

Chapter 2

KEEPING THE TEAM GOING:

Organization

When my children were young Barb, Ben, Betsy and I would go to watch the Philadelphia Phillies play baseball. We would use on-street parking a few blocks away, and then hustle up to the 700 section behind first base. The inexpensive seating allowed us to indulge in a few extra treats. My kids aren't into peanuts, but the ice cream vendor grabbed their attention every game.

While watching the players on the field, we never thought much about the organization that takes place behind the scenes that keeps a ball club going. Occasionally we'd hear something about "the front office" or "the management making a trade." But we rarely thought about the administration of ticket sales, parking, uniform laundering, grounds maintenance, publicity, player contracts, and the other details necessary to keep a team running smoothly. Without good organization, a team can never become a winner.

The ministry of the church of Jesus Christ is eternally more important than a baseball game. So if good structure is necessary for any secular enterprise, it is critical for the discipleship program of a local church.

Is a Christian Education Committee really necessary?

You've probably heard the old saying: "A camel is a horse that a committee put together." Because of the ineffectiveness of some groups, there exists an eagerness to do

away with committees, or at least by-pass them somehow. A committee should not be a group of uninformed, disjointed individuals, but rather a team of coaches who give guidance and supervision to their players.

The Christian Education Committee is a group of individuals who are appointed to give oversight to all aspects of the church's educational ministry. Some congregations call this group a board; others call it a commission or team. In some churches the leadership team meets often, assuming responsibility for the selection of staff, the scheduling of meetings and the planning of programs. Other committees meet less frequently, mainly for coordination and communication among program leaders.

The teaching ministry of the church is so important that it necessitates close oversight. Even in churches where paid staff direct specific ministries, the Christian Education Commission can still help coordinate the various programs. "How much program should our church have?" "How can we best divide our students for learning?" "What materials should we use?" All are questions that can be answered by the Educational Ministry Team.

The committee should not try to reinvent the wheel on every issue, nor control every situation. Rather, their function is to maintain a current appraisal of the educational program, giving special attention to needs which may arise. Many of the decisions of the Christian Education Committee can be implemented directly. Where facilities are concerned, they may need to work with a facilities committee. Where major policies are of concern, they may want to consult the official church board.

The Christian Education Commission can also serve as a sounding board for program directors. Club leaders, children's church workers or youth advisors are less open to personal criticism when they run their programs and special events through the Educational Ministry Team.

The Christian Education Committee serves as the management team, giving oversight to the ministry and making sure all the workers and programs are pulling together smoothly.

Who should serve on a Christian Education Commission?

There are two ways that these management teams are usually formed. Some congregations vote or appoint individuals from the congregation at large. These members are not necessarily related to any given program, but are appointed because of their interest in Christian education in general. This type of organization is useful for evaluating the various discipleship ministries, and for functioning as a sounding board to program leaders. Since the people usually appointed to this type of committee are a random sample of the congregation, their input is usually a good gauge of how the congregation is responding to the various programs.

A preferred way of forming the Christian Education Commission is to comprise it of the leaders who direct the various discipleship ministries. The philosophy behind this approach is that people who run the program should also have the authority to determine and plan the program. For example, one committee may be composed of five members including a children's ministries director, the youth pastor or adviser, director of small group ministries, coordinator of adult ministries and the director of the resource (library/media) center. When larger churches utilize this type of structure, separate

leadership teams are established for administrative oversight within each age division (children's ministries, youth ministries and adult ministries).

This type of committee works especially for planning and coordinating purposes. Committee members can share what is happening in their respective program areas, and can also ask for input on specific concerns. This structure is helpful for the scheduling and coordination of upcoming activities. These dates can be placed on the church's master calendar for coordination with other programs.

What types of items should be on the Educational Leadership Team's agenda?

Any item that is of educational concern can be placed on the agenda. A few words of warning should be given, however. No one needs extra meetings. If quarterly meetings are sufficient, do not schedule monthly meetings. Keep meetings to the agenda; honor the time of your leaders.

We also need to remember that *people* work the programs, not committees. Program leaders deserve, and benefit from, freedom in developing their specific areas of ministry. The committee should be a sounding board, a resource and a coordinator for these leaders.

Items that are commonly on the agenda of the Christian Education Committee are:

- Prayer
- Reports by respective program directors
- Review and evaluation of curriculum
- Appointments to service
- Evaluation of programs
- Scheduling of activities (i.e., VBS; Sunday School picnic; training seminars; annual recognition banquet)
- Adoption of policies (usually initiated by a program leader)
- Development of an annual educational budget

What should be included in our Christian education budget?

