                                    | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(5) | 5    |
| 6. | Ability to get work done willingly and with a<br>high degree of enthusiasm. | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(4) | 5(1) |

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

|    |  |   |      |      |      |      |
|----|--|---|------|------|------|------|
| 1. | Work Ethic: does more than is expected.                                    | 1 | 2    | 3(2) | 4(2) | 5(1) |
| 2. | Communication skills: teaching and preaching are clear and understandable. | 1 | 2    | 3(3) | 4(2) | 5    |
| 3. | Influence: ability to influence, motivate, and inspire others.             | 1 | 2(1) | 3    | 4(3) | 5(1) |
| 4. | Team work: ability to select, train and develop volunteer staff.           | 1 | 2    | 3(3) | 4(2) | 5    |
| 5. | Productivity: is accomplishing the objectives of his job description.      | 1 | 2    | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5    |
| 6. | Church Growth: leading the church in growth.                               | 1 | 2(1) | 3(3) | 4(1) | 5    |

PASTORAL CARE

|    |  |   |   |      |      |   |
|----|--|---|---|------|------|---|
| 1. | Interpersonal relations are positive and cooperative.    | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5 |
| 2. | Provides spiritual leadership for those who look to him. | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5 |

|    |  |   |      |      |      |      |
|----|--|---|------|------|------|------|
| 3. | Makes Scripture meaningful and helpful.                                      | 1 | 2    | 3(1) | 4(4) | 5    |
| 4. | Is approachable: I would gladly seek his help in solving a personal problem. | 1 | 2(1) | 3(4) | 4    | 5    |
| 5. | Is available when really needed.   | 1 | 2    | 3    | 4(4) | 5(1) |
| 6. | Is a good listener.  | 1 | 2(2) | 3(3) | 4    | 5    |
| 7. | The ability to plan, organize and start new ministries through the church.   | 1 | 2    | 3(4) | 4(1) | 5    |

ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP

|    |   |   |   |      |      |      |
|----|---|---|---|------|------|------|
| 1. | Demonstrates overall competence, organization and business sense.               | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(4) | 5(1) |
| 2. | Ability to take charge, direct and make sound decisions, and solve problems.    | 1 | 2 | 3(1) | 4(3) | 5(1) |
| 3. | Judgement: ability to evaluate facts, make sound decisions, and solve problems. | 1 | 2 | 3(2) | 4(3) | 5    |
| 4. | Effectively sets and accomplishes goals.  | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4(4) | 5    |
| 5. | Provides clear and consistent directions.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3(4) | 4(1) | 5    |

6.

Has the ability and courage to give constructive criticism in a friendly, firm, and positive manner.

1

2

3(3)

4(2)

5
7.

Innovative: provides fresh, insightful leadership.

1

2

3(4)

4(1)

5

OVER-ALL EVALUATION

1.

Exhibits character traits of Galatians 5:22-23 (i.e. love, patience, self-control, kindness, goodness, gentleness).

1

2

3(2)

4(3)

5
2.

Possesses the knowledge, and skills to effectively function in this capacity.

1

2

3(3)

4(2)

5
3.

Spiritual growth: people in the church are growing spiritually.

1

2(1)

3(1)

4(3)

5
4.

Organizational growth: development of the organizational structure.

1

2

3(2)

4(2)

5(1)
5.

Numerical growth: attendance and membership are growing.

1

2(3)

3(2)

4

5
6.

Pastoral relations: confidence in this person as a spiritual leader.

