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ABSTRACT

A Descriptive Dissertation on Trust Development
Between Pastor and Parish

Larry Edward Houck

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the factors which contribute to trust formation between a pastor and parish. This study was done in the context of a Free Methodist church in Western Pennsylvania whose average pastoral tenure has been 2.3 years in its 115 year history. The principal participants are the pastor and the heads of the administrative commissions. The thesis of this study is that trust building happens effectively when the pastor is aware of the the factors contributing to trust and is thereby able to respond to the needs of the congregation more effectively. The end result will be longer pastoral tenure.

The chapters of this dissertation are built around the Case Study model presently being used by Asbury Theological Seminary to encourage its students to evaluate professional action and to do critical thinking. This method has been used widely and effectively in the disciplines of law, business and medicine. However, Asbury has refined the

method to be more self-referrent so the student will do critical reflection with an end toward professional and personal growth. The goal is to blend the transfer of knowledge and content with personal and professional reflection.

Level I is the presentation of the background information that places the reader in the ministry setting. In Level II the writer mulls over the event from the previous level in order to do critical analysis. Research then bridges the abstract with the concrete in order that the writer might gain objectivity in the ministry event. Level III contains the conclusions concerning the theories uncovered, the writer's professional effectiveness and decisions regarding future ministry.

The major conclusion of this study is that a pastor's tenure, personal fulfillment and ministry effectiveness hinges on a climate of trust. The important factors of trust building which emerge from the research are the factors of familiarity, compatibility, self-disclosure and leadership styles.

The findings include the following. Familiarity is important to trust building in that what is familiar is trusted more readily than that which is unknown. Trust building occurs slowly over many contacts. Compatibility contributes to trust when the pastor and people are able to

meet on the common ground of role expectations. Self-disclosure becomes important to trust building as the pastor and parish allow each other to be themselves. This directs energy away from facade building and into a positive investment in the relationship. Leadership styles play an important role in trust formation as the pastor moves the church away from a nontrusting authoritarian environment to the shared leadership through participative modeling.

In this writer's opinion the Case Study Method has been useful in pinpointing areas of ministry strengths and weaknesses and has provided valuable reflection for growth.

A DESCRIPTIVE DISSERTATION ON TRUST DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN PASTOR AND PARISH

by

LARRY E. HOUCK

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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May 10, 1988

AUTHORIZATION

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Signed Jerry Edward Powell.

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THE LORD REIGNS, LET THE EARTH BE GLAD! Psalm 97:1

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A DESCRIPTIVE DISSERTATION ON TRUST DEVELOPMENT
BETWEEN PASTOR AND PARISH

Introduction

Trust is the key ingredient of any deep and meaningful relationship. Trust is defined by one dictionary as the "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something."¹ Trust is implied faith based on experience from the past or on some definite evidence in hand. Where trust is low relationships will be strained and rigid.

The absence of trust in the church setting can bear devastating results. "If pastors and their boards don't trust each other, the church will be unhealthy, and...the pastor's tenure will be brief and unpleasant."² In the words of Jack Gibb, the "trust level is the thermometer of

¹ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary s.v. "trust."

² Marshall Shelley, Well-Intentioned Dragons (Waco, Tx.: Word Books, 1985), p. 98.

individual and group health."³

When you couple this understanding of trust with the report that the average pastoral tenure is four years in the United States⁴ one can only wonder if perhaps many pastoral appointments are being aborted because trust has not been developed in such a way as to bond the pastor and parish together.

This, then, brings up a number of questions. Assuming that trust development is a key factor in building relationships, is it safe to say that more effective ministry will happen where there is a climate of high trust? How does a pastor create and build a climate of trust between himself and parish leaders? What factors contribute to high trust and a supportive system? How is conflict managed in a high trust climate? Will a trusting environment pave the way for a longer pastoral tenure?

My personal observation is that the Christian minister tends to move entirely too often. The result is that the personal development and growth of the pastor and church

³ Jack R. Gibb, Trust-A New View of Personal and Organizational Development (La Jolla, Cal.: Omicron Press, 1978), p. 14.

⁴ Gary McIntosh, "Deciding To Leave," The Win Arn Growth Report (Pasadena, California: No. 11)

leaders is often sacrificed. However, if a climate of trust could be developed where the pastor and people could share openly without fear of reprisal or being replaced, each in turn might be able to mature and confront problems long buried.

My assumptions are that where there is a climate of high trust, conflict will be managed creatively and in an integrative way. This will create a more cooperative effort toward effective ministry and goal realization as the church moves away from internal problem solving to ministry tasks. It is also my assumption that where trust exists there will be an environment of collaboration and participation between the pastor and his leadership team. Such an atmosphere will allow the problems of the church to be dealt with in a positive fashion, while at the same time creating a team approach to ministry.

This study originates from my own questions concerning trust building in the pastoral ministry and my own personal area of need. My questions and frustrations have spurred me to seek an understanding of the variables which affect trust, which in turn affect pastoral effectiveness. While this study is done in the context of a Free Methodist Church in Western Pennsylvania, my hope is that it will produce a positive focus on trust formation which will be of help to others in their ministry settings.

LEVEL I
REFLECTION

Focus Statement

I am the pastor of the Oil City First Free Methodist Church in Western Pennsylvania. On January 10, 1987 I met with the newly organized Ministries Committee and invited them to assist me in problem solving concerning a difficult church member. The major focus of this study is: How does a pastor develop a trust relationship with his or her parish so that he or she is given the support needed to carry out effective ministry?

Background

The Church's Background

The Oil City First Free Methodist Church was formed in 1871 in the Western Pennsylvania town of Oil City. The congregation has worshiped in its present building since 1923 and has had a long and illustrious history. The church had its birth just eleven years after the beginning of the Free Methodist Denomination. The church was first part of the New York Susquehanna Conference, then the Genesee

Conference in 1873. In 1884 the Oil City First church became the birthplace of the Pittsburgh Conference. Many Free Methodist Churches rapidly sprung up in the northwestern part of Pennsylvania so that the Pittsburgh Conference divided to form the Oil City Conference in 1898. Oil City was central to this northwest region thus it became known as the Oil City Conference. In fact, the meeting of incorporation for the Oil City Conference was held in Oil City.

The oil industry located in the region brought a steady flow of dollars into the Oil City First Church so that it found itself more wealthy than most for that time. The church facilities were and still are the largest in the Conference today. The Oil City First Church had the distinction of being the largest congregation in the Conference for years, with an average attendance of more than 300. In the 1950's and '60's the church experienced a revival atmosphere as it reached out to the community. However, it fell into decline beginning in the late 1960's and has never fully recovered its former glory. The church lost a number of key laypersons as the city began to decline due to the loss of major businesses and changes in the oil industry.

The church had been known throughout the Conference for its strong lay leadership comprised mostly of white collar

workers. These persons were prominent as they gave leadership to many areas of the conference. Very often Conference Superintendents were elected to that office while pastoring the Oil City Church, or were appointed to be its pastor following their time as Superintendent. The church membership tended to be older, as one member put it, "looking over the congregation on a Sunday morning was like looking over a sea of white hair." Worship services were dramatic with spontaneous testimonies and other emotional evidences such as "shouting" happening regularly. With the passing of time the church turned inward and lost its evangelistic zeal. As they turned inward greater value was placed on a life-style of conformity and rules.

The road that led me to Oil City First had been a long one. Sensing the need for a pastoral change I had contacted four different conferences to see what openings might be available. After three years of serving in a largely legalistic conference I was wanting to be free to get on with more significant ministry. Meanwhile, the Oil City First Church was in dialogue with the Superintendent and had requested that I be appointed as their pastor. Through the 1970's they had gained a reputation for being the bastion of legalism in the conference and became known for their insistence on external standards, keeping the "old paths" and being narrow minded. I searched my heart and asked God

for another opening. On April 15, 1984 the delegates from Oil City visited the church I was pastoring to dialogue with me and invite me to visit them. There were no apparent openings in the conferences I had contacted so the dialogue began with Oil City. As I struggled in prayer the Lord seemed to be saying to me, If I could call the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles why can't I call Larry Houck to the legalists. Searching my heart I saw it would take a person who had come out of an environment where legalism prevailed, who knew the pitfalls, to minister effectively if the church was to experience healthy change. Following a period of fasting and prayer I accepted the appointment. Within the weeks that followed that commitment was tested as three conferences called with appealing openings.

The church that I will be describing is not reflective of all Free Methodist Churches or the Denomination. It is more reflective of a legalistic subculture known in some areas of the Free Methodist Denomination. In this particular subculture the Christian views him or herself as the "guardian of the faith." This came about as evangelists and pastors of the past preached the doctrine of external rules that were said to lead to holiness. The list of rules were viewed as proof of a person's inner holy life. What has developed is a list of "standards" which are not biblically based. The emphasis is on a person's conformity

although no one can remember where such rules of conformity are found in the Bible.

Before the writer's appointment as pastor in June of 1984 the church had dwindled to a membership of 81, along with diminishing finances, attendance and morale. The church had developed a reputation of being judgmental and authoritarian. During the first prayer meeting after my appointment to this church my wife and I had a discourse directed at us by the prayer meeting leader about "keeping the old paths." He said he knew where the others were so he would direct his remarks to us. Such things as keeping the external standards of the church were his main points of emphasis. The others sat huddled on the back two rows of the chapel and left quickly after it was over. My worst fears were being confirmed. Criticism of my ministry was heard often and loudly but little constructive support was given. As pastor I came "under the gun" regularly and it had a wearing effect on my ministry effectiveness.

In matters of discipline I found myself in a no-win situation. There was no forum to discuss problems, gather information concerning their history, or make plans for the future. The energy of the church was being diverted into protection from the constant infighting. It was clear I stood alone "at the top," the target of all. I inherited a secretary who had no apparent secretarial skills, and a

alcoholic custodian who practiced his vice in the church while on the job, even though he was a full member. My attempts to fire them were headed off by some on the Official Board who let me know they would not tolerate interference with what was described as "charity cases" in an effort to help the poor. I later discovered that these employees were a part of an information net-work that kept the power mongers informed of who came or called and what I was doing in the office.

The Official Board prevented the committees from carrying out their work. Each committee built walls to protect itself and guard it's own turf. There was little sharing of information and even less support of one another. When committees did their work it was often discarded or ignored by the Official Board. The Board usually spent between two to three hours in a meeting essentially doing committee business. The Board was basically a "no" voting board who saw its task, as one member described it, "to prevent the pastor from getting his way too much." This was a highly coercive system which kept persons in their place by fear of punishment or non-acceptance. The congregation walked on tiptoe for fear of saying or doing the wrong thing that would bring down the wrath of the power persons. One joke circulated that "Brother BG was watching and would tell" if you did something the church thought was wrong.

This seemed to be the ultimate fear. Consequently, people who did not hold the power would avoid conflict by handling the others with kid-gloves and suspicion. Some of the younger families shared that they felt used. They were permitted to do the work but were not permitted to have part of the decision making. The power persons tended to be white haired and in their 60's through 80's. They had gained a reputation by keeping external rules, such as wearing no jewelry or make-up and requiring long hair and long dresses for the women. These external rules became the standard for knowing if a person was living a holy life.

Congregational priorities included concerns for inclusion, conformity, status and facade building in order to be accepted by the inner core. Yet there was little caring and fellowship evident. The congregation simply did not get together with other church people except on Sundays. There were frequent power struggles and the congregation responded with resistance, rigidity, passivity and apathy. The serving positions of the church were often filled by coercion and pressure. It was difficult, to say the least, to find people to serve. Persons who were on the inner circle tended to look, think, act, dress and even pray the same. Anything different was purged from the group, whether it was a new idea or a new person. Attenders were told how to dress, when to get a haircut and what to believe. A

favorite theme was "Since God never changes neither should we." One angry Board member made the remark that he had not heard the Bible preached in this church for the last ten years. When I asked what he meant he responded that as pastor I wasn't preaching "standards," meaning the external rules.

One layman from another church was overheard joking to others that "of course we all know that the real site for the nativity was just under the foundation of the Oil City First Church." They had gained this reputation because of the endless list of prohibitives. No films or slides could be shown in the sanctuary; only the KJV could be used from the pulpit; no musical instruments other than the organ could be used in the church; those who preach from the pulpit should not wear a wedding band; the organist must have long hair and wear no jewelry; and the list goes on. I was told that a woman could be saved and have short hair but if she was sanctified she would have long hair.

Official Board meetings were characterized by low trust, high suspicion, legalism, score keeping, constant peace keeping, and heavy domination by a few authoritarian laymen. The Official board was comprised of persons primarily who were past the age of retirement. A number of younger families had left the church a few years earlier when it became apparent that the church was not going to

allow change and by 1984 few middle aged persons remained in the church. The younger persons who had not left were rarely trusted to serve in leadership positions on the Official Board.

The members of the Board appeared closed, rigid, inflexible and dogmatic in their opinions. They controlled each other by the withholding of approval and acceptance and by fear. The goal expressed by one Board member was to, "keep the world from creeping into the church." Legalistic rules were clung to tightly and enforced when possible. It was in this spirit that the Delegate asked the writer's wife not to wear her wedding band or any jewelry, not to wear slacks or shorts in the parsonage or on church grounds, and was exhorted to let her hair grow since that was "Scriptural." As pastor I was told not to rock the boat by using any version of the Bible other than the King James since all others were "PERversions." I was told what kind of work was permissible on a Sunday, which restaurants Christians should eat in and even what make and color of car I should own. It was made clear that the pastor should not own a TV set.

The Official Board had final say about nearly everything that happened in the church, spending its time determining such things as whether a baby shower should be held in the Fellowship Hall or whether the pastor should go

to a required retreat. All expenditures small and great had to be approved by this Board as well. Decisions were made on the basis of subjective feelings. It was not uncommon for certain power persons to punctuate board meetings with outbursts of hostility and brandished fists. The church was clearly functioning out of an authoritarian management style. Anything other than an authoritarian style was interpreted as weakness. The older saints reflected frequently on the "good old days" and regularly made vocal their comparisons and complaints in public places.

Several board members let me know that they expected their pastor to be "a real leader." Yet it was clear they resented it when I took the initiative. I was told in the first board meeting that it would take more than just myself to make this church grow, it would take my wife also. For this reason they forbade my wife from seeking employment as a registered nurse.

There had been many situations where I had taken it on the chin from some of the church leadership. However, not all in leadership were this way. Some I found to be godly persons who truly wanted to see the church grow. They were not so much opposed to growth, but they were unsure of how to bring it about. The leadership of the church needed to move from its high suspicion and learn to trust me and trust each other. The power needed to be wrenched from the hands

of the legalists and given to the capable hands of others. The energies of the church needed to be redirected into mapping out a direction so we could get on with ministry. All the programs of the church, without exception, were directed inward to the saints. Nothing was being done for the community to reach out to bring the unsaved to Christ. When a new person found the Lord, he or she would have to go through a long period of proving themselves before being accepted. The process of church membership could take as long as two or three years.

The congregation shut itself away from the community by appearing at the church nearly every night of the week for committee or board meetings, improving the facilities, or to attend another church service. The theology in operation was that the church was not to associate with the world. There was a fear that such association would expose them to infectious sin which would destroy their holiness.

Clearly, some members of the Official Board needed to be moved aside and new leadership brought into place. The Official Board's power needed to be decentralized and shared with others. The solution was not in punishing the congregation with heavy sermons, but by bringing change to the decision makers on the Official Board. I saw clearly I could not take on the whole church, but maybe I could make a difference by working with a few. Since the Official Board

consummed its time with many insignificant items of business it needed to be redirected toward positive action and forward thinking. The best way I could think to accomplish this was by restructuring the Official Board, knowing that some would recognize their loss of power and step aside. I needed a supportive structure that would result in close teamwork and a climate of trust. A case that illustrates this point happened on October 24, 1985. A brief Official Board meeting was called for the Trustees to report back on a task given them. One man became angry over the report and with red face began verbally attacking Paul, the chairman of the Trustees. He knocked some chairs around and after his emotional tirade literally jerked his handicapped wife out of her chair and dragged her from the room. A half-a-dozen others left behind him, sensing more was to come. However, Paul, the chairman of the Trustees, took the abuse like a true Christian. As the first man left the room another man picked up the theme but turned the attack on me, accusing me for things that happened ten years before my appointment here. When I could retrieve the floor I shared that I felt these complaints were not the real issue. I perceived the real issue to be an attempt to see who was going to get the power in the church. The spirit that we had seen was not the Spirit of Christ but the Spirit of Darkness. I then called for them to learn to live in a spirit of love and

mutual respect or have their resignation to all their positions on my desk by the coming Sunday. We were not going to tolerate these outbursts any longer. We closed in prayer. Everyone left stunned. I went home and had a mini-breakdown. The next day a board member explained that the church had never stood up to these persons because the pastors would not have stood behind them if they had. Furthermore, he pledged to stand behind me regardless of the outcome. We were committed. There was no turning back now.

Something had to be done to give the honest people of the church a chance. I began researching and working toward the restructuring of the Official Board as allowed by the Book of Discipline, Par. 402.10, planting the seed informally and in committee meetings. My goal was to help the church move from an authoritarian, coercive climate to one that was more democratic and collaborative. On March 25, 1986 the Official Board took the initial step toward structural changes by voting that we research ways to move us toward effective, supportive ministry. Some changes had already begun happening when one of the men spoken of above left the church and the other refused to attend Board meetings. On June 11, 1986 the Board voted to restructure itself to offer supportive systems for its leaders, begin to minister by reaching out to the community, and broaden its decision making base by bringing more persons into

leadership positions. It has been a different church ever since. The median age of the Board has dropped from about 67 to about 41. Since that time our new Evangelism Outreach Commission has lead us into significant community outreach. New converts are being added regularly.