Although some discipleship budgets are divided by age divisions, in a smaller congregation a more typical Christian Education budget may look like this:

Sunday School	4800
Youth Ministries	2800
Women's Ministries	500
Vacation Bible School	750
Library	600
Children's Club	2200
Adult Ministries/Small Groups	900
Discipleship Resources	600
Training	500
Equipment	700

The amount placed in each category of the budget should honestly reflect the program needs. Obviously, every program could use additional money, but the committee

must look at both what it wants to accomplish and what it can afford. Programs that can receive a fee for service can have less in the budget. Sunday Schools that provide free student resources will need to budget those costs. The committee should plan well in advance expenses for summer ministries, training opportunities, etc., that it envisions. The budget can then adequately provide for those ministries.

Unfortunately, like our federal government's budget, church budgets have many fixed categories. Since churches must pay their staff, the mortgage company, missions, utilities and so on, program areas of the church are sometimes viewed as negotiable.

The congregational leadership must understand that while bricks and mortar are important, they are never more important than the training of our teaching staff or the purchasing of materials that will aid in the study of God's Word. Our purpose is not a building—but the changed lives that takes place within the building. Pastors, especially, need to lead the way in making sure that spiritual formation budgets are healthy.

Should we have a Christian Education Organization Chart?

Whether or not you have an organization chart, you already have some type of organization. And while some volunteers might be unsure of who supervises who, or how ministries interrelate, most teachers know where they fit into the program.

The advantage of having an organization chart, however, is that the grid provides a visual picture of the overall Christian Education program. A chart lets you know, for instance, how much ministry you have for junior highers in comparison to senior citizens. It can reveal staffing levels per program. For example, some charts are designed with room in each box for both the position title (i.e., teacher, leader, sponsor, host) and the worker's last name. By looking at the chart it is easy to tell which programs have adequate staff, and which programs have staffing needs. Computer software makes the construction and updating of charts an easy and useful tool.

What does departmentalization mean?

Departmentalization is a term used to describe a way of breaking down a program into manageable supervisory units. A small church may have only three or four departments consisting of young children, elementary age children, youth and adults. In a larger church you may find the elementary children's division departmentalized into primaries (grades 1-2), middle school (grades 3-4), and juniors (grades 5-6), or even a department for each grade.

A department is not the same thing as a class. Within each department there might be two to four classes. All students within one department usually study the same curriculum. The teachers of a department may group the students differently for various learning activities.

This systematic division of people into more manageably sized groups also establishes reasonable spans of control for the directors working in leadership.

What is the best way to organize the children's program?

Some congregations prefer to organize their kid's ministry by age stratification. The programs for 1st and 2nd graders, 3rd and 4th graders, and 5th and 6th graders would be planned and conducted specifically for each group of children.

Most churches, however, prefer to organize by program. For example, these churches might have a Sunday School, club program, youth group and home Bible studies. Each program would have a coordinator, and then within each program there could be a further breakdown, for example, by age groupings.

How large should a teacher's class be?

If Johnny, Billy and Sam are in the same class, it may already be too big for one teacher. Several factors affect how many students can be grouped for learning:

- Number of volunteers available for teaching
- The experience and competence of the teacher(s)
- The number of students in a given grade
- The personalities and behaviors of the students
- The teaching objectives—can they be reached in a larger group?
- Shepherding expectations—are responsibilities of follow-up realistic?

Recognizing individual differences among teachers, and even individual differences within classes (eight six-year-old boys will be different than eight six-year-old girls), here are some general recommendations:

- Babies and Toddlers: One worker for every two to three children
- Young children (two through kindergarten): One teacher for every five students
- Elementary children (grades 1—6): One teacher for every six to eight students
- Youth (junior high, senior high): One teacher for every ten students
- Adult: One teacher for every 20—30 students, with discussion leaders selected when the class is broken down into small groups

Larger classes or groupings are possible for some learning activities. For example, the senior high mid-week study may have two team-teachers leading 18 students. In general, however, appropriate methodology and manageable shepherding is best fostered by the ratios above.

Should our adults be age-graded, or should we use electives?

Churches that utilize a Sunday morning adult Sunday School usually choose from two organizational approaches. Some congregations offer elective classes each quarter, allowing adults to select topics of interest to them. Other churches prefer the life-stage approach of ABFs (Adult Bible Fellowships). These smaller communities not only study regularly together, but also serve as a vehicle for fellowship, caring and the assimilation of people newer to the church.

On the surface it might appear that one system is superior to the other. For example, one might think that new Christians would benefit from an elective program which would allow them to study basic Christianity, rather than the minor prophets. However, someone else might argue that the best way for young Christians to grow is to put them in a class with mature Christians in the same life-stage, where they can learn with and from them regardless of the subject.

