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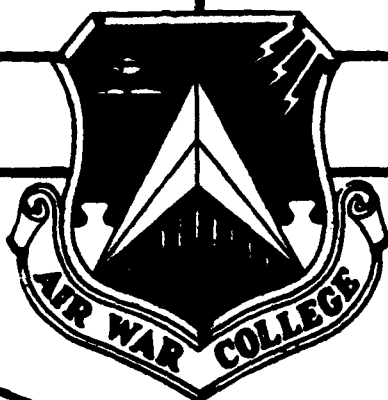
AIR WAR COLLEGE

RESEARCH REPORT

A PLANNING PROGRAM FOR USE IN AIR FORCE CHAPEL PARISHES

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HERBERT L. ISENBERG

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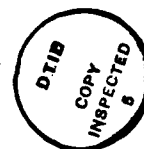UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

AIR WAR COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY

A PLANNING PROGRAM FOR USE IN AIR FORCE CHAPEL PARISHES

by

Herbert L. Isenberg
Lt Col, Ch, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel F. Edward Ward, Jr.

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA
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Air War College Research Report Abstract

Title: A Planning Program For Use In Air Force Chapel Parishes

Author: Herbert L. Isenberg, Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

This paper is a proposed solution to a significant problem encountered in every chapel parish in the Air Force, namely that of utilizing a system to develop programs which satisfy the existing spiritual needs on a local base. Before a parish can develop adequate programs it must first have a firm grasp of who it is and what its business is to be. Only then can it begin the process of need satisfaction. Specifically, the proposed program consists of three phases. The first phase centers on the process of needs assessment, including the process of information gathering and prioritizing needs. The second phase concerns development and implementation of programs to satisfy the established needs including consideration of funding for such programs. The third phase consists of the process of evaluating the implemented program. This phase discusses the importance of accountability in the evaluation process as well as the importance of sharing program information with future programmers. The conclusion offers insights to today's planners in Air Force chapel parishes.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert L. Isenberg (B.S., Western Kentucky University; M.Div. Duke Divinity School, Duke University; D. Min., Eden Theological Seminary) has been a chaplain for fifteen years. He served as Senior Protestant Chaplain at Mt Home AFB, Idaho, Templehof Central Airport, and Sheppard AFB, Texas. He is a graduate of the Air War College, Class of 1989.

OUTLINE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each Air Force Chapel is organized, at least in part, around a chapel parish - either Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Orthodox. The parish community provides an opportunity for Air Force personnel and their dependents to join together as the people of God, empowered by the Spirit of God both as individuals and community, to witness to the presence of God in their lives. Considering the importance of this community to the overall mission of the Air Force, this paper will deal with a one-year planning process within the context of the chapel parish.

Proper planning is essential since we live in a society which is changing at a faster rate than ever before. Technology has brought us face to face with innovations which directly affect the individual as well as the community. Consequently, the needs of people are changing as the issues with which they must deal change. Using the process of parish planning, the parish can cope with the changing situation in the lives of Air Force personnel through a system which identifies the needs, develops programs to satisfy those needs and then finally evaluates whether those programs were successful in fulfilling their objective. The thesis of this paper is that such a system can

easily be utilized in each Air Force Chapel program to provide a more effective ministry to Air Force personnel. The program of planning as discussed in this paper will be developed using three broad categories: parish assessment; program development and implementation; and parish evaluation.

If an Air Force pilot left Scott AFB, Illinois for a destination of Luke AFB, Arizona, without filing a flight plan, we would think he was negligent and irresponsible as a pilot. I am sure his superiors would take action to make sure he did not fly again. Yet each year chapel programs begin with a destination in mind without "filing a flight plan," that is, without doing any planning as to what path they are going to chart to their destination. This paper provides a model of such a plan which, hopefully, can be followed by any chapel parish.

Two important points should be remembered. The first is this paper is only one of many methods which can be used for planning in the chapel parish. Each chapel staff must decide which system best assists them and their parish.

A second point is that the method detailed in this paper is meant to serve the interests of the parish. If instead, the parish seems to be serving the system, then it is being used incorrectly. This method of planning should make ministry more effective, not weight it down.

CHAPTER II

PROVIDING MINISTRY IN THE AIR FORCE CONTEXT

Two Areas of Concentration

The ministry of chaplains in the Air Force context can broadly be divided into two areas. The first is ministry to Air Force personnel who do not participate in the chapel program of worship, religious education, or attend other chapel activities. Ministry is provided to these personnel through a "ministry of presence" which includes visitation in their work areas, attendance at squadron commander's call, and participation in base functions, as well as through counseling if requested.