The church met September 20, 1986 to work through the formation of a Mission Statement. The newly formed Ministries Committee reworked the material into more complete form. The Official Board put the finishing touches on it before presenting it to the congregation. On February 4, 1987 the society gathered to vote its approval and received the statement in its final form. Since then the church met again in May of 1987 to formulate its goals and the Official Board is presently working with the results for building a strategy. Things are not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but I believe we have the tools to work out our problems.

The basic foundation of the Restructure Document is that the church leaders are linked together so that each person has a "supportive structure." The term "supportive structure" refers to the shared leadership of teams so that each person receives the encouragement and assistance needed to effectively accomplish problem solving and task assignments. The pastor's support team is the Ministries Committee which is comprised of the chairpersons of each of

the five commissions. The chairperson's support team is the commission he or she leads. The Ministries Committee meets the Saturday before each scheduled Official Board meeting. Here we handle sensitive issues and do problem solving. Time is spent in prayer that each will be successful in their respective Commissions. I now have a forum to air problem situations. These persons also meet in my office to pray for me and the worship team before each worship service. We are sensing more unity than ever before.

The Commissions meet one hour before the Official Board each month. Here they work through an agenda that has been agreed on in the Ministries Committee. They in turn bring in recommendations to the Official Board for consideration. Controversial issues are placed before the Board as a "Study Item." This can be discussed freely knowing that no action will be taken until the next months meeting. We no longer come in for business meetings each week-night. Now the pastor and people are free to be in the community as God's people. The pastor does not have to sit on every committee meeting of the church. The chairpersons are trusted to handle the work in the best way. The result is that the Board has become a "yes" voting board and are seeking new ways to accomplish their tasks. Younger Christians have been invited into the decision making process and new leaders are being developed. There does not seem to be the

shortage of willing servants there once was. The disruptive personalities have lost power and have resigned or were voted out of their positions, thus opening the way for new leadership to come forward.

Case Presenter's Background (Larry)

My age at the time of the encounter to be described was 40. Having been appointed to this church at age 37, I am the youngest of the 50 pastors who have served in the church's 115 years of history. I have lived in this conference since the age of 10 and know it well. It was not until I attended Asbury Theological Seminary in 1974 that I discovered there was anything different from the legalism under which I had grown up. A process of careful assessment and growth began during that period that has brought personal spiritual freedom. When being considered to pastor the Oil City First church I resisted the appointment because I was not anxious to be re-submerged into the restrictive confinement of a legalistic sub-culture again. Oil City First is well known for its legalistic orientation, although they themselves are not aware of how they are perceived.

My undergraduate work was done at God's Bible School, a school known for its legalistic traditions and religious

peer pressure. I was graduated in 1970 with the Bachelor of Theology degree. We moved to the Oil City Conference where I pastored four years and could say with the Apostle Paul that I was a "Pharisee of the Pharisees." I understood holiness to be the keeping of the external rules and I preached it often. I was accepted at Asbury Theological Seminary in 1974 to prepare for missionary service and was graduated with the Master of Divinity degree in 1977. During this time of preparation I began a pilgrimage toward spiritual freedom. My wife and I were appointed as missionaries to the Philippines and Indonesia for a tour of duty from 1977-81. Following the completion of our work overseas we returned and pastored another church in the Oil City Conference until our appointment to the Oil City First Church in June of 1984.

Until my time at Asbury Seminary I was only aware of leadership styles that were strongly autocratic and authoritarian. However, it was not until I entered the Doctor of Ministries program that I got a handle on leadership styles through a study of the Rensis Likert materials and others in the field. As a result of this study of leadership styles I began consciously making an effort to move out of the authoritarian leadership style I had known so well. I could not say I ever knew a leader in the church, be it pastor or otherwise, who was not strongly

authoritarian, until my move to Asbury in 1974.

With my own personal pilgrimage came a shift in my theological viewpoint of heart purity and the deeper life in Christ. I discovered that holiness was not the keeping of peer pressure rules. Living the holy life was what happened as I sought to please God with all my heart every moment of each day. It was no longer important that I please others as long as I had the confirmation that I pleased God. This shift set Christ as the center of my life rather than guarding the traditions and maintaining the rules. This process happened gradually over a period of time with the help of many gentle people who loved me when I did not deserve it. Their love and patience paved the way for me to discover that my life of prohibitions was actually a life of spiritual weakness (1 Corinthians 8:7-13). Returning to a legalistic setting was a painful experience after I had found such personal freedom.

A turning point happened at Oil City when I began moving away from facade building and began to risk sharing my true feelings with the church. During a Revival Service in April of 1985 I made my first step toward an open relationship with the congregation. The Evangelist had preached on being free in the Spirit. I clearly felt the pressure of spiritual bondage due to the church's prohibitives. At the close of the service I asked the

congregation to release me from any supposed agreement they thought they had with me concerning these issues and I freed them from any assumed agreement they thought I had with them. I felt as if I was behind bars when I was with them and had to be set free. If they could not allow me to be myself as God intended I suggested they talk to their delegate so he could begin looking for a new pastor before the next Annual Conference that June. The Evangelist asked those who would give us support in prayer to gather around the altar to pray. During that time of prayer I was truly set free from the bondage I had experienced.

The Ministries Committee's Backbround

The Ministries Committee⁵ began functioning as a team August of 1986. The Chairpersons to the five major Commissions are the members of the Ministries Committee. We meet at a specified time each month to handle any needs and do problem solving in preparation for the next Official Board meeting. We also discuss the agenda of each Commission for that month. It is not uncommon for us to

⁵The names of the Ministries Committee members and the principal foil of the case has been changed to protect their identity.

spend a block of time ministering to each other through prayer and Bible study. We pray for the success of each and share insights and information that might help the other do his or her job better.

Luke's Background. Luke was the newest member on the Ministries Committee. He is 62 years old and newly retired from the accounting department of the National Fuel Company. Luke had not been active in the church except for teaching a Junior Sunday School class. This was primarily because of living in another town where he worked week-days and driving to Oil City on week-ends. Having recently retired, Luke is bringing his financial expertise to the Finance Committee of which he is chairman. Luke considers himself to be a good friend of the principal foil of this case and views him as one of the spiritual leaders of the church. Luke has expressed his desire to see the church go back to the way it was 30 years ago. He does not handle conflict well and has been known to look the other way when confronted with hard reality. Luke does not require the adherence to the external rules by his family, but agrees with those who do. He moves easily between both groups. He has been a member of the church about 10 years.

Gerry's Background. Gerry is 66 years old and

serves as the chairperson to the Commission on Social Concerns. She is a capable worker and often gives long hours of voluntary service to the church. Gerry is a long standing member of the church who has been there through several difficult periods in the church's history. She has been a part of and defensive of the "inner-circle" and has a strong orientation to tradition, however, I believe she is a good woman who sincerely desires to serve the Lord. Gerry can be critical and judgmental when things do not go her way. She dominates her extended family and those who surround her. When angry she will bring up things from the past and has been sharp in her criticism of those who do not live by the external rules. Gerry has become explosive and tearful on several occasions as she defends the "standards" of the church. She clearly sees herself as one of the "guardians of the faith." She has been a member of the church about 40 years.

Paul's Background. Paul, at the age of 75, is recognized as the spiritual leader of the church by his peers. He is a wise and patient man who has been refined by the fires of persecution. Paul is retired as a foreman from the Pennzoil Oil Company and has proven his spiritual maturity in and out of church. He had been identified with the legalistic group but recently has shown an openness to

new ideas. Paul very capably serves as the chairman to the Board of Trustees. He was reserve delegate when the writer was appointed pastor of the Oil City Church in 1984, but was elected delegate December 1986, replacing Albert. Paul has been supportive of the writer and has encouraged the gradual change toward a more biblical theology. Paul has been a member of the church for about 35 years.

Mark's Background. At the age of 31 Mark is the youngest member of the Ministries Committee and is an hourly worker at the Pennzoil Oil Company. Mark has said that he senses a call to be at the Oil City First Church just as keenly as any pastor could. He is the Director of the Commission on Christian Education. Mark is very analytical and has been a great help in identifying issues and dealing with problems. He is responsible and reliable, although insensitive to feelings at times. The church has recognized his gifts by placing him in several important positions in the past. He knows the church about as well as anyone. Mark is not legalistic in external issues, but tends to be dogmatic. He has been a member of the church for 13 years.

John's Background. John is the newest Christian on the Ministries Committee. He made a clear commitment to God about 4 years ago and has been a great help in organizing

the Commission on Evangelism Outreach, of which he is the Chairman. John is 49 years old and now serves as the church custodian after having been layed off work for about two years. He has been showing growth and maturity in his attitudes and spiritual life. John is a former Air Force Crew Chief and often states his opinions forcefully. He runs a tight ship at home among his wife and three teen-age sons and tends to be dogmatic in his opinions. John does not have the rules orientation that is so prevalent in the church. John has been a member of the church for two years.

The Background of the Foil For the Case (Albert)

Albert is 76 years old. He is not a member of the Ministries Committee but is the principle foil for the case. Albert has been a member of the Oil City Free Methodist Church for 49 years and has served the church in many capacities including church treasurer for 23 years, during which he proudly claims he "never made a mistake." He also was the delegate to Annual Conference for nearly 20 years. He was the delegate responsible for bringing me to Oil City. He prides himself in having sat on every major committee and board in the church. Albert clearly assumes he is right with God on the basis of an experience that happened long

ago. The proof that this is still in effect is that he has not broken the external rules. However it seems unimportant that there is little love shown in his attitudes toward other Christians. He has proven his "perfection" by carefully following the external rules and putting pressure on those who do not.

Albert had been a supervisor at the local Pennzoil Oil Company before his retirement. He has skillfully used political means to get approval for the church business items he supports. He spends much time on the phone convincing people to vote his way and finding out how many votes he can count on. He has a way of drawing people into controversy and then withdrawing while everyone slugs it out. He has drawn the church into heavy financial commitments, often not supporting the decision with his own giving. He recently convinced the church to give heavily to support a building campaign at one of our demoninational colleges, promising to pay a third of the commitment over a three year period. When the three year period had ended Albert had only paid a fraction of what he had promised. The church was put on the spot and ended up absorbing the difference.

Albert asked permission in October of 1984 to install a large stained glass window behind the pulpit as a memorial gift to the church. He promised the Finance Committee, the

Trustees and the Official Board that this was a memorial gift and he would pay all the expenses. He wanted to give the window now rather than leave the church money upon his death. The window was completed amid a cloud of controversy. Albert decided the \$10,400. price tag was going to be too much and asked the Finance Committee for the privilege of soliciting from persons out of state. They agreed as long as the congregation was not solicited. He proceeded to write persons in a number of states, using church stationery and stamps. He followed up the letter with phone calls which were billed to the church phone. Then letters were written to everyone in the congregation on church stationery. Some families threatened to quit attending because they received as many as six or seven phone calls from Albert asking how much they would give. Albert claimed I was trying to scuttle his project because I did not make a pledge due to a heavy commitment I already had to another church project.

The Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees met jointly to straighten out the matter. Albert finally admitted he had no intention of giving any money toward the window unless it did not come in from these other sources. Furthermore, he would not turn the plans over to the Trustees as he had earlier agreed to do. The committees were kept in the dark as he contacted all the companies and

accepted a bid, not sharing any information about the project. He came to the office several days a week taking up secretarial time and calling the parsonage nearly every lunch hour after we sat down to eat. He met with the Finance Committee again, but this time in an attempt to get them to divide the unraised portion of the cost among themselves. The church was growing weary of his manipulation. When I asked him to sign a contract that stated he would pay for the window he became angry and refused stating that I didn't trust him. He finally agreed to pay one fourth of the price after receiving pressure from the Finance Committee. It was a difficult time and I almost resigned from the pressure I received. The Trustees, the Finance Committee, the Official Board and the membership were upset and I became tangled in the middle trying to keep peace. We were all glad when it was over in March of 1986 and agreed that we had learned some difficult lessons.

After the new structure was approved in June of 1986 Albert began searching the financial statements for what he thought were irregularities. One such irregularity he claimed he found had to do with money being given by several persons for a sanctuary piano. About six hundred dollars had been given up to that point. The treasurer had asked me what to do since this was not an approved project. I told him to inform the givers that since there was no such fund

the Official Board and Finance Committee might recommend that it be put to use somewhere else. If that did not meet with their approval the money should be given back or channeled into another fund of their choosing. Each agreed to leave it as it was. The treasurer had been reporting it monthly for five months and asked the board to make it official or tell him what to do with it although they made no suggestions. Months later Albert came into the Finance Committee and reported that I had been collecting money illegally to push a piano over on the church. He insisted this be brought to the Official Board. In the Board meeting Albert insisted the matter be brought to the Society. In order to keep the peace this was approved. When the Society gathered on July 9, 1986 they voted to buy a sanctuary piano when the funds became available and empowered the Music Committee to do the purchasing. Nearly \$5,000. came in overnight and they bought a beautiful baby grand that week. The Conference Superintendent received a call from Albert saying that I was not following the Book of Discipline, along with other complaints. The Superintendent supported my handling of the matter.

Meanwhile, the new structure had been approved and put into place. Albert stepped up his investigation by going back into the finance statements from the time I arrived as pastor. He attempted to get confidential information from

the church auditor and even called the Conference Superintendent, two former pastors, the treasurer and former treasurer and other persons in the church. He asked each not to tell me what they had discussed. He was suggesting that I had received more pay than I was entitled to and was misusing church funds. Ultimately he was working toward my dismissal by the next Annual Conference. He had written all the injustices on 3X5 cards which he claimed happened from the first week I had been appointed. He brought them out in the Finance and Nominating Committees and Official Board to put me on the spot in front of the others. He tried to use his influence in the Nominating Committee to get Paul voted out of all his church offices because he had come to my defense in one of the meetings.

The Society met December 3, 1986 to elect the officers of the church for the year of 1987. Albert was not re-elected as delegate and lost his seat on the Official Board. He argued that he should still be on the Official Board and phoned the Conference Superintendent who confirmed that what I had said was correct according to the Book of Discipline. In the last Finance Committee meeting of the year Albert tried a number of maneuvers to manipulate things. He was confrontive, trying to make me appear in a bad light before the others. He had called Paul seven times during that week until Paul's wife intercepted the last call and told Albert

that if he was calling to run the pastor down she wouldn't let him talk to her husband. Albert hung up on her. He was pressuring Paul to go to the Board to say they had made a mistake by giving me a raise seven months before. Paul refused saying that he felt they had not made a mistake. Albert then insisted that together they come "put me in my place." Paul caught me before Prayer Meeting January 7, 1987 and told me that he and his wife were taking a great deal of harassment from Albert and was going to leave the church. We talked for two hours following the service and I encouraged him to stick with it a little longer and give the new structure a chance to be tested at the next Ministries Committee meeting that Saturday. Meanwhile I found out that the new treasurer of two months had been called about 14 times as Albert asked questions and cast a shadow on my honesty and integrity. Her husband insisted that she resign if this was going to be part of the job. Albert made an appointment to see me Saturday, January 10, 1987 at 3:00 p.m. to "set my thinking straight." I knew this would be a confrontive encounter and decided to lay the problem before the Ministries Committee. If they refused to help me I made up my mind I would accept an offer that had been extended to me to move to another conference.

Time Line

6-21-84	My appointment as pastor to the Oil City First Church
10-10-85	Albert requested permission to put in a stained glass window
3-14-86	The stained glass window is completed amid a cloud of controversy
3-25-86	Dialogue began about restructuring for leadership support and a climate of trust
6-11-86	The new structure adopted by the Official Board
8-13-86	The new structure put into place
12-3-86	Albert not re-elected as delegate and lost his seat on the Official Board
1-10-87	The Ministries Committee meeting where the problem of Albert was presented and discussed (9:00 a.m.)
1-10-87	Confrontation with Albert by pastor and two members of the Ministries Committee (3:00 p.m.)

Figure 1

Description

The Ministries Committee met at 9:00 a.m. in the Church Library Conference Room January 10, 1987. This was the first Ministries Committee meeting that Luke had attended since his election the month before so we took time to orientate him and help him feel welcome. As usual we began with a devotional time and then cleared away several agenda items. One item of discussion centered around how we could signal unity to the larger congregation. We agreed we needed to show that we were in harmony with each other and functioning as a team. There were several ideas discussed when Luke suggested that before the worship services they

join with some of the spiritual leaders of the church around the altar to pray for the pastor. He went on to explain that spiritual leaders like Albert should be used more often. I cringed because the problem with Albert was the next item on the agenda. I was relieved when the group came up with another alternative.

When the other agenda items were cared for I explained that there was a problem I needed their help in solving. It had to do with a difficult member who was causing a great deal of grief in the church. I shared that more than likely it would shock some of them when I mentioned who this person was. I asked for their patience to hear me out. The discussion concerning Albert lasted an hour and a half. We were arranged around the conference table as seen below.