Some important questions which may be overlooked when making a decision on the adult format are: “How is fellowship and shepherding provided in the local congregation? How are visitors assimilated into the church? How does the church keep track of, and care for its adults?”

A church with a solid shepherding ministry within small groups might benefit from elective classes in the Sunday School. Offering a variety of topics for study recognizes differences in student backgrounds and interests.

On the other hand, a church having difficulty keeping in touch with the needs of its people, or desires to improve its fellowship and outreach, may benefit from the life-stage approach. A class of young marrieds, for example, can study Philippians, and also plan baby showers and visit other young marrieds who are new to the church.

How can we coordinate the Christian Education program with other church ministries?

Most churches provide overall ministry coordination through a one-board system. While they have many committees or teams, ultimate authority resides with the Elders, Church Council, Session or Consistory (or whatever title your denomination uses). Larger churches tend to include the pastoral staff in this leadership function. Frequently, the staff takes the initiative in program direction, with the board providing governance oversight. Irrespective of a church’s particular structure, it is beneficial for all of the leaders to pull together at least twice a year for prayer, planning training and communication.

Another vehicle for coordination is a master calendar, usually kept in the church office. Individuals, groups or committees can submit their programs and dates to the official board or through the church office as a clearinghouse. This practice not only lets the left hand know what the right hand is doing, but also encourages a team concept where all involved realize that they are working together in the ministry of Christ.

How can we increase attendance in our program?

Some churches have annual rally Sundays or a Friend Day to motivate their people to reach out to others. Some departments or classes have special incentives for students who bring visitors. All these emphases when rightly applied can build enthusiasm and keep the growth of the Sunday School before a congregation.

However, the best way to increase a program’s attendance is to simply have a good program. No doubt you have sat in some classes with such poor quality that only an extreme commitment to Christ draws attendees to return each week. Needless to say, you are not likely to invite an unchurched friend to join you next Sunday. Let’s face it, the average person will only attend programs that are enjoyable, biblical and personally

relevant. When these qualities characterize our program, attendance is likely to increase even with limited promotion.

Improving the quality of a program is 80 percent of the growth battle. The remaining 20 percent is motivating people to have the attitude, “we want to let others know what they’re missing.” The best sales person is a satisfied customer. Every attendee needs to know that our programs are open to guests, and that their friends would not be embarrassed if they came. Extra Bibles should be available in the classroom. Teachers of all ages should be sensitive to those with little Bible knowledge. Finally, we must realize that adults embarrass easily when called upon—so let them volunteer to read or to answer questions. A little bit of sensitivity can make our classes very visitor friendly.

Rally days and occasional attendance contests have their place, but the most consistent method for growth is to have our people possess the attitude: “This is a great place to learn what God says about life. You would really enjoy and benefit from this program. Why don’t you come with me next Sunday?”

What should be the pastor’s involvement in the Christian Education program?

Because pastors have many demands on their time, they cannot have in-depth involvement with all of the church’s programs. They have responsibilities to Christian education, worship, music, community outreach and stewardship matters. They must also divide their time between church administration, sermon preparation, visitation and counseling. But even with a pressing schedule, wise pastors recognize the benefits of maintaining some visibility with the Christian education program.

Even in a smaller congregation the pastor’s involvement cannot be in the leadership of or regular teaching in a particular program. That level of responsibility must be handled by persons who can provide the required time.

Pastors can best assist the educational ministry through team building and the encouragement of teachers. They can offer suggestions for recruiting and they can provide counsel to the commission. But relating well to the teachers themselves is of most importance. Demonstrating a pastor’s joy in service, and showing sincere appreciation for the teachers, is an encouraging blend of involvement.

What type of records should be kept?

The best answer to this question is, “Whatever records you will *use*.” Some churches maintain a detailed file of enrollment and visitors. Where an adequate outreach ministry exists, these names can provide good contacts for a deeper commitment. There is little benefit, however, of having records which include people not interested in the church.

Many congregations design their program so that each teacher is a shepherd of a *mini-flock*. In this arrangement each teacher maintains his or her own records. Names of visitors who come to the class (or have attended another church program) may be given to a teacher for follow-up. If, in time, the individual shows little interest, the name is not retained in the records of the teacher or department. If they demonstrate an interest, they are added to the mini-flock responsibility of the teacher. For the purpose of overall

coordination, names of students should be kept by the teacher/shepherd, and also by the department coordinator and church office.