The second ministry is extended to those who participate in the chapel parish programs. This agenda closely resembles the type ministry provided by the civilian parish although, at least in the Protestant area, there are differences in that the military parish is composed of persons from varied denominational backgrounds, as opposed to a civilian parish which is representative of only one denomination. It is this second area, ministry originating within the chapel parish, with which this paper is concerned. However, in order to understand the planning process it is necessary to have an understanding of the chapel parish and the environment in which it exists.

Defining What A Chapel Parish Is Called To Be

The first thing any chapel parish should do is find out who they are. Especially in the Protestant community, where diverse and often seemingly contradictory doctrinal positions are brought to the parish environment, it is important for the parish to come to an understanding of what they are to be, in the sense of a purposeful organization. That they are called to be a Christian community is correct, but too general. A more specific understanding is needed. I would suggest three things which a chapel parish must be if it is to be effective in its ministry.

1. The chapel parish must be a parish of disciples. All members of the Christian church are called to be disciples. This is the basic Christian vocation.[1] It is not a question of ordination, position, or military rank. Likewise there are no degrees of discipleship in the parish community. There might be varying positions of responsibility but not levels of prominence among disciples. Specifically, the parish council should recognize themselves as disciples who are seeking a deeper understanding and closer involvement with their God. The chapel parish is not primarily concerned with doing good - it is primarily concerned with serving God. The doing of good is a product of serving

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[1] William J. Rademacher, The Practical Guide For Parish Councils (West Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1980), p. 72.

God.

2. <u>It must be a parish of people dedicated to service.</u> This service must be balanced between service to the parish itself and service to the community and greater world. The parish is a service oriented community because it is first of all a community of faith. Numerous doctrinal positions might be held between members of the parish, but a common life perspective lived in faith in the God who has delivered and sustained them is primary. In a Christian parish this faith is placed in the person of Jesus Christ. It is because of this faith that the parish is able to work, trust, live in community, and provide a balanced ministry. If the ministry is unbalanced toward the parish their efforts will eventually be self-serving. Interest will decline since such service violates the call of Christian discipleship to be a servant unto those of the world who need help. If the balance favors only service to the world the parish will become spiritually exhausted and eventually grow disinterested in its work, since as the physical body needs nourishment to survive so also does the spiritual body. The chapel parish must be a balanced service community.

3. <u>The chapel parish must be dedicated to a ministry of healing.</u> The society in which the Air Force community exists is in many ways no different from the civilian community - fast paced and geared toward producing and

consuming. Within such an environment the focus is most often on things instead of people, which results in people suffering from despair, estrangement, loneliness, and numerous types of family problems. It is a success oriented society driven to participate in the "free" life which often involves illicit sex, participation in the drug scene, and misuse of alcohol.[2] In the midst of such an environment the chapel parish is called to extend an opportunity to participate in the wholeness of life which the parish believes is available through the agency of God. It offers healing through connection with God and thereby forgiveness, acceptance, and help toward new opportunities for growth and spiritual development. Providing a healing environment is not easy and demands both patience and a keen remembrance of our own frailty.

Defining What A Chapel Parish Is Called To Do

Every chapel parish faces unique and particular challenges as it performs its ministry. A chapel parish in the isolated area of Mt Home AFB, Idaho might have several different tasks than an urban chapel parish such as Kelly AFB, Texas. Air Force Regulation 265-1, the governing regulation of the Air Force Chaplaincy, states:

> Chapel programs are designed to meet the religious needs of all authorized personnel through a comprehensive ministry that matches

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[2]Ibid., p. 73.

people and resources to the particular environment of each base community. The goal is to help persons develop and enhance their relationships with God and with one another. Chaplains, CMP, and lay persons from the chapel community, working together through representative parish councils or comparable planning and advisory groups, are to evaluate local needs; organize for service; and engage in ministry for all personnel.[3]

This statement, although extremely general in direction, does serve as a guide for parishes in structuring their emphasis. Four major areas present themselves as spheres in which a chapel parish should be engaged.

1. <u>It must provide a program of worship and religious observances which accommodate the religious needs of the base community.</u> This would necessitate a survey of the chapel community as well as the base to determine what needs are expressed in this area. The chapel parish leadership must be alert to needs which parishioners might have, such as special concerns at specific seasons of the year, or special observance of some denominational religious days which might not be familiar to the majority of the congregation. Likewise religious faith such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism have special religious days which, if possible, must be provided for by the chapel community. If not in the chapel program itself, then certainly information where such religious services are being conducted in the local area or region.