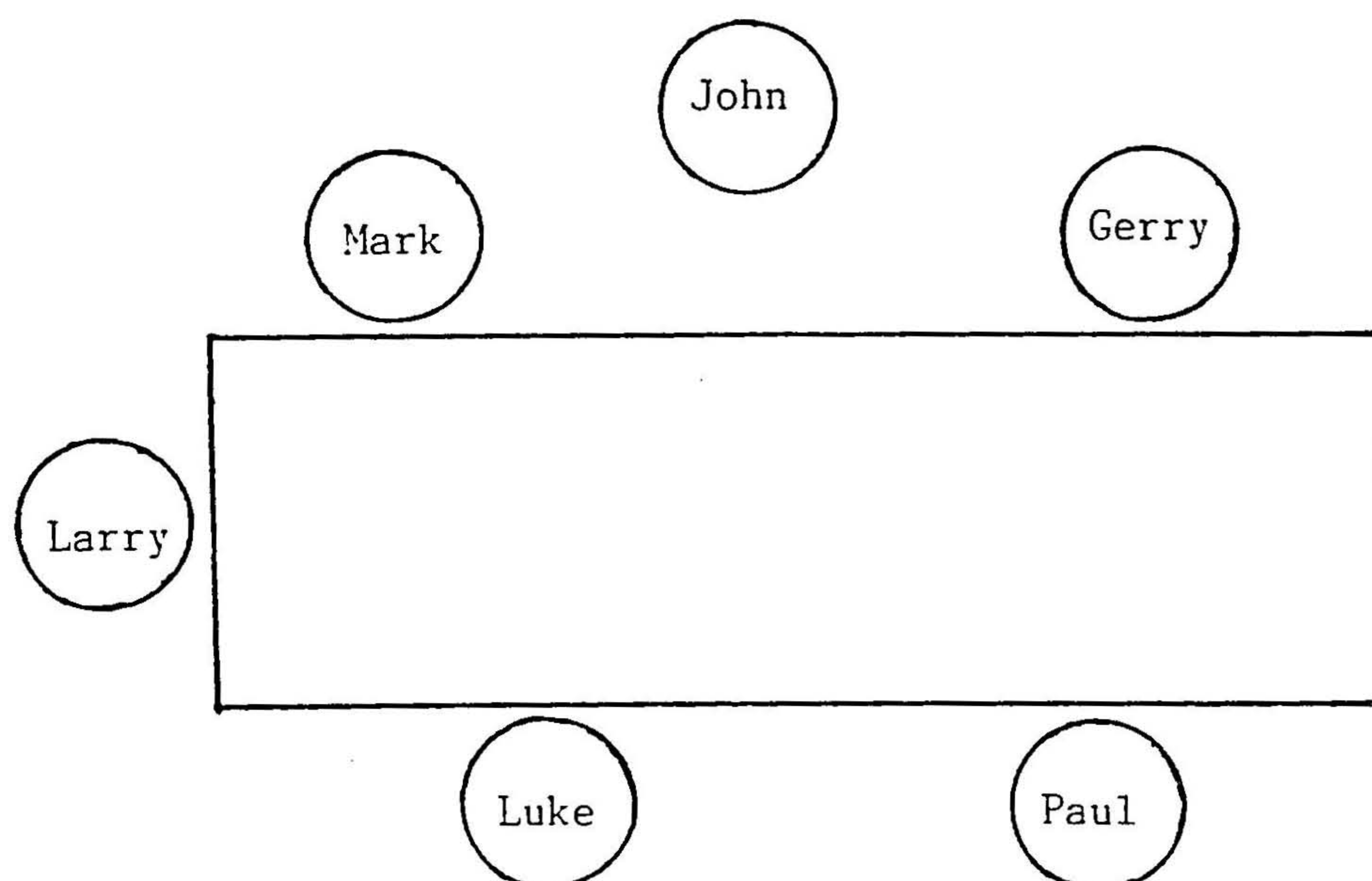


Figure 2

LARRY 1 = "When we set up this new structure you will recall one of the reasons was to give each other support in problem solving. I have a problem that I don't feel I can solve well alone. I realize that I may be risking any trust we have built together. You have known me for 2 1/2 years. I am asking for your patience to hear me out and that whatever we talk about here will be kept in the strictest confidence." (Everyone nodded consent.) "This whole process of risking and self-disclosure may be as foreign to you as it is to me, but I want us to give it a chance. I am trusting you with my deepest feelings in this situation. I hope you can be as open and frank with me."

(Paul looked straight ahead. He must have known I was speaking of Albert but was trying not to let on. Luke nervously glanced at the expressions of the others to see how they were reacting. I am sure he was wondering what he was getting into and how he could get out of it. Mark sat rigid, unmoving as he intently followed everything I said. Gerry fidgeted with her pencil and paper, nervously darting glances around the room. John had pushed his chair away from the table and sat slumped without motion. I read a section from Robert Dale's book, Surviving Difficult Church Members, concerning what he calls the "crazymaker."⁶ The description fit Albert almost to the last detail. I explained the problem, naming Albert as the person involved, laying out the problem as I perceived it. We were all tense and uncomfortable. This is the first time since my appointment that we had tried to solve a problem in this fashion. When I finished Mark spoke.)

MARK 1 = "Why is it necessary to discuss this. Our pastors have always taken care of these situations. (Then laughing,) Isn't that what we pay you for? I'm not sure why we should take time for something like this." (I'm not sure Mark takes this as seriously as I do. Then I recognize that he really is serious. I am disappointed because this initial reaction seems like rejection of my sharing of feelings. I am committed so I press on.)

⁶ Robert D. Dale, Surviving Difficult Church Members (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1985), pp. 52-58.

LARRY 2 = "The reason why we are handling it here is that I have taken it on the chin from Albert before and I'm not sure I can survive another situation like the one we had over the window." (All but Luke knew how much grief we had experienced over the stained glass window.) "Albert is doing what he calls an investigation and some are talking of leaving the church or resigning positions as a result of the pressure he is creating through his phone calls. I think its imperative that something be done now. Albert has let it be know that he is coming to "set my thinking straight" this afternoon. Things are coming to a head. We were talking of standing together in unity earlier. I guess I need to know if we can be unified in something like this?"

PAUL 1 = "Somebody needs to handle it. It'll divide the church. You'll remember how he almost divided the church over the building of the Fellowship Hall. Now it's happening again. The church can't continue under this pressure." (Paul was red in the face and trying to control his emotions. His call to action seems too premature. I wondered if they will think Paul and I are trying to push them into something.)

LUKE 1 = "Pressure, what pressure? I didn't know there were any problems in the church." (Luke looked like he wanted to run. We took time to assure Luke that problems were common in the church but that we could do something constructive about them. I apologized for having brought something so big into his first meeting and that I had no intention of destroying his relationship with Albert. He remained rigid and contributed little until the end of our time together.)

(The Ministries Committee gathered all the information they needed and discussed each angle carefully. Toward the end of the time I asked whether they would give me the support I needed.)

LARRY 3 = "I guess what I am asking for is a signal from you that you will support me in some sort of corrective action with Albert. If you can't then I need to know that too. That would mean I have some hard questions to ask myself." (Really I was thinking I would pursue moving to the Conference that gave me the invitation, although they did not know it.)

- JOHN 1 = "The last church I attended in California had a problem and the church didn't stand by the pastor and the church went under. I don't think we have any choice but to stand together and get behind our pastor. I believe he shouldn't have to go through this by himself." (John said this with such emphasis that the others didn't say anything for a moment and seemed to be withdrawing. I was afraid they were going to say it was my problem and that I should handle it alone.)
- Gerry 1 = (Thoughtfully) "This sort of thing has been going on for 30 years or more. We should have stood up against this a long time ago. It's a shame we didn't but the church has been afraid to do anything about it. I feel it's time somebody took care of the problem. Albert has just done this too often. But before we didn't have what we needed to handle it." (I took this to mean the supportive structure just put into place. I was surprised. I expected Gerry to take Albert's side.)
- LUKE 2 = "It's obvious that the man needs to be disciplined and stopped. Do we really have a choice? You have seen him in a different way than I have. I'm not saying what you have said is wrong, only that I have never seen him in this way. It's obvious we need to do something." (I feel relieved at Luke's input. I was afraid he might be angered and betray my trust by telling Albert what we had discussed.)
- LARRY 4 = "What would you suggest be done? Remember Albert is going to be coming over here at 3 p.m. to meet with me."
- JOHN 2 = "I think the whole Ministries Committee should be there. I'd be willing to come back in. We all have a part in this. We've got to stand together. This shouldn't be put in the pastor's lap."
- MARK 2 = "I agree that someone needs to go with the pastor, but I think it should be just a couple of us."
- PAUL 2 = "I think you're right Mark. It would make Albert think he has an audience. The smaller the group the better. Why not appoint two of us to go with you." (The others agree.)
- LARRY 5 = "Instead of anyone being appointed I wonder if two of you would volunteer?"

MARK 3 = (Mark responded quickly.) "I would. Since I was the former Finance Committee Chairman I am aware of his complaints as well as anyone."

PAUL 3 = "I would be willing to go with you too. He has been calling me to go with him to see you, pastor. I have been drawn into this as much as anyone and need to show where I stand."

(The meeting was dismissed with earnest prayer for the church and the meeting with Albert that was scheduled for 3 p.m.)

LEVEL II
REFLECTION

Analysis

The spades used for the purpose of analysis in this section are turning points, decision points, espoused theories/theories-in-use, repetition, feelings, and contrast/comparisons.

In the opening statement of LARRY-1, I state that I feel the sharing of this problem might risk any trust we had built together in the Ministries Committee. Why did I feel that this would risk the trust we had built? It might be the uncertainty of how Albert was perceived by the committee members. He had been at the church for nearly fifty years, whereas I had been there only two and a half years. It might be that the development of trust could hinge on familiarity. I might have been afraid that there had not been enough time to develop deep trust. Albert was good friends with Luke (p. 28). Gerry identifies closely with those who are in the "inner-circle" (p. 19) and might defend Albert. Deep sharing and risking had not been tested with

this committee before, not to say anything about sharing that placed one of the church leaders in bad light. It could be that trust development presupposes self-disclosure and there has not been such sharing with the committee before. It is also possible that I and the committee are uncomfortable with risking and self-disclosure (LARRY-1).

Why do we seem to be so uncomfortable with risking and self-disclosure in LARRY-1? We all seem to be uncomfortable (p. 29) and somewhat tense as I began to share. It might be that none of us has much personal experience with this kind of personal risking of feelings. It could be that self-disclosure appears threatening to relationships since it assumes the others in the group can be trusted with what is shared. It could be that risking and self-disclosure does not come automatically to newly organized groups. This was the first meeting that Luke had been in (p. 27) and the committee had been formed just a few months before. It is possible that a church with a leadership style based on authoritarian principles will need time to build trust and move to a shared leadership style. This might be the reason for Mark's questioning in MARK-1.

Why did Mark respond negatively to my sharing in MARK-1? The espoused theory is that we have organized for the mutual support of the church leaders, but the theory in use seems to be that we are still functioning with the old system

which offers little or no support. Our espoused theory is that the leadership is unified (p. 28), but the theory-in-use appears to be that it is every person for himself. It is possible that Mark is not comfortable with open sharing. He is described (p. 20) as being insensitive to feelings. But on the other hand it might be that he truly has never seen a pastor ask for support in problem solving (MARK-1). It is possible that such sharing appears to Mark as if the leader has lost control of the situation and this might be frightening to him. It could be that his understanding of a strong leader is one who handles problems by him or herself. Anything else might be understood as weakness.

But is this really a negative response? On the one hand it might be seen as a negative reaction but on the other hand it might be honest questioning. It could be that Mark is trying to grasp the support concept since he is so analytical (p. 20). It is possible he is trying to bring order to a process that is foreign to him. It could be that I had anticipated and was fearful of a negative reaction from the committee. I may be interpreting anything other than a highly positive response as being negative.

Why do I seem to be so sensitive about rejection in MARK-1? It might be that this is a new experience for the Ministries Committee and I want them to handle it right. Or it could be that I have a fear of being viewed as an

ineffective leader. It is possible that I have a personal fear of rejection. But the real issue here seems to be the testing of the new structure that is based on trust and offers support to its leaders. This is a new process with which none of us has had much experience. It could be that if we do not come out of this right I feel I will have to resign as their pastor (LARRY-3). In LARRY-2 I said I could not survive another encounter with Albert. It is possible that I felt rejection from the church when Albert put pressure on me with the window project (pp. 22, 23) and do not wish to deal with another similar episode. I might also be fearful of Paul leaving the church and the Treasurer resigning (p. 26).

Why does Paul respond as he does in PAUL-1? It is possible that Paul has been receiving overwhelming pressure from Albert (p. 26). Such pressure had driven him to say that he was going to leave the church (p. 26). It also could be that Paul has felt a lack of support from the church on other occasions (p. 11). But it might be that this is part of a long standing problem between Paul and Albert and that Paul has been up against this kind of problem with Albert before (PAUL-1). Albert might recognize Paul as a threat and that could be the reason he tried to have Paul put out of all his offices (p. 25). It might be that the authoritarian system of leadership creates a

competitive climate which pits leader against leader and prevents the development of trust.

Why do I wonder if the committee will think Paul and I are trying to push them into something in PAUL-1? It is obvious that Paul has spoken forcefully and with emotion. I might feel his call to action is premature. All I had done to this point was lay out the problem. There had not been time for group interaction and information gathering. To have come to a decision point without group interaction might have taken us back to the authoritarian system. It could be I really want them to come to a group decision. I might be afraid that one person will push his or her opinion over on the others in an attempt to sell them on their point of view. It could be that I was reluctant to appear as if a decision had already been made without their input.

Why did Luke react as he did in LUKE-1? It is possible that he is not accustomed to confronting problems (p. 18). It is also possible that this is the first time he has been aware that there are any problems in the church (LUKE-1). Yet, on the other hand, it might be that he was overwhelmed with the realization that his good friend, Albert, might not be what he seems. Or it could be that he was remembering his suggestion that Albert be included in the preservice prayer time and was embarrassed (p. 28). It also could be that Luke had not had time to adjust to the problem solving

concept of the supportive team since this was his first meeting.

Why was I seeking the support of the committee in LARRY-3? On the one hand it could be that I am uncomfortable in handling matters of discipline in the church. It might be that I was not willing to handle the tougher issues of ministry alone. But more likely it is possible that I felt I could not survive another encounter with Albert (LARRY-2). However, it could be that I was following through with the new structure that offers support for its leaders. It might be that nonsupport from the committee would mean that trust had not been built and that the new system was not working. It is possible that I felt I could not continue in a nontrusting, non-supportive system.

Why was getting "behind our pastor" so important to John in JOHN-1? It might be that as a newer Christian he was not experienced in openly expressing his opinion in the church. But maybe he had experienced deep pain in the California situation and saw the possibility of the same happening here. It is possible that John had formed a close bond with me and was not hesitant to offer support. It could be that his experience might not have been shared except in a trusting, supportive environment. It also could be that John knew that the system that would not support

it's pastor would not offer support to him as a church leader. It could be John was afraid that his only support system in the church was crumbling.

Why does there seem to be the reoccurring theme of fear in this encounter? There appears to be fear of risking and self-disclosure in LARRY-1. I seem to be afraid of not being able to survive another encounter with Albert (LARRY-2). Luke appears to be fearful of conflict in LUKE-1. I was fearful of betrayal in LUKE-2. John might have been fearful of the California experience reoccurring. Or it could be that there was fear because the church had not faced the problem with Albert in the past (GERRY-1). There might have been fear because there was no forum to positively work through such problems. It is possible that the old authoritarian leadership had such control of the power that there was no climate for other leaders to be supported and heard (GERRY-1). It also could be that fear was evident because a trust climate had not developed due to the authoritarian system that had been in place.

A turning point seemed to come when Gerry spoke in GERRY-1. Why was I so surprised with Gerry's supportive words? It is possible that I knew the influence of Albert and was prepared for the worse. It could be that Gerry has been so critical in the past that I did not expect support from her (p. 19). Or perhaps it is because her words seemed

opposite of her body language (p. 29). It might be because of her loyalties to tradition, friendship with Albert, and being part of the older segment of the congregation. It also might be that I was unsure of where the committee stood as a team and had no proof they would give me the support I needed.

The statement of Gerry might be compared and contrasted with the statement of John. John speaks with obvious emotion in JOHN-1. He speaks from experience yet the committee members do not respond readily. When Gerry speaks (GERRY-1) she seems to speak with less emotional force, yet moves the others to action.

Why was GERRY-1 a turning point? It might be because she was older and had been a Christian considerably longer than John and thus offered more experience. It could be that she commands more power to be heard since she is part of the trusted inner-circle. Or it might be that she was speaking out of local church experience with Albert, whereas John was speaking of an experience of which none of the committee could relate. It is possible that Gerry spoke what others on the committee had already been thinking.

The turning point seemed to set the stage for a decision point. Once Gerry had spoken Luke brought it all into focus in LUKE-2. Why was this a decision point? It could be because it seemed that Luke had changed his

thinking and had dropped his defenses. This might be because he saw he was outnumbered and gave into the wishes of the larger group. It could be that he sensed the direction the group was going and wanted to be accepted by the group. But a better answer might be because he saw we were not going to attack him for his friendship with Albert. It could also be that he saw we were not there to cut Albert apart, but to find a solution to a troublesome problem. It is possible that when given the facts Luke agreed that this was something that had to be done for the good of the church. This would seem evident from his repetition of the word "obvious" in LUKE-2.

Why was I relieved with what Luke said in LUKE-2? It could be that I was unsure of how strongly the ties were between Luke and Albert and was fearful Luke might betray my trust by taking the problem outside the committee meeting. It might be that I am relieved that Luke has decided to be a part of the group and not withdraw because of being overwhelmed. It could be that I am relieved I will not have to face Albert without support and that I will not have to pursue a move from Oil City. It is possible that I am relieved in LUKE-2 because it appears that the group will be unified in bringing about a solution. Even greater is that if the committee could be trusted with this kind of sharing we might be able to work through even deeper problems.