Regardless of how classes are structured, statistics should be kept for each program, and for the classes within the program. These records are useful for evaluation and planning. The attendance figures can delineate the age proportions of your congregation. They can also reveal involvement levels of your people in the various programs, as well as likely growth trends. Attendance statistics are also a critical factor in assigning of classrooms. Square footage allotments must match student attendance and needs.

How large should our church be before we hire paid staff for the children's ministry?

There are many variables involved when it comes to the expansion of church staff. Churches vary in per capita giving. They also vary in amount of mortgage indebtedness or monies committed to missions. All of these factors must be considered in determining the feasibility of pastoral staff expansion.

Furthermore, churches differ in the expertise of the laity within their congregations. One church may have great musicians, with good lay worship leaders. Another congregation may have people with administrative or educational backgrounds, who effectively coordinate parts of the discipleship program. Other congregations may have a team of youth sponsors who provide an excellent, balanced youth ministry. Whether a church hires an Associate Pastor, a Youth Pastor or a team of part-time program directors really depends on variables within the local congregation.

A general rule of thumb is that a staff position can be added to a church for every 100-125 regular attendees. Since this figure also includes support staff such as secretaries or custodians, others have followed the ratio of one pastoral staff for every 125-175 congregants. A smaller church that is expanding to a second, full-time pastor will likely need to call an individual who can wear two hats. The leadership must recognize he/she will not be able to wear both hats equally well, but since the pastor is already wearing several hats, two hats aren't that bad.

An increasingly common practice today is for a church to utilize a combination of full-time and part-time staff. Many churches actually employ more part-time hourly specialists than full-time salaried ministers.

Again, all of the staffing issues above take into account the number of people needed to support a new staff or to expand a program. Obviously, a church struggling with finances will struggle. On the other hand, churches experiencing a generous per capita giving can afford more remunerated leadership.

What exactly is the function of the Minister of Christian Education? What is his relationship to the lay program leaders?

The basic job of the Director of Christian Education should be that of encouraging, coordinating, counseling, and doing everything possible to help the leaders, teachers and members of the church serve through teaching. Sometimes this position is called Pastor of Discipleship or Director of Spiritual Formation. As a professional

member of the pastoral staff, this person is also charged with the biblical responsibility of “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.” He/she serves the congregation best in the role of a faithful and trustworthy counselor and administrator to the lay leaders and groups who are responsible for the church’s educational program.

More specifically, the Discipleship Pastor will work with the Christian Education Committee in developing educational aims and polices, coordinating the educational program, promoting the educational program, staffing and training those who will serve in the program, and evaluating each program’s effectiveness.

Most often the M.C.E. position is found in a smaller church where fewer numbers and modest finances do not permit the hiring of age level specialists. However, this position is increasingly being added to mega-churches, where these management experts are utilized to coordinate a team of paid age level ministry professionals.

A sample job description for a Pastor of Discipleship is provided at the conclusion of the chapter.

Summary

We live in an orderly universe. Design and purpose are apparent in everything from automobiles to wristwatches. As managers and coaches of an educational team, we are charged with the task of “maturing the saints for the work of the ministry.” That commission necessitates organization. If good organization is of concern to AT&T and Intel; if it is necessary for every successful ball team in our country, then it is of much more importance to the local church, the body of Christ.

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PASTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP

DEFINITION: The Pastor of Discipleship shall be a full-time member of the pastoral staff who serves as administrator of the church's educational ministries.

RELATIONSHIPS:

1. The Pastor of Discipleship shall be responsible to the Board of Deacons, and shall work directly under the supervision of the Senior Pastor.

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Give administrative leadership to the total educational program of the church.
2. Assume supervisory responsibilities, working as a leader and guide to all educational program leaders. He/she shall be available for counsel to program managers, teachers and small group facilitators.
3. Work with discipleship leaders in regular evaluation and improvement of the church's spiritual formation program.
4. Serve as an ex-officio member of Christian Education Commission, utilizing program leaders' suggestions in the development of educational goals, policies, curricula and programs.
5. Train and assist program leaders in the recruitment and training of new volunteers.
6. Minister as a team member of the pastoral staff, promoting Christian education, yet understanding the importance of the whole ministry of the church.
7. Serve as a resource person to all personnel of the teaching staff, therefore keeping informed of educational techniques, materials and programs through private study, personal associations and professional conferences.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. A mature, born again believer who has displayed a love for the Lord, a call to ministry, and effective service in the church.
2. A student of the Bible, with professional training in Christian education.
3. Ability to work with people, commanding authority yet treating people with respect.
4. Supportive of the total church program of stewardship, worship, missions, fellowship, education and evangelism.