1

2

3(2)

4(3)

5

7. Shall the present pastoral relationship continue? YES(4) NO(1)



ANALYSIS OF REVIEW OF PASTOR  
[Scale ranged fro 1 (low) to 5 (high)]

CHARACTER TRAITS

|                                     | MEAN<br>SCORE |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Personal appearance              | 3.8           |
| 2. Manners and graces               | 3.6           |
| 3. Assimilates well into fellowship | 3.4           |
| 4. Spiritual maturity               | 4.2           |
| 5. Disciplined and self-controlled  | 3.4           |
| 6. Initiative                       | 4.0           |
| 7. Dependability                    | 4.4           |
| 8. Integrity and honesty            | 4.4           |
| 9. Character Traits Mean            | 3.9           |

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Competency and knowledge                  | 4.6 |
| 2. | Current in ministry developments          | 4.4 |
| 3. | Committed to the church                   | 4.0 |
| 4. | Plans and work priorities                 | 4.4 |
| 5. | Team player                               | 4.0 |
| 6. | Ability to get work done enthusiastically | 4.2 |
| 7. | Professional Skills Mean                  | 4.3 |

## JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

|    |                      |     |
|----|----------------------|-----|
| 1. | Work Ethic           | 3.8 |
| 2. | Communication skills | 3.4 |
| 3. | Influence            | 3.2 |
| 4. | Team work            | 3.4 |
| 5. | Productivity         | 3.8 |

6. Church Growth 3.0

7. Job Responsibilities Mean 3.4

## PASTORAL CARE

1. Interpersonal relations 3.2

2. Spiritual leadership 3.8

3. Makes Scripture meaningful and helpful. 3.8

4. Approachable 2.8

5. Availability 4.2

6. A good listener 2.6

7. Plan, organize, and start new ministries 3.2

8. Pastoral Care Mean 3.4

## ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP

1. Overall competence 4.2

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 2. | Leadership                              | 4.0 |
| 3. | Judgement                               | 3.6 |
| 4. | Effectiveness in achieving goals        | 3.2 |
| 5. | Ability to provide directions.          | 3.2 |
| 6. | Constructive criticism given positively | 3.4 |
| 7. | Innovative                              | 3.2 |
| 8. | Administration and Leadership Mean      | 3.5 |

#### OVER-ALL EVALUATION

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Exhibits fruits of the Spirit               | 3.6 |
| 2. | Possesses requisite knowledge and skills    | 3.2 |
| 3. | Spiritual growth                            | 3.2 |
| 4. | Organizational growth                       | 3.8 |
| 5. | Numerical growth                            | 2.4 |
| 6. | Pastoral relations and spiritual confidence | 3.6 |

|    |   |              |
|----|---|--------------|
| 7. | Over-All Evaluation Mean                          | 3.3          |
| 8. | Shall the present pastoral relationship continue? | YES(4) NO(1) |

## DISCUSSION REVIEW OF PASTOR<sup>24</sup> by Church Board

What do you see as this person's greatest strengths?

Honest, hardworking; sincere; dedicated, good person, means well, believes in what he is doing. Professional skills - knowledge of the Bible and teaching, Business procedures and organization, staying within guidelines of denomination. He tries to be fair and does not run from problems. Education, Prayerful life, supportive wife.<sup>25</sup>

What do you see as this person's ministry successes?

He will always have problems until he learns to handle people and problems smoother and with more tact. Preaches the Gospel, visits the sick will [sic], organization - Establishes some positive ways of doing business, Establish goals for himself, trying to encourage members to become leaders. He has prompted me to reevaluate my own motives for coming to church; caused us to think thru "what is our church doing, and why?" Cooperative and talented wife, sermons and church services always open and God filled. Self-sacrificing for church.

What can this staff member do to improve his job performance?

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<sup>24</sup> Burnie Burnside, "Pastor-Board Review Instrument," West Texas District Church of the Nazarene, 1990, 10.

<sup>25</sup> All data reproduced in same form and format as received from the self-study director.

Not be so hard at times on certain subjects. Study "P.R." more and use it daily as needed - Learn to listen more. Visitation of non-attenders. Not offend people so much -Seems to rub people the wrong way. Not make the running of the church so complicated. Begin to initiate programs to encourage - Get better feel for members tendencies and personalities. Improve listening skills - Accepting others point of view when not totally wrong - Get along with people better. Localize his thinking.

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