Integration-Interaction

There are a number of issues which might be researched from the description in Level 1. For instance: How can a church resolve internal conflict; What steps will enact positive change in the traditional church; How can a pastor accomplish leadership training in the local church; How does a church develop a supportive system for problem solving; What are the positive ways to discipline difficult church members; How can a church face its problems by facing the fear of confrontation. The issue I would like to focus on is: How does a pastor develop a trust relationship with his or her parish so that he or she is given the support needed to carry out effective ministry? The research will be accomplished by looking through the lenses of biblical/theological sources, the behavioral sciences, management and leadership theories, social research, and related current church research.

A Summary Statement of Trust in the Bible

A study of trust in the Bible shows the expectations God has for his people as they interact as the Church. We first see the concept of trust in Genesis, the book of

beginnings. Genesis not only records the beginning of all creation, but also records the beginning of a trust relationship between God and Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:16-17). However, trust was questioned when the serpent appeared to Eve (3:1) and cast doubt on God's word by using an interrogative expressing surprise:¹ "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The prohibition was exaggerated to cause the woman to distrust God by casting doubt on the truthfulness of his word.² It was a challenge to trust herself more than God. The woman recited the command given by God. The tempter spoke with what sounded like absolute authority in verse four by saying they would not die.³ The implication was that God could not be trusted because he was afraid they would be as knowledgeable as he once they ate the fruit. Verse six says that the man ate also so that their eyes were opened to their nakedness. When trust relationships are violated, guilt requires distance (hiding) and cover-up (fig leaves). The man and woman made coverings for their nakedness and hid

¹ C.F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, Commentary of the Old Testament, Vol. 1. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 94.

² Keil and Delitzsch, p. 94.

³ Keil and Delitzsch, p. 95: This is placed in the infinitive absolute. The meaning is not, "you will not die," but, "you will positively not die."

from God. Trust was betrayed and they were afraid.

When man disobeyed he fell in sin, and with disobedience came the fall of trust. Adam and Eve did not admit to their distrust when confronted by God. Adam accused the woman and implicated God when he said, "The woman you put here with me..." The woman accused the serpent saying, "The serpent deceived me...". Punishment was given in the form of curses which affected all creation and Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. A cherubim with a flaming sword was placed to guard the way to the tree of life because Adam and Eve could not be trusted.

Yet God still desired a trust relationship. There needed to be a way to bridge the separation caused by sin; therefore, God entered into a series of related covenants.⁴ A covenant was meant to be a security and guarantee that the persons entering into the relationship agreement could be trusted.

Throughout the Old Testament mankind continued to break trust with God. Yet God promised there would be a time when mankind could be trusted to keep the trust covenant laws (Jeremiah 31:31-33; Isaiah 59:20, 21). The covenant of the

⁴ W.E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, 17th revised edition (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966).

New Testament paralleled the covenant of the Old Testament in that both were based on the saving intervention of God in human history, first on Mount Sinai and then on Mount Calvary. The old looked forward to the new and the new looked backward to the old.

Christ clearly saw himself as fulfilling the trust covenant promised by God (Luke 22:19,20; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24). This recalls such passages as Exodus 24:8 in which the blood of the victim slain was called the blood of the covenant (cf. Hebrews 13:20; Ephesians 1:7). When Christ willingly went to the cross the covenant reached it's climax as Christ became the sacrifice for all mankind. This fulfilled all the stipulations of the covenant and bore the curse mankind deserved to receive.⁵ The Apostle Paul said, "God presented him (Christ) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law." (Romans 3:25, 27)

The sign of the new covenant is Christ's victory over death and the grave (Romans 1:4). According to the book of Hebrews, Jesus was the "guarantee of a better covenant"

⁵ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Walthe. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 282.

(7:22). He was the mediator of a superior covenant (8:6) since His sacrifice is given once and for all (7:27; 10:10). In this respect it was a "new" covenant(9:15). The old covenant is considered obsolete which means that New Testament Christians are free from the old (Romans 7:1-6). Mankind is justified not by keeping the law, but by faith in Christ (Galatians 2:16). In the words of H. Orton Wiley, "the primary element in faith is trust; hence saving faith is a personal trust in the Person of the Saviour."⁶ Justification is grounded in the propitiatory offering of Christ's blood. This excludes any and all theories of justification through works of the law.⁷ Unless there is faith in Christ mankind will perish because "unbelief is the essence of sin."⁸ Thus it is not surprising that Scripture declares, "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17).

Redemption under the trust covenant, though monergistic, requires a human response, a meeting of the conditions that God has given. God keeps covenant with those who are faithful (Deuteronomy 7:12; 8:18). There must

⁶ H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology, Vol. II, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1966), p. 366.

⁷ Ibid., p. 395.

⁸ George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 229.

be faith (trust) without which it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). God looks for those who will trust him. Where there is faith in him, God can do anything. The war of faith has always been fought on the battleground of trust. "Nothing dishonored and grieved (God) so much as unbelief. Unbelief was the root of disobedience and every sin..."⁹

When the Greek noun pistis or the verb pisteuo (faith) are used they can be understood to carry the meaning of trust formed on the basis of reliability. It is that which gives a guarantee upon which trust may build.¹⁰ As the Old Testament understands it, faith is always mankind's reaction to God's primary action. However, it is not a single-sided relationship, rather it is a reciprocal relationship which makes trust what it is.¹¹ The trusting person is also the faithful person. Faith is a "daring decision for God" which includes an individual turning aside from the world and from his or her own strength.¹² From an Old Testament

⁹ Andrew Murray, The Two Covenants (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1965), p. 4.

¹⁰ Gerhard Kittle, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 6. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), p. 174.

¹¹ Kittle., Vol. 6. p. 187.

¹² Ibid., p. 198.

perspective, "to keep the Law was paramount to trusting God."¹³ "In the Old Testament and Judiasm...trust is combined with faith. The same is true in the New Testament as well."¹⁴ "It is natural...that the pistis of the Old Testament characters in Hebrews 11 should be trust..."¹⁵ George Eldon Ladd emphasises, "The heart of the Old Testament religion cannot be characterized as legalism, nor was the Law given as the means of achieving a right relationship with God by obedience."¹⁶ It was not until the intertestamental period that the law became more important than the concept of the covenant.¹⁷ During this time the law became the condition of membership and inclusion in the community of God, although that was clearly not God's plan.

Faith/Trust is commonly defined among some theologians as "the assent of the mind; the consent of the will; and recumbency" which gives the indication of the element of trust.¹⁸ "But the comprehensive meaning of faith must ever

¹³ Ibid., p. 199.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Wiley., Vol. II. p. 366.

¹⁷ Ladd., p. 496.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 497.

be trust--that which sustains our expectations and never disappoints us."¹⁹

Faith/Trust will lead to obedience in the moral realm. Moral obedience is the response of mankind to God's revealed standard of ethics as seen in the Ten Commandments. The way a believer demonstrates faith/trust is through his or her conduct. Faith/Trust includes obedience to Christ's commands which can denote the depth of one's commitment to God. Such obedience will lead those who trust in Christ to trust and love each other (John 15:10-12; 1 John 2:3-11; 3:22; 5:2). Faith/Trust in God is the fountainhead of trust for those who are in the Christian community. As the covenant given to Israel had vertical and horizontal stipulations, so does the new covenant. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10).

Those who are in Christ are folded into a trusting environment with other believers. There are moral and ethical standards which must be kept if a person is to remain in Christ. For instance, a person who would be a bishop or deacon is given certain guidelines by which he should live. Such criteria sets the stage for trust building. When persons in leadership fit the biblical

¹⁹ Wiley., Vol. II. p. 366.

patterns and yet someone does not trust them, it might be speculated that there is a breakdown of trust for God's Word.

The Christian is given a number of statements in the New Testament concerning trust relationships. We are members of one another (Romans 12:5), therefore we should love one another (John 13:34a), bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2, NASB), accept one another (Romans 15:7), serve one another (Galatians 5:13), be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10), bear with one another (Ephesians 4:2), submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21), forgive one another (Colossians 3:13), not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9), not speak against one another (James 4:11), but live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16), confess our sins to one another (James 5:16), honor one another (Romans 12:10), be of the same mind with one another (Romans 15:5, NASB), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9), and encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Observing these relational statements pave the way for trust formation.

Faith/Trust is more than believing in Christ for personal justification. Faith also includes being obedient to the commands of Christ. Werner Kummel says, "Faith in its actual nature is not intellectual acknowledgment of a

state of affairs, but obedience..."²⁰ Thus faith is not a human accomplishment of works, but the free decision to obey God's Word on the basis of his trustworthiness. Such faith has both the horizontal and vertical dimensions. A relationship with God is based on the fact that we do not walk by sight, but by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

In summary, we see that trust is a key concept in understanding God's love for us and how we are to live out our lives in the community of believers. Faith and trust can be rightly considered as parallel. God has never wavered in his desire for mankind to trust him; to have faith in him. It is he who has sought after mankind, even when we repeatedly turned our back on God. The goodwill of God toward mankind is seen in his covenants made throughout the Old and New Testaments. Christ was the guarantor and the mediator of the better covenant which made the old covenant obsolete. Faith/Trust is the basis for our following and serving God. The working out of our trust for God is clearly seen in our trust for and submission to the Church of Christ. Christian relationships are built on trust and assume high moral and ethical standards.

²⁰ Werner Georg Kummel, The Theology of the New Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p. 201.

Contributing Factors of Trust Formation

Meaningful, working relationships between a pastor and a congregation are "glued together by a fragile bond called trust."²¹ In fact, "trust is one of the most essential qualities of human relationship."²² Rather than being a negative trait of the gullible, the naive, or the innocent victim, it is the backbone of healthy organizations and human interaction.

"Trust is an act, not a feeling."²³ Those who trust do so as the result of the cognitive processes that form the foundation for trust building. Each person can choose whom he or she will trust based on the perception of available evidence.²⁴ The trusting environment will give evidence of the celebration of diversity, acceptance of motives, spontaneous expression, facade reduction, constructive confrontation and conflict, candor, frankness, more energy for work, involvement, creativity, satisfying work, clarity of goals, a shared vision and mission, no need for rules,

²¹ Bruce Powers, Church Administration Handbook (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1985), pp. 70-71.

²² Taylor McConnell, Group Leadership For Self-Realization (New York: Petrocelli Books, 1974), p. 19.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ J. David Lewis and Andrew Weigert, "Trust As A Social Reality," Social Forces (June 1985): p. 970.

informality, the flow of feelings and communication, and is more like a community.²⁵

The nontrusting environment will show evidence of such symptoms as fear of inadequacy, concern for inclusion, avoiding conflict, conformity, testing for acceptance, need for status, facade building, caution, grapevine, deceit, apathy, resistance, competition, diffused goals, structure, rules and form, bargaining, dependency, hostility, power struggles and legalism.²⁶

An understanding of trust and the factors which contribute to its formation are important to the pastor who desires a harmonious and effective working relationship with the leadership and membership of his or her church. While the factors given below are not intended to be all inclusive, they do represent some of the major factors that contribute to trust formation between a pastor and his or her Official Board.

The Factor of Familiarity. Sociologists such as David

²⁵ Jack R. Gibb, Trust: A New View of Personal and Organizational Development (LaJolla, California: Omicron Press, 1978), p. 171.

²⁶ Ibid.

Lewis and Andrew Weigert contend that trust is not to be considered a psychological event within the individual, rather it is an intersubjective or systemic social reality.²⁷ Trust must be seen as what happens between persons. "It is the mutual 'faithfulness' on which all social relationships ultimately depend."²⁸ This being the case, trust in groups, such as administrative or official boards, will be developed through a process of interaction that leads to familiarity. Lewis and Weigert agree that "familiarity is the precondition for trust..."²⁹

Trust work happens through a building process in the social interaction of groups. The foundational work of the cognitive processes confirms by certain information received that the other person can be trusted. He looks like an honest person. She talks like a sensible individual. Therefore, we initially consent to trust that person. But trust will need to be based on something deeper as the relationship develops. This happens when an emotional base for trust is formed. This affective side of a relationship creates a bonding in that we trust on the belief that our trust will not be betrayed. The emotional base requires

²⁷ Lewis and Weigert, p. 967.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 968.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 970.

an investment in other persons. If this trust is betrayed the intense feelings and emotions will be wounded or damaged, depending upon the investment made.

The third sociological base for trust is behavioral enactment. Groups do not know what will happen in the future, but they act on the basis of what they believe can be expected. When a person displays trust by his or her actions, it encourages others to return that trust. In the same way, when someone distrusts us by his or her actions we will distrust him or her in return.³⁰

This would tend to bear out the belief that trust building is done slowly and carefully over many contacts. Peter Blau contends that trust is built incrementally through a series of gradually increasing investments in the relationship, a series in which the partners demonstrate their trustworthiness to each other.³¹ Familiarity comes by interpersonal contact over a period of time. Jack Gibb, in some of his earlier work, found that groups did not begin to make significant progress until they had worked together more than 60 hours.³² Trust could not occur until the

³⁰ Lewis and Weigert, p. 970-72.

³¹ Peter Blau, Exchange of Power in Social Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. 1964), p. 98.

³² Jack R. Gibb, "Climate for Trust Formation," T-Group Theory and Laboratory Methods (New York: John Wilen and Sons, 1964), p. 290.

groundwork was laid in group familiarity. Translated into time spent as a group, church official boards might need to work together with a pastor about two and one half to three years before proper trust could be built. Until then it is likely they would not be ready to begin to handle change.

Such factors as grief over the last pastoral termination, unresolved internal problems, historical and doctrinal perspectives will require the arriving pastor to, in the words of Roy Oswald, "be a lover and a historian" before making changes.³³ "How you come across in the first twelve months often determines your effectiveness for your entire ministry."³⁴ Many are the mournful tales of pastors who arrived on the doorsteps of a receiving church with lists of changes they felt had to be made. Even more sadly is the fact that so many learn so slowly and repeat the same offense time after time. Roy Price says, "You can only effectively change things after your consistency has laid a solid base of trust for you. It takes time to build trust because it takes time to know another person."³⁵

³³ Roy Oswald, "The Pastor's Passages," Leadership (Fall 1983): p. 15.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

³⁵ Roy C. Price, "Building Trust Between Pastor and Congregation," Leadership (Spring 1980): p. 38.

In research done by John Fletcher, there are three developmental stages through which a pastor will pass in a church. There is the launching stage which will last from 18 to 24 months. This is the time when the pastor and people are getting to know each other and mistakes are often overlooked. Next is the adjustment stage which stretches into the third and fourth years. This is when the rough edges begin to wear thin and the pastor and people will need to work out their differences. Third is the productivity stage which can extend through the eighth year and beyond and which will most likely be a time of fruitfulness in ministry.³⁶

The Factor of Compatibility. A critical factor in trust building is compatibility between pastor and parishoners. Just as each pastor has a personality of his or her own, congregations develop personalities too. Roy Oswald has termed this compatibility between the pastor and congregation, "The Pastor/Parish Fit"³⁷ and has developed

³⁶ John C. Fletcher, Religious Authenticity in the Clergy (Washington D.C.: The Alban Institute, Inc., 1975), p. 1.

³⁷ Roy M. Oswald, Gail D. Hinand, William Chris Hobgood, and Barton M. Lloyd, New Visions for the Long Pastorate (Washington, D.C.: The Alban Institute, Inc., 1983), p. 91.

an instrument by the same name to verify the compatibility. Not only do congregations have personalities, but those personalities may shift with increased needs and demands, so that a church could outgrow a pastor or the pastor outgrow the church.³⁸

Trust formation begins with the blending of the pastor's ability to meet the expectations and needs of the congregation to which he or she ministers. If the expectations are more than the pastor can fulfill the pastor may find himself or herself in a situation of diminishing trust.

Leith Anderson gets at the problem through his humorous yet sobering article, "How To Win at Parish Poker."³⁹ He claims that upon arrival at a new parish the pastor will be given a hypothetical number of poker chips that represent trust and acceptance. If the pastor presents himself well, has previous experience, and perhaps some gray hair, he will begin with more chips than, say, the person just out of seminary. Depending upon the pastor/parish fit he may gain or lose chips based on his sermons, visitation, clothes,

³⁸ Norman Shawchuck, "Are You a Flexible Leader?" Leadership (Spring 1981): p. 90.

³⁹ Leith Anderson, "How To Win At Parish Poker," Leadership (Winter 1986): pp. 44-49.

spouse and children. Some churches expect an abundance of personal contacts through counseling, home visits, phone calls, and hospital calls. If a pastor does not please the congregation by fulfilling their expectations he will find his store of trust chips dwindling away. When all his trust chips are gone the pastor must move to another church and begin all over again.

Some role expectations are impossible for any pastor. When the role expectations are unrealistic it may indicate that the church has not openly discussed nor thought through its expectations. The church that works through a search committee to interview perspective pastors will be more likely to discuss role expectations. Denominations that have conference committees which make appointments may find less chance for dialogue and a greater risk of appointments that are incompatible. In such a structure the Appointment Committee may only be slightly acquainted with the pastor, his or her dreams and gifts, and even less acquainted with the membership's expectations of the receiving church.

The Alban Institute has gathered some initial empirical data based on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator which has its roots in Carl Jung's Theory of Types. The Institute sees a correlation between pastors who score into "feeling" and those who tend to have long term pastorates. Their assumptions are largely based on the fact that a "feeling"

person will be more empathetic toward the hurts of individuals, therefore forming bonds that build trust. Thinking types, on the other hand, tend to be more goal oriented and are less aware of feelings. When their goals are met they tend to move to more challenging pastures.⁴⁰

At the other end of the spectrum David McKenna believes that

...the effective pastor cannot be stereo-typed by personality. Contrary to some expectations, God does not try to change the personalities of the persons whom He calls. Conversion reverses our direction, justification cancels our sin, regeneration transforms our lives and sanctification sets us apart for service—but only to make the most of the personality we have inherited and learned.⁴¹

The compatibility dilemma is heightened when we realize that no two congregations are identical. It is important to realize that churches have personalities too.⁴² This makes it even more critical that a church develop in a way that will "maximize its resources, assets, and strengths, including the unique gifts and talents of its pastor."⁴³ If a church is looking for a person oriented minister then the

⁴⁰ Oswald, Hinand, Hobgood, Lloyd, pp. 52-56.

⁴¹ David C. McKenna, Reviewing Our Ministry (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986), p. 42.

⁴² Ibid., p. 44.

⁴³ Lyle E. Schaller, Growing Plans (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), p. 11.

"feeling" personality type might serve them well. Other churches might need an administrator who is task oriented.

Compatibility can also be generated from socio/economic factors. The well educated pastor might not be received well in a church where education is held in suspect. There can be differences in leadership needs, values and traditions, direction and goals, and spiritual gifts, just to name a few. Lyle Schaller points out that there are wide differences between churches. The small church places a higher value on the person oriented pastor and less on his or her professional competence; it uses a shorter time frame in planning and scheduling; continuity is in the congregation and the church building, not in the minister or denomination; finances are treated more casually; decision making is less structured and more informal and the pastor may be one of a number of leaders.⁴⁴ These factors need to be taken into consideration when compatibility is discussed. Trust can be formed or dissolved depending on the level of compatibility between pastor and people.

The Factor of Leadership Styles. Another factor that

⁴⁴ Lyle E. Schaller, The Small Church Is Different (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982), pp. 46-46.

affect trust formation is the pastor's leadership style. It is generally agreed that there is no one style that is perfect for every situation. In a discussion of the five leadership styles espoused by Tannenbaum and Schmidt, Joseph Zaccaria says, "Given different people, different problems, and different situations, any of the above leadership styles may be appropriate."⁴⁵ Styles must be matched to the needs of the group.⁴⁶ While there is no perfect style there can be an appropriate one. "The appropriate style depends a great deal on the task of the organization, the phase of life of the organization, and the needs of the moment."⁴⁷ The successful leaders are those "who can adapt their leader behavior to meet the needs of their followers and the particular situation. When the leader's style is appropriate to a given environment measured by results, it is termed effective..."⁴⁸

As the effective leader interacts with the needs in the group, he will likely adjust his style in response to those

⁴⁵ Joseph S. Zaccaria, Facing Change (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), p. 28.

⁴⁶ Shawchuck, p. 90.

⁴⁷ Ted W. Engstrom and Edward R. Dayton, The Art of Management for Christian Leaders (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976), p. 32.

⁴⁸ Rodney Napier and Matti Gershenfeld, Groups: Theory and Experience (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1981), p. 269.

needs. Group needs can be determined by observing the group's maturity. For instance, if the group has a high level of trust for their leader and each other the leader will want to respond with a participative style. If the group has low trust they will be more satisfied with their leader being authoritarian.⁴⁹ Jack Gibb offers ten stages through which groups will work toward maturity and high trust. At each higher level there is a corresponding increase in the level of trust.

0. Chaos (fear, anger, dread, a pre-group state)
1. Punitive (hostility, jealousy, guilt)
2. Autocratic (power, obedience, need for order)
3. Benevolent (nurturing, warmth, parental)
4. Advisory (vision, consultative, data gathering)
5. Participative (consensuality, collaboration)
6. Emergent (freedom, cooperation, involvement)
7. Organic (intuitive, empathy, heightened awareness)
8. Holistic (creativity, unconscious)
9. Transcendental (altered states, egoless)
10. Cosmic (universal, ecstasy)⁵⁰

Gibb admits that levels two through five are parallel to Rensis Likert's Systems 1 through 4 management styles. For this study we are most interested in levels 2-5. The basic assumption to the earlier stages is that fear creates

⁴⁹ George F. Farris, Eldon E. Senner, and D. Anthony Butterfield, "Trust, Cultures, and Organizational Behavior," Industrial Relations (May, 1973): p. 146.

⁵⁰ Gibb., Trust: pp. 50-74.

barriers to trust and growth. Fear is present in many guises such as masks, protective roles, creating boundaries, gaining and keeping control.⁵¹ Trust formation is hindered when a leader functions on one level and the group functions on another. If the separation is great it might be supposed that trust building would almost be impossible.

Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt have shown the need for different types of behavior on the part of the leader in their diagram below.⁵²

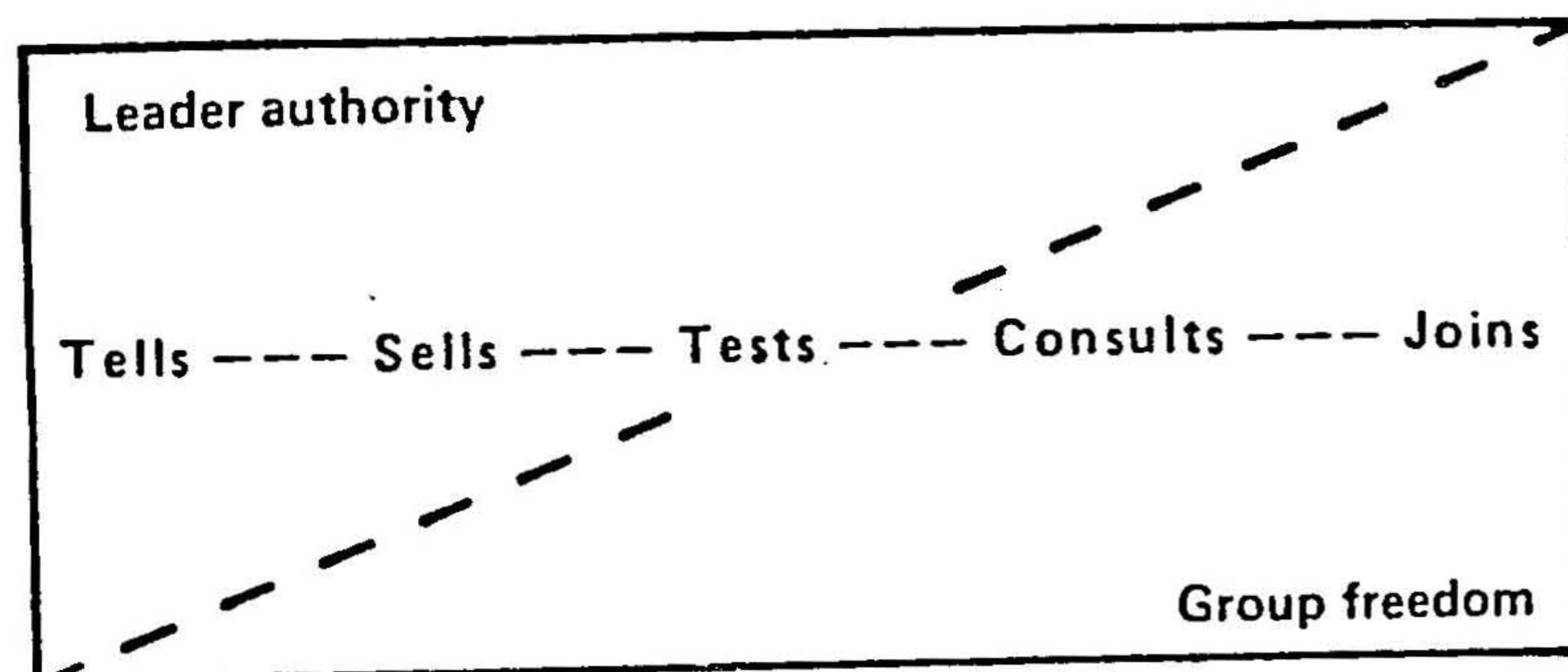


Figure 3

The leader must first determine where the group is in terms of the freedom they expect to be given. The leader would expect to exert much influence in the telling or

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 28-31.

⁵² Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," Harvard Business Review (May-June, 1973): pp. 162-180.

selling styles. He or she would decide what should be done and set the course of action and then tell or sell the followers on what has been decided. When the testing style is used the leader would present an idea and decide whether the followers will agree. The consulting style allows the group to be involved in the problem solving with limited input. The joining style allows the leader to become a co-worker or colleague with those in the group. Should the leader choose an inappropriate leadership style for the situation the group will be immobilized and incapable of accomplishing their task. "The skillful leader has a variety of styles...and uses them at appropriate moments."⁵³

Rensis Likert and his associates at the University of Michigan have identified and developed what is called Systems 1,2,3, and 4 to show how a leader relates within a group.⁵⁴ This significant work forms a conceptual framework for understanding the range of management patterns. The following contains the kernel thought of Likert's research.

System 1 - Exploitive Authoritative. The leader using this style is usually very competent and often has a charismatic personality. He knows what has to be

⁵³ McConnel, p. 74.

⁵⁴ Rensis Likert, New Patterns of Management (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).

accomplished and works on a one-person coercive model to accomplish it. The leader seeks no information from the group. When there is any interaction it generally takes place in an atmosphere of fear and mistrust. Any upward information tends to be inaccurate. Communication is generally from the top down. There is quick punishment for any who does not follow the leader's orders. System 1 is coercive, using fear to accomplish its task. There is little or no trust and confidence in this system since there is a low view of persons. This style of leadership is diagrammed as follows to show the one-person coercive model.

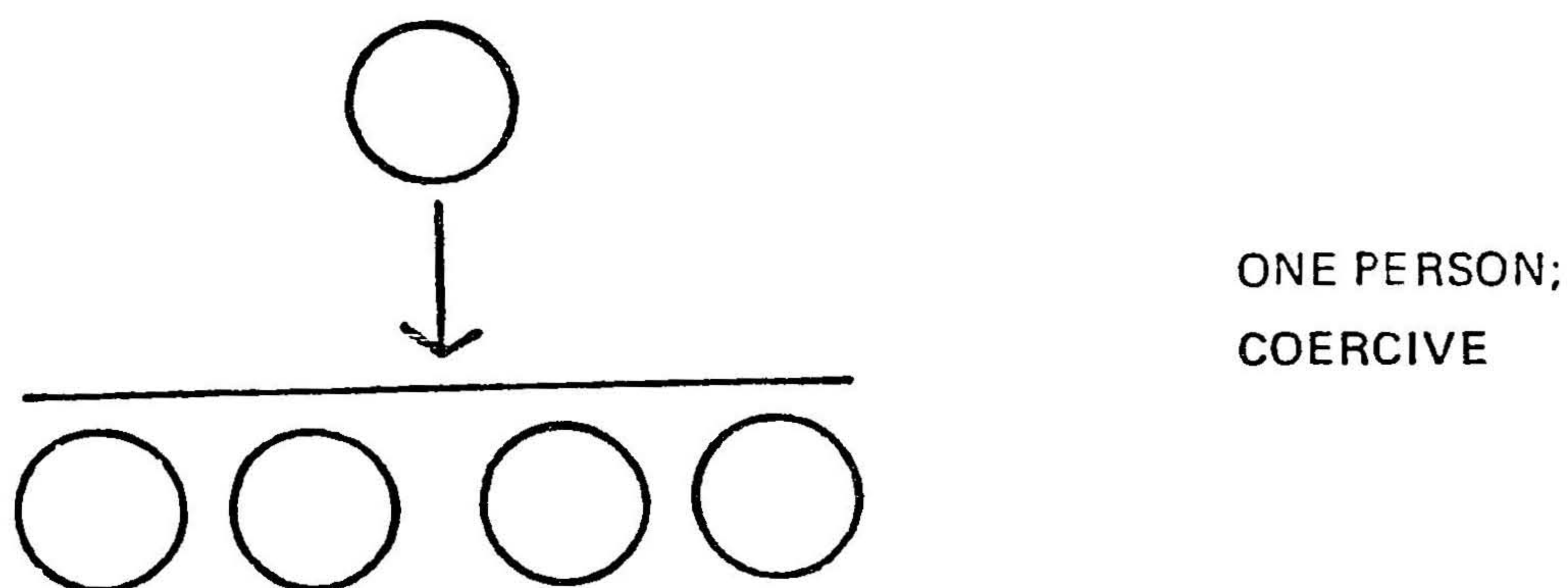


Figure 4

System 2 - Benevolent Authoritative. This system is a one-to-one competitive pattern. A paternal relationship develops as the leader supervises each person on a one-to-

one basis. The leader makes the decisions and passes along orders on what to do and how to do it. Rewards are given as incentives based on individual competition. There is some degree of trust and confidence in persons, though the subordinates will be treated as children or slaves. There are tight controls from the top with some delegation. The subordinates will be subject to spot visits and policed by surprise inspections. Since the competitive system is based on individual performance, the leader will not encourage group interaction. This one-to-one competitive model is diagrammed as follows:

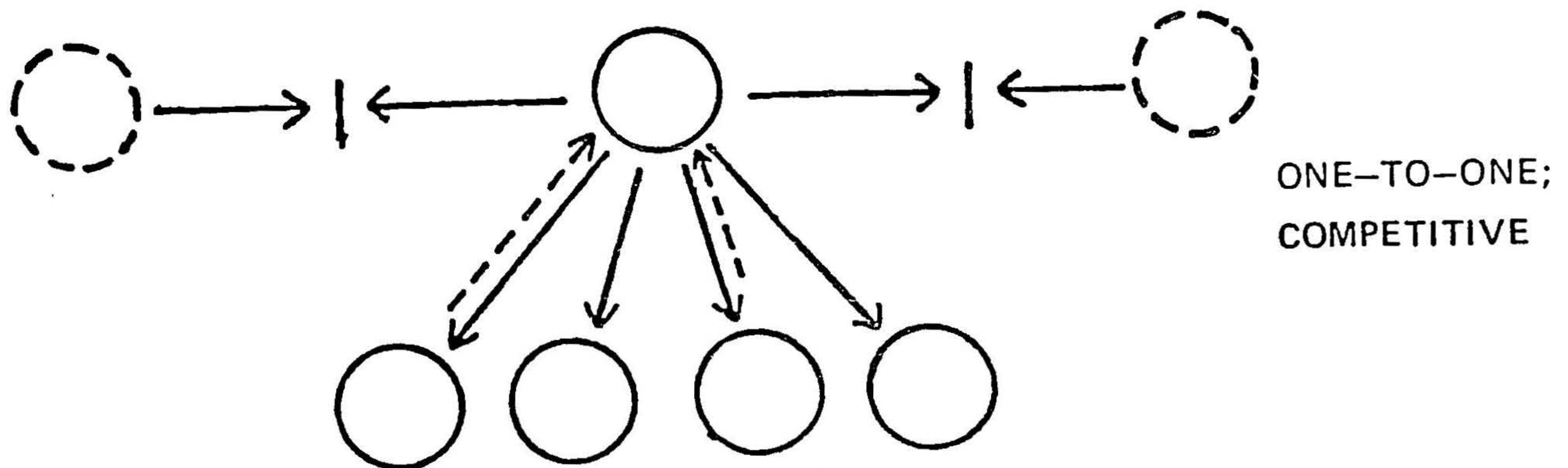


Figure 5

System 3 - Consultative. This system is seen as a one-to-one consultative model. The leader will consult individually with group members as each is encouraged to

share information. Communication is frequent and frank with a two-way flow. However, when the information is gathered the leader will make the final decision for the group. The group will exchange information with members and with other groups as there is a need, but always on a one-to-one basis. There is trust in subordinates, but not complete trust. The leader still sets policies and makes decisions. Goals are determined at the top after a discussion with the subordinates. Information will flow up and down between leader and members, but there will still remain some suspicion for the leader. Diagramed below is this one-to-one consultative model.

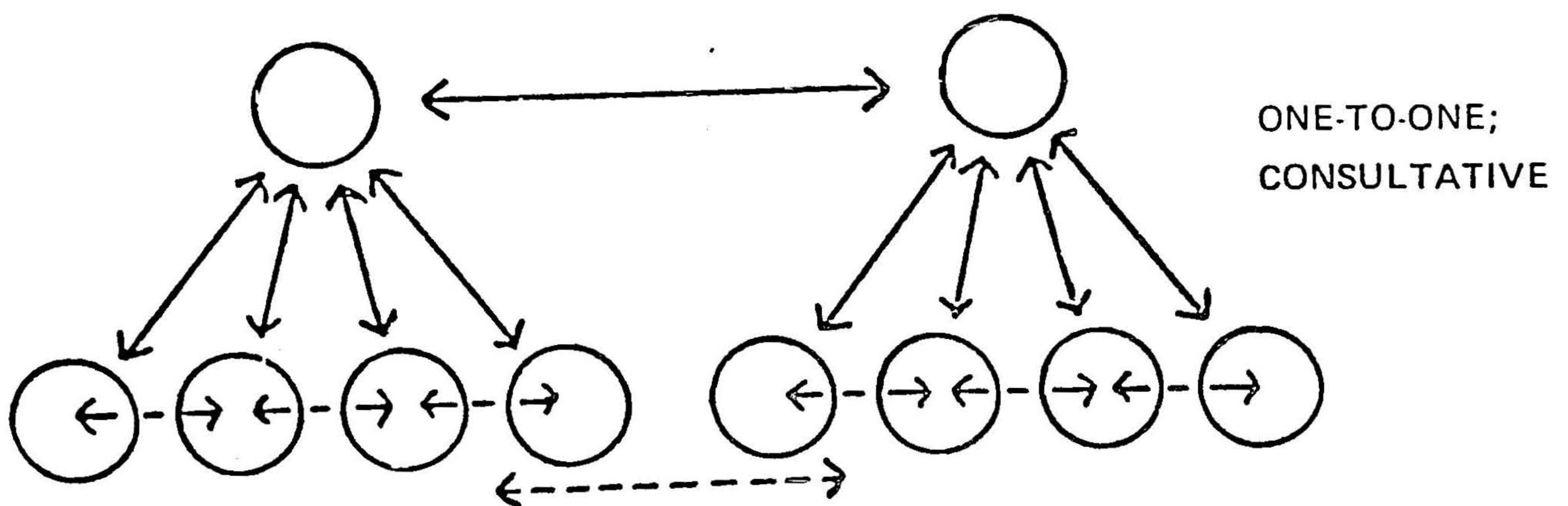


Figure 6

System 4 - Participative Group. This pattern is group interactive-collaborative. The leader is seen as having complete confidence and trust in group members. Decision-

making is spread out through the whole organization. Goals are usually established through the participation of the group. Motivation comes through a high view of persons as each participates in the group's direction. Teamwork is at its finest in this system. Trust and confidence is high. The leader becomes one of the group with the group's decision being final. Information flow is horizontal and vertical as well as lateral. The group interactive model of collaboration is diagrammed as follows:

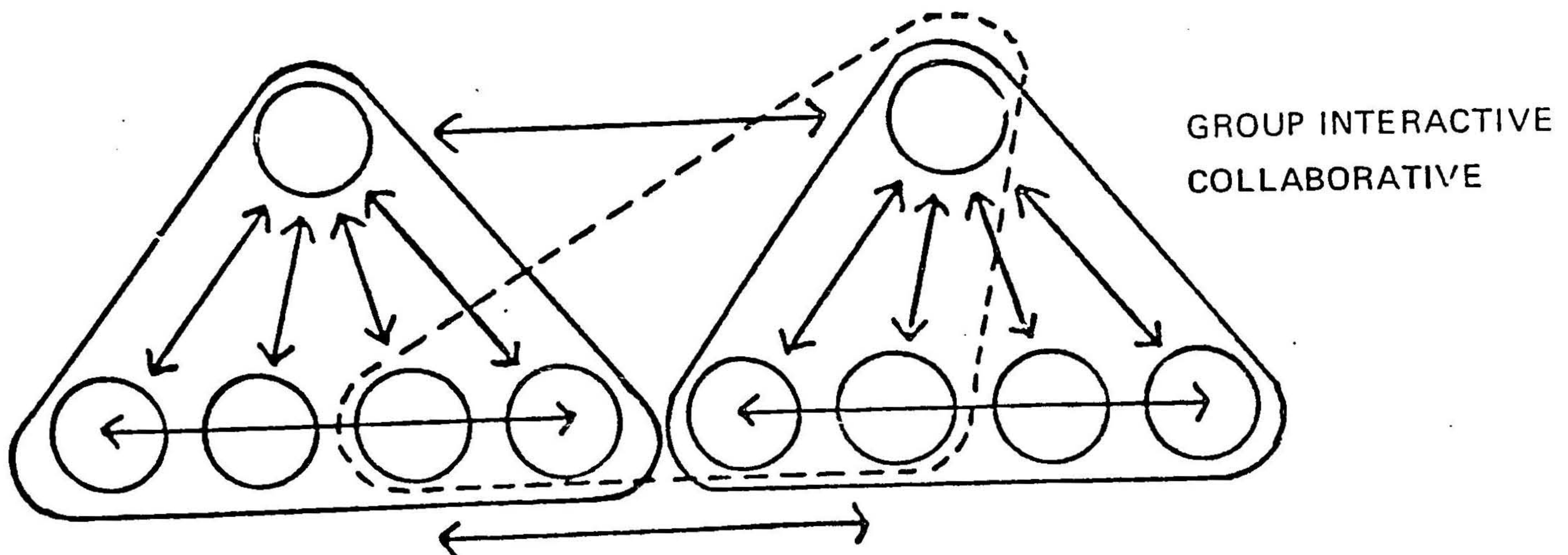


Figure 7

One key part of System 4 is the linking persons aspect.⁵⁵ These are individuals from each committee or

⁵⁵ Rensis Likert, The Human Organization: Its Management and Value (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), pp. 163-186.

group that connect the organization together. Information and ideas are shared so that each group has the same facts, knowledge, and awareness of problem situations. This opens the door to a win/win situation rather than the win/lose of the other three systems and increases the trust level with open lines of communication. The linking persons system could be diagramed in the following manner using an inverted triangle to show the change in how the leader is perceived as compared to the authoritarian systems which would have the leader at the top.

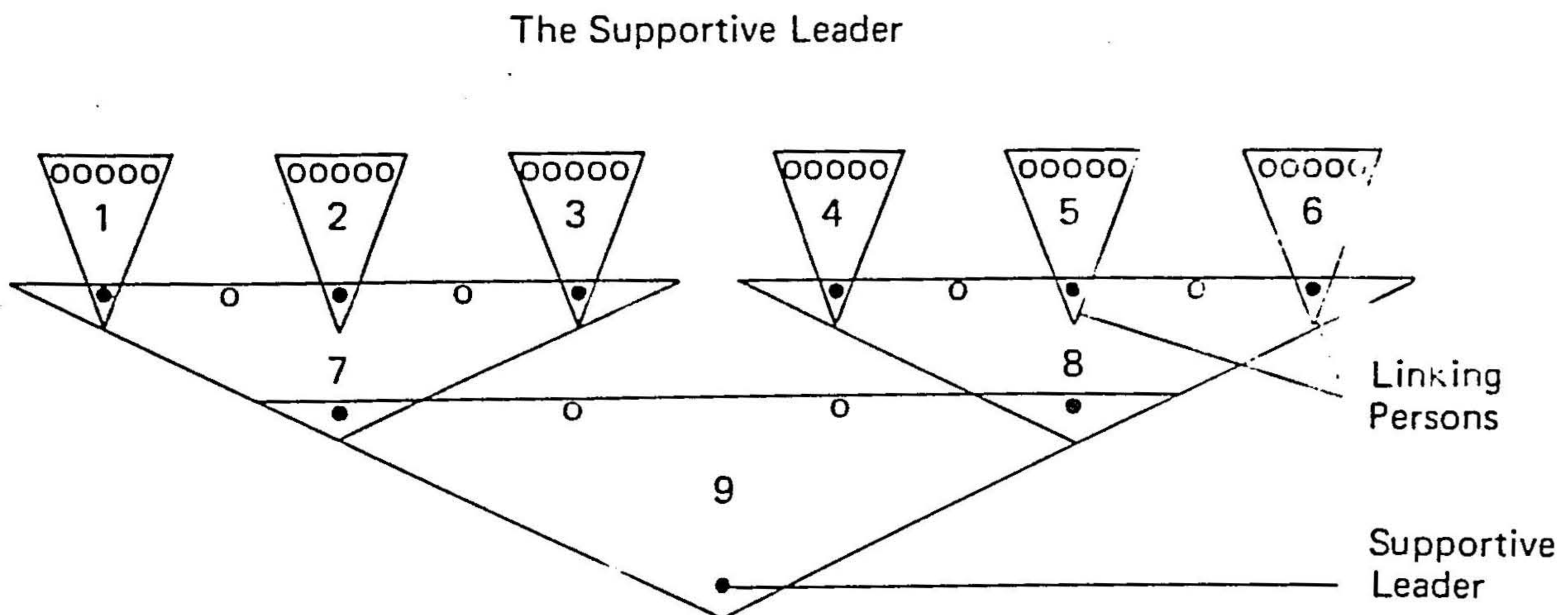


Figure 8

In Systems 1 and 2 the goals and directions would come down from the top. But in the diagram of System 4 above, there would be more ownership of goals by the entire group since the decision making is spread out.

System 4 provides supportive relationships for group members. In the words of Rensis Likert,

The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interaction and all relationships with the organization, each member will, in light of his or her background, values, and expectations, view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his or her sense of personal worth and importance.⁵⁶

Supportive relationships allow persons to develop to their full potential without inhibiting criticism and competition. Each person is valued and encouraged to give input and feedback to contribute to the good and the goals of the group.

Likert's research has shown that System 4 by far has the highest productivity level and a greater climate of trust and confidence. Group members are free to discuss their problems as a bond forms between the members and the leader. There is high satisfaction throughout the organization with free flowing lines of communication. Teamwork is greater as each supports the other to make decisions that affect the whole.⁵⁷ There are some basic similarities between System 4 principles and certain biblical teachings.

⁵⁶ Likert, New Patterns: p. 103.

⁵⁷ Likert, The Human Organization: pp. 14-24.

1. Concern for one's neighbor. Jesus said, "Love each other as I have loved you" (John 15:12). A System 4 leadership style is based on a profound respect for persons in the group. Coercion and manipulation are clearly to be avoided.

2. Sharing of one another's burdens. The community of God was to be a supportive body. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:2, "Carry each others burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." System 4 offers the supportive climate in which persons can better bear the burdens of others.

3. An open, caring community. The church is called to be a community marked by honesty and openness. The early church was first structured in ways of caring for the needy (Acts 2:42-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6). System 4 offers the opportunity for the needs of each group member to be met through acceptance and open communication.

4. The leader as servant. Jesus told the disciples that those who would be great must become a servant (Matthew 20:26,27). This thought appears at least seven times in the Gospels. The System 4 leader is a supportive leader who serves, and upholds those on the team.

5. Speaking the truth in love. Hiding truth is strictly forbidden. Everyone is to speak what is truthful (Ephesians 4:14,15). The feedback aspect is no new theme to

the church. Deceitfulness blocks open communication and hinders congregational relationships, not to say anything of the plan of God. System 4 is characterized by open communication that make the whole truth available.

6. The Body of Christ. The New Testament shows the church as the community of faith in which each member has his or her place (Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12). System 4 teaches that each person is a part of the decision making process. Together we plan, set goals, and work.⁵⁸

These Scriptures are not given to prooftext or argue for System 4. Clearly Likert did not have such things in mind when he wrote his books. However, it is easy to see the comparisons between the two as a way of building a bridge from the Bible to present theory in use.

System 4 clearly opens good interaction between leaders and members. When trust is high, each is loyal to each other, goals and values are integrated, each member is highly valued, there is a supportive, open atmosphere, members develop and mature, each member works to help the other reach his or her potential, the group is open to new and creative ideas, information is shared, and members are

⁵⁸ Paul Dieterich and Donald Arthur. The District Superintendent, Key to District Revitalization (Naperville, Illinois: The Center for Parish Development, 1974), pp. 47-48.

permitted to be themselves.⁵⁹

The Factor of Self-Disclosure. The factor of self-disclosure and transparency also will have an effect on trust formation. The pastor that insists on role-playing and facade building will be preventing his congregation from really knowing him. In the words of Jack Gibb:

Ministers have been well trained to "take a ministerial role", with all that this implies: to participate formally in ceremonies and rituals, to take a caring stance in time of death or tragedy, to be a bulwark of strength for members in time of fear, and to put aside personal concerns in favor of ministering to the needs of others. Often it is difficult to find the real person of the minister under the role facade.⁶⁰

Gibb continues, "The more we are into a role, the more likely we are to...induce distrust."⁶¹ Hiding behind a role is less than complete honesty. We make people believe we feel up when we really feel down. We appear strong and confident when we really feel fearful and unsure. We treat people with honey and kid-gloves when they secretly grind on us, and we do it all in the name of fulfilling the role.

⁵⁹ Likert, New Patterns: pp. 166-169.

⁶⁰ Gibb, Trust: p. 219.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 258.

Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham developed in 1955 what came to be known as the "Johari Window", which assesses the movement toward self-disclosure and openness.⁶²

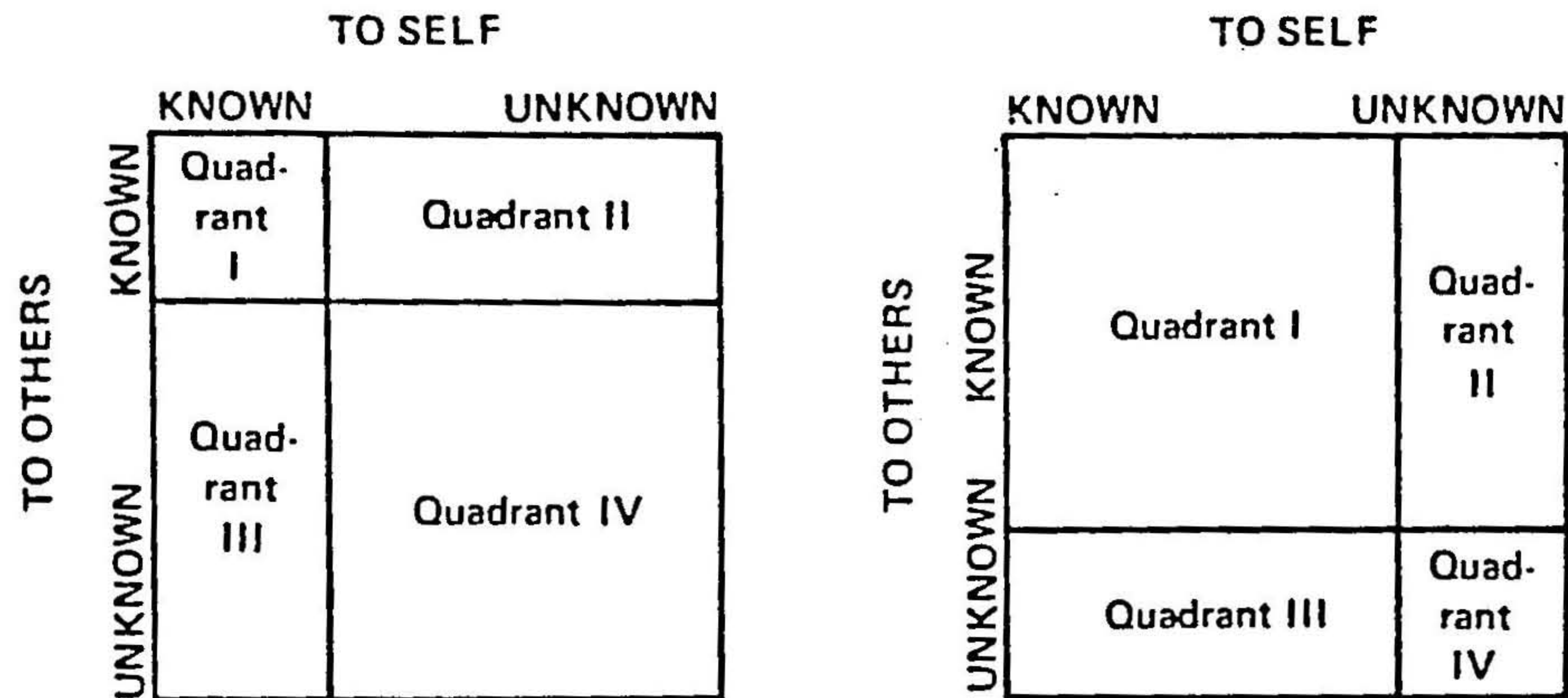


Figure 9

The areas that are known and unknown are mapped out in four quadrants as seen above. Each corresponds to what is known and unknown about a person to him or herself and others.

Quadrant I is the area of communication that is open and available to the persons in the group. These are the things that are known to us and we are willing to talk about with others.

⁶² Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, "The Johari Window: A Model of Interpersonal Awareness," Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development (Los Angeles: Extension Office, University of California, August 1955).

Quadrant II charts that which is hidden or avoided. It is what we know about ourselves, but do not wish to reveal to the group members.

Quadrant III represents the blind areas about us that are known to others in the group but are unknown to us. As the group moves toward open and frank sharing this quadrant will be revealed to the person.

Quadrant IV is the unknown and fuzzy areas that are not known to us or anyone else. This area will become smaller as others share openly what they know and see in us.

As a new group forms, it will discover quadrant I being rather small. With open and free disclosure of self this quadrant will grow and the other quadrants will become smaller. The maturation process of group development centers around self-disclosure as individuals allow materials to be brought from the hidden area to the open area. This is also facilitated by a corresponding offering of feedback, which moves materials from the blind area into the open. If a person risks self-disclosure but receives no feedback from the group the blind area of that person will increase and trust will be decreased. Conversely, if feedback is given, but the person does not disclose himself, the area that is hidden will increase and trust will be decreased.

There are both benefits and dangers in self-

disclosure.⁶³ One positive benefit is that people will get to know who I really am which will free me from diverting energy into building a facade or protecting a role. Also, I will get to know who I am. The feedback will give me a view of myself that was hidden from me without the group reflection. The process of self-disclosure and feedback will form a trust bond with those who will listen and accept me.

The danger is that people can decide they do not like me and that sets me up for personal injury and hurt. The other side is that my candor can hurt another person if I become insensitive. Clearly, "self-disclosure is not a solo act."⁶⁴ It is an adventure of trusting relationships.

Jack Gibb describes his trust theory with the acronym "TORI" (Trusting, Opening, Realizing and Interdepending). By "Opening" he means allowing a person to see themselves through the mirror others provide when the relationship is authentic.⁶⁵ This depends on self-disclosure as a person trusts another to experience them exposed. Such an exercise will permit a person to see and accept others as whole

⁶³ Emory A. Griffin, When It's Time to Move (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), pp. 100-103.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

⁶⁵ Gibb, Trust: p. 24.

persons with little distortion. The one thing that can keep me from such self-disclosure is my fear. Fear that I will not be liked or accepted, that I will not be appreciated for who I am. Such fear develops masking, closing up, distancing, filtering, and covering. The closed person develops strategies to protect the self. Such strategizing leads to distortion, formality, and giving and receiving social distance.⁶⁶ To free myself from such fears I begin by freeing myself from roles. The person who is keeping a role will not be free to be personal and real. Breaking free begins with the self-disclosure of feelings.⁶⁷ The expression of feelings is the core component part of trust building in relationships. To deny feelings is to withdraw in fear. Self-disclosure moves a group toward trust.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

LEVEL III
REFLECTION

Judgments of the Research

The amount of materials relating to trust in the Scriptures is astounding. In simplistic terms it could be said that the Bible is the record of God's attempt to form a trust relationship with mankind. It underscores the fact that God is a loving God who has pursued mankind in order to restore us to a trust relationship since the fall of our first parents. We do not seek God except that he had first sought us. What surprises me is the fact that after mankind broke trust God persisted in opening the door for a new trust bond with him. By contrast the Devil works to destroy trust between humanity and God. The enticement of sin is for a person to trust him or herself more than God.

Where there is trust for God there can be spiritual contentment and peace, whereas the non-trusting environment will be characterized by fear as seen in Adam and Eve after the fall. This fear creates hiding, covering up and

pointing the finger of blame at others.

God used the concept of covenants, drawing on what was familiar to the Israelites to demonstrate his willingness to establish a trust relationship. While God may work through the familiar he always remakes it to be truly his. This is seen in the fact that Christ came to be the ultimate sacrifice, offered once and for all. Never before had a sacrifice been offered in such a final and conclusive way. The stipulations of the new covenant were not so much external and tangible as they had been in the old covenant, but internal and intangible (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

This is not to say that the old covenant was not important. The law held a significant place in that it led us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). But now that the new covenant has come we are no longer under the old law. The old covenant law brought us to Christ, but it could not save us. Redemption, then, is brought about by faith/trust in Christ. H. Orton Wiley makes it clear that justification is grounded in the offering of Christ's blood (p. 52). Justification can never be by works or external rules. Where the old covenant placed us under spiritual bondage the new covenant set us free in spirit.

There has always been some sort of outward sign to show that a person trusted God. In the Old Testament it was the keeping of the law and circumcision. In the New Testament a

key sign would seem to be obedience to Christ's words. Jesus said in John 15:14, "You are my friends if you do what I command." The command is clear: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12). We demonstrate our love for and desire to be a disciple of Christ when we love one another (John 13:34-35). In fact, "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10). Love for Christ will be seen in how we interact with Christians and non-Christians alike. Matthew 25:34-40 illuminates this by saying that when we feed the hungry or give water to the thirsty, when we cloth the naked and invite the stranger in, when we care for the sick and visit those in prison, we are showing love for Christ.

I find myself in agreement with the understanding that the biblical words "faith" and "trust" are parallel. Kittle understands trust to be formed on the basis of reliability (p. 52). In other words, there must be some prior action that proves God to be worthy of our trust. Trust always begins with God's primary action. However, there must be a similar and corresponding response on the part of mankind. We trust God on the basis of what we have seen and known. Therefore we trust God and respond by being trustworthy toward him. The study of the trust covenant brought this into better focus for me. What surprised me most was to realize that the Bible is comprised of the weaving of the

theme of the trust covenant throughout. For me the Bible is the account of God's desire for a trust relationship with mankind. All of God's actions toward humanity are to encourage mankind to trust him.

I also agree with McConnell when he says that trust is an act, not a feeling (p. 57). A person chooses to trust because trust is based on what we have experienced in interaction with someone in the past. The social sciences make this clear with their understanding of the framework for trust. The "cognitive base" allows initial trust on the basis of early evidence (p. 57). The "emotional base" for trust allows more risking in relationship on the belief that trust will not be betrayed (p. 59). "Behavioral enactment" forms the third part of the trust base triad. We trust a person in the future to the extent they have shown themselves trustworthy in the past (p. 60). This has given me a practical construct to grapple with trust theory.

Sociologist, Peter Blau, suggests that trust does not happen quickly, but gradually as familiarity grows. This is one point where the discipline of Psychology tends to agree (Gibb, p.61). Personal experience has shown this to be true. When a pastor moves to a church with the expectation of introducing broad changes without allowing time to form a trust bond, he or she is courting personal pain. But when the pastor understands the dynamics of trust building, he

will be cautious before making too many changes that could prevent future bonding. John Fletcher, writing from a practical viewpoint, sees three time frames through which a pastor must pass in trust development. These are the "launching", the "adjustment", and the "productivity" stages (p. 62). Although Fletcher never intended these to be laid alongside the disciplines already mentioned there is some interesting comparison. However, Fletcher seems to ignore the fact that each pastor and parish have individual personalities. The movement through his stages hinge on the assumption of the compatibility of the pastor with the church.

I am in agreement with Leith Anderson (p. 63) that compatibility will be decided on the basis of the ability of the pastor to meet the perceived role expectations and needs of the congregation. The appointment or call system used to bring a pastor and parish together would, in my opinion, decide how much of the congregational needs would be brought to bear on the appointment. I tend to think that the more dialogue the receiving church can have with the possible appointee the greater the chance a trust bond will take place (p. 64). Those appointed by a conference appointment committee may have to depend more on a system of trial and error to pull them through. It is my impression that there would tend to be shorter tenures and greater stress where

there is little or no dialogue with the pastor and parish in the appointment process. This could mean that under the appointment system there might be a longer period of adjustment and a longer time frame before the best ministry could happen.

The discussion of the "effective pastor" (p. 65) was enlightening. I believe the important question is not so much whether a certain personality type will be effective and another not effective. I contend God would not call a person except that there be the possibility for effective ministry. The issue is not whether a person is a "feeling type" or a "thinking type," but whether a pastor can be effective. David McKenna expressed this when he said the pastoral role should not be "sterio-typed by personality" (p. 65) When a church calls a new pastor the larger question should be whether this person can be an effective leader in this setting and can he or she work with the perceived needs and expectations of the congregation. It would seem that all the research overlooked the fact that some personality types may need a greater support system than others. It can be assumed that given the appropriate support system each personality type can experience effective leadership, assuming that all else is equal.

The factor of leadership styles shows the complexity of ministry in today's church. The minister may be skilled as

a "people person" and effective in the factor of building trust on the basis of familiarity. He or she may be compatible with the congregation and viewed as an "effective" pastor in terms of meeting role expectations. But the pastor's tenure may live or die depending on his or her leadership style preference.

Rensis Likert, Engstrom and Dayton, Tannenbaum and Schmidt, and Joseph Zaccaria seem to be in agreement that what is important is that a leader have what is called an "appropriate" leadership style (p. 67). Here again, there needs to be a matching of the pastor's style with the needs of the congregation. I agree with Napier (p. 68) that the pastor/leader will be effective as he or she is able to match the leadership style to the environment in which he or she ministers. There could be great discontent and injury to trust development if the congregation is accustomed to sharing in the decision making process and a pastor expected to make all the decision him or herself. It could be supposed that there would be equal discontent if the people were passive and expected the leader to make all the decisions while the pastor wanted everyone to participate. Such a gap in the expectations could damage trust development and cause a great deal of stress in relationships.

McConnel takes the discussion even further by

suggesting that an effective leader will use a variety of leadership styles, depending on the needs of the moment. This says to me that the effective leader will be a flexible leader. The Likert materials (pp. 71-75) identify four major areas of leadership styles. Perhaps Likert has compartmentalized too much in his systems 1-4, but they give a clear understanding of how a leader might function. What tends to happen, however, is that not all situations fit neatly into one system or another. I find system 4 attractive because of the win/win environment it produces (p. 74) as opposed to the win/lose of the other three systems. Here again, the effective leader will move from one system to another, choosing a style that is appropriate to the needs of the moment. For instance, if there was a fire the leader would not be termed effective if he called for a vote to see how everyone felt about leaving the building. On the other hand, when the church is confronted with a controversial issue the leader would want to take his or her time, gathering all the information and entertaining adequate discussion before leading the group to make a decision. Likert would say that a system 4 decision involves more people in the decision making process, therefore this would produce more contentment, harmony and support in the carrying out and living with the decisions made.

System 4 represents an ideal that the church, in my opinion, would want to embrace. Not only does it make good sense in terms of longer pastoral tenure, church harmony, lowered stress levels, and effective goal accomplishment, but it would seem to be more in line with the New Testament ideals for Christian living within the body of Christ (pp. 75-77). It is my impression that those who function at systems 1 and 2 often tend to be in an arrested developmental stage in terms of Christian maturity and interpersonal relationships. Those in systems 1 and 2 tend to think a "real" leader is the strong fisted person who can make all the decisions and coerce the church to do things his or her way. The reality is that it takes more ego-strength and self-confidence to function in system 4 where you do not control everything in your environment.

A key factor that I see in system 4 is the high trust environment. System 4 offers more personal freedom and involvement so that the person has a better chance to mature and feel self-worth. It is a supportive atmosphere that is open to the view points of other persons. It also seems that there will be a higher contentment level which would mean that church leaders might not experience burn out as often. None of the other systems offers this kind of freedom and potential for trust. System 4, then, offers the climate where significant trust can happen.

The factor of self-disclosure is one that is best represented by Luft and Ingham's Johari Window (p. 79). On the basis of personal experience I would agree that the smaller the Quadrant I the less openness and trust there will be. When compared with Likert's Systems I and 2, we would find a closed system which would create an environment of lower trust because self-disclosure does not exist. The larger Quadrant I is the more trusting the person will become because less is hidden or avoided which forces the unknown area of Quadrant IV to become smaller. If Quadrant I remains small over a period of time then group effectiveness would be limited and trust would be slow to develop, if at all. Group and personal maturity would seem to be tied to the ability to be transparent. This, I believe, has something to say to the pastor who is closed and has not learned to risk self-disclosure in appropriate ways before his or her congregation. According to Gibb, being closed would create barriers and encourage facade building, masking, hiding of the true self, and shallow relationships. One can quickly see that such does not contribute to trust building. This is not to say that the minister should "spill his guts" or "tell all," but appropriate self-disclosure can contribute to a realistic understanding of who a person is and create a climate of trust.

Griffin is right when he warns there are dangers in self-disclosure. Others may take what is shared and open and use it in such a way as to cause personal pain and injury. But the danger of diverting large amounts of energy into hiding the true self and of not maturing seems even greater than the threat of injury.

Evaluation of Ministry

I believe that I am moving in the right direction in terms of understanding and putting into practice a more collaborative leadership style which is encouraging greater group participation. This has meant risking and moving into an area of self-disclosure that I have not known before. However, the more I move toward system 4 the more I am aware that this is how ministry was meant to be.

The new structure the church put into place has been pushing me toward patience and sensitivity for the feelings of others. Taking time to orientate Luke (p. 28) in his first meeting would not have been an item on the agenda in the past. The research for this study has also made me aware that often the climate is as important as the decisions made in committee meetings. I am finding that as I allow church leaders to talk about what is on their

agendas the Ministries Committee is moving to more significant ministry oriented tasks (p. 28).

The Description section of LEVEL I shows some of my struggle to be more open and to allow a more shared leadership. The Ministries Committee is comprised of trusted leaders who chair their separate commission meetings without the controlling presence of the pastor. The Ministries Committee meetings are characterized by free and open sharing. When the group arrives at a decision I consider it final. I have discovered that I do not have to control the thinking of persons, the group usually monitors itself (p. 28).

In LARRY-1 I set the pace by bringing the problem of Albert to the Ministries Committee. I believe it would not be fair to expect them to risk sharing their feelings if I did not first lead the way by doing so myself. The problem was presented in a logical and low-key manner so there would not be an emotionally overcharged atmosphere. However, I do think I acted overly sensitive in LARRY-1. Perhaps this was because of the anxiety I was experiencing. I am not sure that I needed to set the stage quite so much before launching into a description of the problem.

I seem to be going into this encounter braced for the worst. When Mark questions why this is being presented I experience an initial reaction of disappointment and

rejection. I went into this encounter with fear and was prepared to be told to handle things on my own. In spite of this I do think I did a fair job of laying out the problem in such a way as not to attack the person of Albert. Neither did I attack Mark when he voiced what I interpreted as a negative statement. I also was not calling for the committee members to take sides in such a way that they could not continue a friendship with Albert if they chose to do so (LUKE-1). My personal fear surfaces again in GERRY-1 in my surprise that Gerry did not take the side of Albert. I seem to have prejudged how each will react. This could have a negative effect on my ministry by increasing fear and thus causing increased stress.

It might have been better had I found a way to handle the problem with Albert without involving Luke since this was his first meeting with the Ministries Committee and he was close friends with Albert. I believe this placed a great deal of pressure on Luke from what is seen in LUKE-1. I think I was risking too much and could have lost Luke from the committee. On the positive side I did take the time in LUKE-1 to reassure him of my intentions. I need to watch becoming so engrossed in my emotions or the task at hand that I am not aware of the feelings of others.

I am happy that I am more and more able to let others make up their own minds without my selling or telling them

what to think. LARRY-3 is one indication of that. I am moving away from being overly competitive and coercive, and am becoming more consultative and collaborative which has been my goal.

It would seem that I had perceived the situation with Albert correctly for the most part. However, I did not anticipate such a positive experience from the whole encounter with the Ministries Committee. Knowing that each of us was coming from an authoritarian system, I am surprised that the group has come together so well in trust development. It is my impression that the group has responded well in our journey from an authoritarian system to a more collaborative style.

It has been liberating to see the lay-leadership respond without the former coercive style that was used in the past. It is also refreshing to see the church gradually move from the assumption that the holy life meant keeping a list of rules. I think I have acted as a responsible agent of God and the church has responded in a positive fashion. I have shown myself able to risk with the church and the Ministries Committee and to be more collaborative and trusting by the sharing of feelings and self-disclosure.

Decisions for Future Ministry

There are a number of things that I feel I need to follow-up as a result of this study. As a result of the research in this study I will try to be more in touch with my feelings and will do so by reading more literature concerning self-disclosure. I will practice opening myself up, little by little, in controlled ways until I have gained more experience and am more comfortable in revealing myself. I suspect there is a gap in previous interpersonal development due to my closed authoritarian background.

In the future I will look closely at what makes me fearful and why I am fearful of what others say and think. While I am the product of my past and present I need to build more confidence into my ministry. I will accomplish this by involving myself in the kinds of seminars and personal training, at least one a year, that will encourage positive and balanced ego-strengths. I will not dismiss genuine affirmation for the positive ministry I have.

At the present time I see myself going back and forth between systems 3 and 4. I will choose to trust those who have proven themselves worthy of trust and not set myself up to expect personal rejection. In the future I will do some remedial reading in this area and continue my research into trust bonding.

There is another need that comes to light as a result of this research. I am not as strong as I need to be in creating a way back for those who force me to relate to them confrontationally. When such situations happen again I will create a process so the Albert's of my church can be rechanneled, if at all possible, so they can be productive again. I will develop a structure that is win/win for those who will accept it by first being alert to the dynamics of conflict. I will avoid trying to solve problems alone when they could be handled by a supportive team.

I also need to be aware that I tend to prejudge how some situations will end. I have a habit of bracing for the worst and expecting negative results. In the future I will attempt to do critical thinking by using the Case Study Method for difficult problems. This will give me several optional windows through which to view problems so I can build a positive mental attitude for ministry.

EPILOGUE

Part I

A Follow-up of Albert's Story

Albert came into the office precisely at 3:00 p.m. January 10, 1987. Paul and Mark and myself were already waiting. I had called Albert beforehand to let him know Paul and Mark would be joining us. He had sounded pleased. After being seated Albert took out a stack of 3X5 cards and began to tell me why the three of them were here to see me. Sensing it was getting off to a bad start I stopped Albert to say that he should know the ground rules for the meeting. Mark and Paul were not there to take sides with either of us. They were there to listen and be certain that his complaints were heard. I suggested that we should begin with prayer and led in a brief prayer asking for God's guidance.

I then promised that I would write down Albert's complaints as I understood them and read them back to him to make sure that what we heard was correct. We would then give the complaints to the proper committees to research.

It was made clear that since he was no longer on the Official Board or any other committee he should not pursue any further investigation until he heard from the committee dealing with it.

Albert sat stunned for a few seconds and then said that it appeared that things were already decided and maybe he should continue this on his own. He thought Mark and Paul were here to confront me and set my thinking straight. He was shocked that I would set things up like this. Yet he shuffled his cards and began.

As each complaint was aired I wrote it down and before he went on to the next I asked him to give his consent to the accuracy of what I had written. At the close of the time, about half-an-hour, Albert stood up in disgust saying he guessed he never should have come if it was going to be this way. I asked if he had given us all his complaints and he affirmed that he had. I asked that before he go that he agree to end his investigation, especially as it included those outside the immediate church. He acted surprised and said he had not contacted anyone about this. I reminded him of the two former pastors, the superintendent, the pastor across town, and some others. With face flushed he opened the door to leave.

I asked Albert to sit down until we had the chance to handle one more thing. I shared that I sensed these issues

were only part of the problem. There was something wrong in our relationship and I wanted to get things straightened out. In accordance with Matthew 18 I had already talked to him privately and nothing seemed to be resolved. Now, with these men present, I wanted us to make things right. He stood up and said an emphatic "No!" I wasn't sure he had heard right so I asked twice more that we take the opportunity to get things resolved. Each time he refused. With the last refusal he bolted through the door and was gone.

The three of us sat silently for a few moments. Then Mark spoke saying that what we had just witnessed seemed almost satanic. Paul added that he felt that everything had been handled in a spirit of love and it was now up to Albert whether he would accept it. Paul commented that in all the years he had known Albert that he had never heard him ask forgiveness even though there were many reasons why he should have. We bowed our heads before leaving the building and committed Albert into the hands of God.

Albert and his wife did not come back to services for nearly six weeks. For the first time the church did not go after them and beg them to return. When they did finally come to worship they arrived late and left early to avoid people contact. Three weeks after the confrontation Albert called for an appointment to see me again and wanted a

promise that no one else would be there. Wanting to create an opening for him to get things settled I agreed. He canceled the first meeting an hour before the time and didn't show up or call the second, but he made it the third.

This time he came in with a determination to control the meeting. He suggested that we begin with prayer and before I could agree he began leading in prayer. When the prayer was over Albert had his 3X5 cards already in hand and began by saying that this was the most difficult thing he had ever done, except when he disciplined another pastor 10 years before for a case of what he called "temporary insanity." I listened to see if there was any change of heart or any hope that something good would come out of this. After an hour, when it was apparent nothing had changed, I asked him to put away his cards, look me in the eye and tell me from his heart what he had against me. He looked startled and told me he didn't have anything against me. This so disturbed him that he got his cards out of sequence and they apparently were useless to him for the rest of the time. When Albert left my office he turned to say he didn't think we had accomplished anything.

Albert attempted to get things moving only one other time after that. This time he tried to get the financial files from the church auditor. When that didn't work he tried to get what he wanted from the finance committee.

When everything turned into a dead end he apparently gave up the endeavor.

Albert's home was closed to me for the next eight months until it was discovered that his wife had cancer. Since that time I have been welcomed into their home several times for prayer.

Part II

A Follow-up of the Writer's Story

One value derived from this study is that I have enjoyed pastoral tenure nearly two years beyond the average for this church. I am able to function freely without restraint in nearly every area of ministry. I feel I have grown in many ways while being the catalyst for positive change in the congregation.

My personal journey is bringing healing so that I am not experiencing the repressed feelings of hostility toward those who forced their religion of rules on me in the past. My impatience and anger is being tempered with patience and compassion for those who are weak in their faith and need the crutches of works. This has allowed more energy to be diverted into positive ministry that brings healing rather than scars.

I feel I am no longer just surviving. I have found internal peace and freedom from the restrictions that I once thought led to the holy life. This has not come easily but with hours of searching the Scriptures and searching my heart. Old habits and mind-sets have had to be challenged and confronted in order to bring me to a more biblical understanding of holiness and heart purity. I have learned not to rely on the opinions of others to supply me with the answers to my spiritual journey. The peer pressure of the legalistic system is less and less able to sway me. I find no need to be the "guardian" of the external rules and traditions but to be a proclaimer of the positive Gospel.

Openness and honesty about my personal journey has created opportunities to share my story with other such seekers of truth. There is a quiet revolution taking place as more and more throw aside the crutches of holiness by works. There is satisfaction and fulfillment in watching these persons grow and mature in the Lord. I owe much to the Oil City First Church for having had the privilege of working through the problems that have shaped my life.

Part III

A Follow-up of the Research Impact

God is at work doing new things as a result of this study. There are a number of ways I see this happening. First, I feel we have a greater handle on problem solving than in the past. The Case Study Method has been helpful in walking around other difficult problems since this study. By careful and methodical application of the principles learned I have been able to get inside the problems that immobilized me before. The result has been an awareness to the positive options and opportunities in each problem situation.

This study has taught me the value of patience in building relationships before pushing for too much change within the church. The research on familiarity has kept me from plunging into some programs until the lay-leaders knew me better. I understand now that trust is built incrementally through many varying encounters. As familiarity has grown I have witnessed the increase of trust among the leaders of the local church. The resulting trust has created a climate where bonding between pastor and people has happened. By being aware that familiarity needs to happen first, I have avoided repeating some things that have caused grief in former pastor/parish relationships. The message I received from the research on familiarity is, Go slow and build the foundation well.

Another implication for ministry is found in the

insight given in the research on compatibility. This has helped me to understand what my church is saying concerning their expectations of me as their pastor. The study has strengthened my acceptance of my ministry gifts while at the same time developing an appreciation for where the church is. Growth began when I decided that my goal orientation was not going to meet the perceived needs of the people. I then tempered my ministry style to meet the expectations of the people until they could get to know me and trust me to allow change. In the past, problems have been created when I pushed for change to happen too quickly. The research tends to show that longer pastoral tenure happens when the pastor meets the role expectations, thus contributing to a climate of trust and positive change. My goal is to be an effective pastor in whatever situation I am placed by ministering to the needs of the church. This process has bought me time so that the unreasonable role expectations can gradually be challenged and openly discussed.

The most helpful segment of the research has been that on leadership styles. This has pushed me to consciously create an atmosphere of shared leadership and support. Lay persons are becoming involved in the decision making process and leaders are being trained to use their gifts in ministry. The research indicates to me that the effective leader relates to the people at their level of expectations

and then moves them only after trust has been formed. Such awareness has permitted me to move the church toward Systems 3 and 4. We find ourselves functioning between the consultative and collaborative styles, going back and forth depending on the needs of the group. Group immaturity has pushed us back into Systems 1 and 2 only occasionally. I am learning to allow the group process to work, considering group decisions to be final.

Accountability has been a spinoff effect of moving toward a shared leadership. The Ministries Committee has felt free to question some things in my ministry which in turn has brought personal growth. This has created a more positive tone to my ministry since things are dealt with openly in the appropriate setting. I have noticed that my sermons have been less a forum for getting some things out in the open than before.

An understanding of the Likert materials has opened the door to positive change in my style of leadership. This in turn allowed the restructuring of the administrative structure for shared leadership. There is emerging a sense of stability and unity as the Ministries Committee takes on more responsibility. Pressure has lifted for me to be a "one-man-band" as others use their gifts and help shoulder the work. The turnover among volunteers has been greatly reduced which indicates to me there is more ministry

satisfaction among the membership. Not only has this happened in this local church but these principles have been introduced into the Conference Board of Evangelism and the District organization of which I am chairman.

The factor of self-disclosure has been the most difficult to place in the stream of daily life. I have learned that self-disclosure must be done with discretion and for the most part in the context of the smaller group of the Ministries Committee. Here constructive criticism has been offered in an atmosphere of love and trust which has bonded me with the church leaders. I recognize this as my growing edge. As I risk more I find I am more free to be myself. This has had a healing effect on my ministry. Not only is this happening for myself but I believe it to be happening to some degree with each member of the Ministries Committee. The greatest growth of all has been to see fear gradually being replaced by trust.

APPENDIX A

FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH
OIL CITY, PAOFFICIAL BOARD STRUCTURE
AND DUTIES

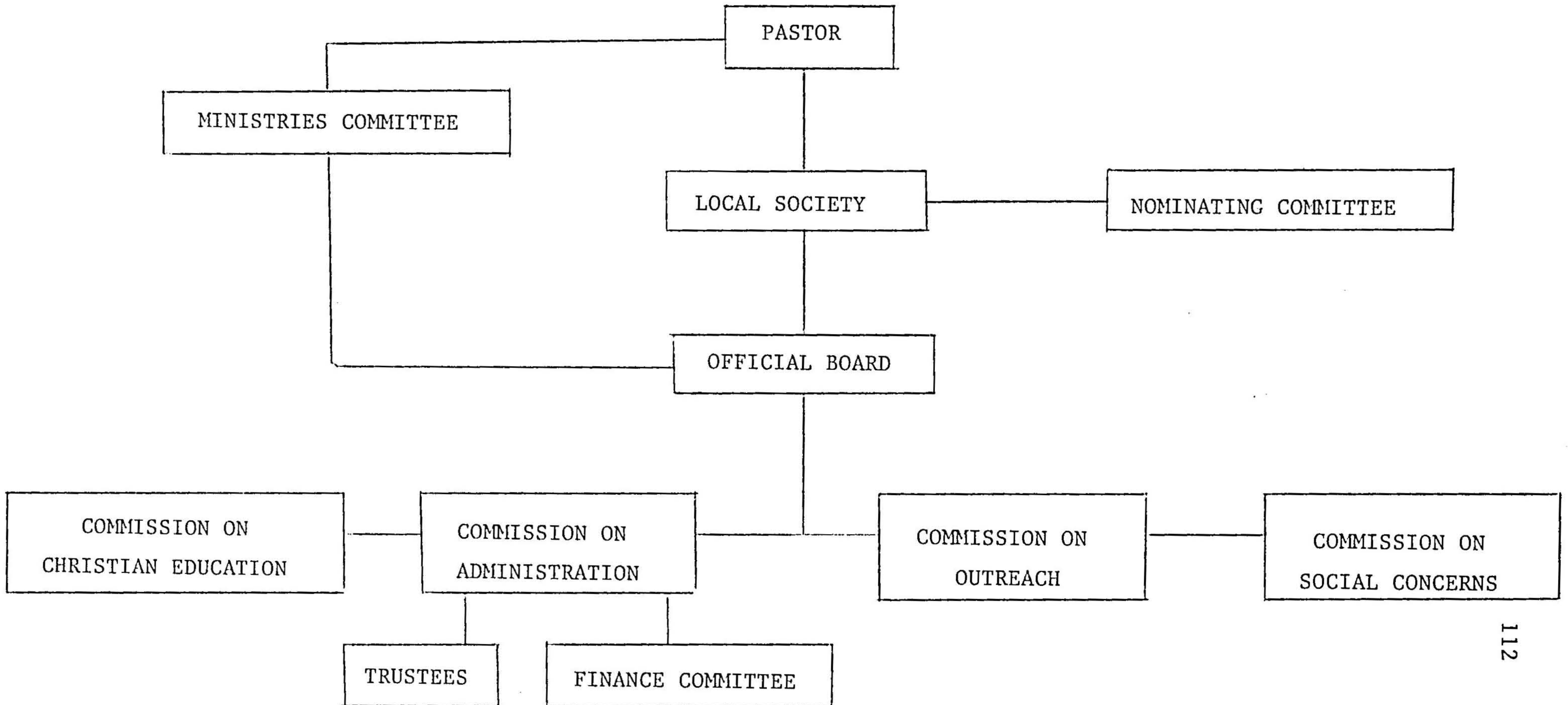
MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the First Free Methodist Church of Oil City, PA, is to glorify God and demonstrate our love for Him through our spiritual worship (Romans 12:1-2); nurturing and equipping the believer (1 Corinthians 12-14); and reaching out to win our world for Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

February 1987

FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH
Oil City, PA

OFFICIAL BOARD STRUCTURE



OFFICIAL BOARD STRUCTURE

There are several reasons why we have moved toward the following structure.

1. To share the leadership responsibility throughout the church membership.
2. To develop leadership earlier in those who are younger.
3. To develop a sense of purpose, direction and priorities in ministry.
4. To free more evenings for some to be in other ministry or with their families, especially those who serve presently on a number of boards and committees.
5. To free the Official Board to set creative and spiritual direction for the church rather than the functional discussions of committee work.
6. To discover and encourage the use of spiritual gifts so that ministry is more effective.
7. To offer a forum for problem solving in a climate of trust and confidentiality. This will be done so that leaders have the support to carry out better ministry without experiencing burnout.

OFFICIAL BOARD DUTIES

The following is an explanation of the newly approved structure for the Official Board of the First Free Methodist church. Restructuring was carried out as an attempt to form a supportive system for each Official Board member and the Pastor, as well as open channels for better communication in problem solving and goal realization. It is hoped that breaking from an ineffective system to the one approved will provide us with greater potential for growth.

Envisioned in this structure is a more shared responsibility throughout the membership. This will permit the development of new lay leadership and contribute to the overall direction and purpose of the church. This will also free more evenings for some who have been overloaded by being asked to serve on several boards. Such will free a person to be with his family and to be out "in the world" as Christ's witness. Restructuring also will be giving more persons the opportunity to discover and develop Spirit given spiritual gifts. Such a structure will allow the Commissions to do the committee work so that the larger Official Board may be free to set a more creative and spiritual direction for the church rather than the functional discussions normally experienced. The general ground work of the structure is as follows (see chart on first page):

1. No person will serve on more than one commission, except in unusual and special situations.

2. Each Commission will be guided by a director who is elected by the local society. Where appropriate the pastor will have the privilege of recommending to the Nominating Committee those persons suitable for such responsibility.

3. Elected directors will become a member of the Ministries Committee. This committee will meet with the pastor before each Official Board meeting.

4. The Commissions will meet from 6-7:00 p.m. before each Official Board meeting. At 7:00 p.m. all Commission members will meet from 7-8:00 p.m. to transact business brought from the Commissions.

5. As often as possible, items of business brought from the Commissions will be placed on the agenda as a Study Item where it will be discussed without a vote. The following meeting it will be brought before the Official Board under New Business and may be voted on. In the event that a matter is urgent it may be taken immediately to New Business upon the unanimous agreement by the Official Board.

6. Each Commission will select a recorder to keep minutes of discussions and motions. These will be left in the church office to be copied for the pastor's file following the board meeting.

7. Commissions will be considered subcommittees of the Official Board. When empowered by the board, they may act on behalf of the board.

8. Each Commission will annually review the Church Mission Statement and ask itself what it can do to help the church fulfill its purpose. This report will be shared with the Official Board as soon after the new year as is feasible.

THE MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The Ministries Committee shall be comprised of the pastor and the directors from each Commission. The Ministries Committee will assist the pastor in the administrative duties of the church. Together, they will form a linking support team for the pastor and each member of the team. In an atmosphere of support and confidence the pastor and team members will engage in problem solving, encouragement, supportive prayer, and the spiritual equipping of each member.

The first task for this committee will be to set an example of cooperation and spiritual unity for the church. Therefore, they will take seriously their relationships with one another. Each member will let others see him truly "loving the Brethern."

The committee will meet in an appropriate place before each Sunday worship service to pray for the pastor and the service. This will not only give support to the pastor, but will signal the solidarity of these key leaders.

When necessary, items of a sensitive nature, such as discipline in spiritual matters, will be handled by the

committee. If the pastor needs support in dealing with such matters, he may invite the committee to meet with him when confronting such situations.

COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

MEMBERS: Each age level director and the C.E. Director

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Administer all C.E. programs.
2. Co-ordinate all C.E. activities.
3. Recruit C.E. personnel and fill all vacancies in the Christian Education department, except for the directors position, which will be referred to the local society.
4. Provide and review job description for age level directors.
5. Provide teacher training for each teacher.
6. Provide a rotating class for new converts using such materials as the "Timothy Lessons". Also, train and appoint persons to be personally responsible for each new convert.
7. View all Sunday School classes as a discipling experience for class members. The goal is each student will not only do as a teacher says, but that they will become more like the teacher as the teacher follows Christ.
8. Keep abreast of current trends, methods, and curriculum and implement them where applicable.
9. Work with the administrative commission in planning for present and future needs of facilities and equipment.
10. Create a climate for ministries to families.

COMMISSION ON OUTREACH

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Coordinate and encourage a balanced outreach program in the church such as the "Reach Out In Love" program.
2. Provide training for the laity in personal evangelism when profitable.
3. Provide printed materials, tapes, films, etc. for local evangelism.
4. Be familiar with all major successful evangelism programs available.
5. Encourage attendance at church growth seminars, retreats, etc. Plan church growth seminars in the local church when feasible.
6. Initiate, coordinate, and oversee all visitation programs of the church (i.e. organize visitation teams for new visitors, absentees, community contacts, etc. The Commission on Social Concerns will be responsible for visiting the sick and shut-ins.)
7. Provide training in visitation for those gifted in this area.
8. Coordinate a training program for altar workers.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

The Trustees will serve with the Commission on Finance under the general heading of Administrative Commission, although each will hold separate Commission meetings.

TRUSTEES

MEMBERS: elected Trustees.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The Trustees shall have and hold in trust any and all property committed to it.

2. See that the titles are good; that deeds are drawn in harmony with the laws of the state.
3. See that valuable papers are safely stored.
4. Be responsible to the electing body for general oversight of the property held by the church.
5. Be responsible to the electing body for general maintenance of the property, hiring and, if necessary, the firing of the custodian.
6. Supervise expenditures for repairs, improvements, and alterations when so directed.
7. Make a report at the Annual Meeting, and whenever else the chairman of the electing body may require, of all business transacted, including a statement of the financial and material condition of all property entrusted to it.

FINANCE COMMISSION

MEMBERS: Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Director, Delegate (where possible), and any other person necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Prepare an annual budget in cooperation with the other Commissions, giving them opportunity to suggest their priorities for the coming year, being careful that the budget represents the overall priorities of the Church Mission Statement.
2. Present written monthly financial statements to the Official Board.
3. Review the staff salary every six months and bring in recommendations to the Official Board.
4. Review all requests to solicit among the members and respond accordingly with approval or disapproval.
5. Encourage the congregation to give no less than one-tenth of their income for the Lord's work in the local church.

6. Encourage the pastor to preach on tithing yearly to compliment the work of the Finance Commission.
7. To set an example by each member giving a minimum of one-tenth of his or her income.

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL CONCERNS

MEMBERS: elected Stewards.

Stewards are elected by the church membership and are responsible to the electing body. They are to be examples to the church and the community as to their Christian experience, in all business dealings, in their attitudes and relationships with people, and in their attendance at the means of Grace. Stewards should be persons of solid piety, who are members of the Free Methodist Church, who both know and love the church doctrines, and are of good natural and acquired abilities to transact temporal business on behalf of the church.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. It is the responsibility of the Stewards to see to the temporal needs of the pastor(s). They shall also serve as the social arm of the pastor and society.
2. Solicit sustenance for it's needy (and others within it's means).
3. Give special ministries of comfort to it's sick and sorrowing.
4. Perform courtesies for it's aged.
5. Iniate action toward the establishment of Children's Day Care centers and schools where practical.
6. Seek support and encouragement for it's youth.
7. Assist in the promotion of accredited institutions as listed in Par. 463, Section 5 of the Book of Discipline.
8. Provide the elements for the Lord's Supper.
9. Become involved with approved movements within the

community which improve the welfare of the whole man, but ever keeping in mind that all of it's services have but one objective, the redemption of the soul in a full knowledge of Jesus Christ.

10. Perform any other duties as may be assigned by the pastor or the electing body.

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