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[3]AF Regulation 265-1 (4 September 1987), p. 5.

2. _A second area concerns religious education._ An attempt should be made to include the religious needs of every group, from children to singles, teenagers to the elderly. Likewise, a consistent effort must be made to present the material in the most understandable and retainable manner. The chapel parish must realize that religious education is more than having a Sunday School class - it involves having the best learning experience possible. If the chaplains and parish council are interested and excited about religious education, and most important - supportive of the total religious education program, including their personal involvement in the program, then the religious education program will grow.

3. _A third effort is the spiritual development of the Christian community._ Efforts promoted in the area of pastoral care, including the spiritual, social, physical and emotional needs of the people of the community will pay lasting dividends.. Also, spiritual growth utilizing retreats and workshops are always productive. These retreats and workshops should be in areas which the parish deems necessary for their spiritual health - as opposed to areas which the chaplains feel they have a specialty, even though no one has a need in that area. A final area in building up spiritual development concerns lay ministry. There is no limit to the talents which lay persons have, or to the potential for good

which they can accomplish, if channeled in the needed direction. A program of spiritual gift recognition and development will generate enthusiasm throughout the parish.

4. <u>The fourth and final area concerns Christian stewardship</u> The New Testament speaks of individual responsibility over what God has given to each person. Areas include the use of individual time, maintenance one's personal property, the use of one's mind and talents, and the use of money.[4] A stewardship program limited to preaching on giving money is shortsighted. A good stewardship effort involves every aspect of the chapel parish, and urges commitment of the entire person to God, who as Christian doctrine instructs, is the giver of all life.

Granted, these areas are somewhat general, yet within their boundaries are the seeds for effective ministry to both the chapel parish and base community. This is the work of the chapel parish.

The Reason For Planning In A Chapel Parish

Chapel parish planning is an organized method of explaining how to get from point A to point B. Unfortunately, most Air Force chaplains, when they enter the Air Force Chaplaincy, are totally unprepared for the task of planning.

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[4]Rom 15:26; Acts 2:45; I Cor 12:28; II Cor 9:12 (RSV).

Workshops dealing with planning are not routinely offered among the varied career development courses provided chaplains. Likewise planning plays a minor role in any of the course material offered at the Air Force Chaplains School at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. The course material for the Installation Staff Chaplains course taught at the Chaplains School emphasizes in its literature, "the concepts of planning, organizing, and exercising control dominate the literature about management over the past years, " and "organizations thrive because people plan, organize, and control resources wisely..."[5] The emphasis in this area of the Installation Staff Chaplains course appears to be on the establishing of goals and objectives, which although important, is only one phase of the planning process.

The planning process in a chapel parish is helpful and necessary for at least three reasons.[6]

1. The complexity of modern society prompts the chapel parish to use a planning process. We live in a technological world utilizing the most sophisticated means possible to manage and occupy our lives. We cannot

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[5]Air Force Chaplains School Installation Staff Chaplains Course, "Chapel Organizational Management." 15 May 1988, p. 2.

[6]William C. Harms, "Necessary Ingredients and Steps to Parish Planning," Military Chaplains Review (Fall 1981): 39-46.

continue to live from day to day in the church wondering what we should be about and why our programs fail. The planning process uses modern technology and technique to promote the message of the church in the modern age.

2. The age in which we live calls on the chapel parish not only to respond to the changing needs and trends in our society, but in many ways to anticipate them. Effective planning assists that process by enabling the chapel parish to adopt future-oriented goals instead of always playing catch-up.

3. Finally, the planning process helps the chapel parish remember what it is about and what it should be doing. Instead of establishing goals and objectives and then forgetting about them until next year, the planning process provides a system of checks and balances to ensure that goals are satisfied. It keeps the chapel parish on course.

The introduction of this paper contained an illustration of a pilot without a flight plan. Why should we think it normal for a group of several hundred people in a chapel parish to begin a trip lasting one year, yet not having a plan as to how to reach their destination? They often have a goal but seldom a plan to achieve it. Planning is necessary for successful ministry.

The Relationship Of Planning To Ministry

If planning is a necessary ingredient in a successful ministry then surely the Bible must have said something about it, and indeed it does. The ministry

of Jesus was characterized by planning. He came "in the fullness of time,"[7] and began his ministry when he was prepared, finally giving his life at the proper time - not earlier as he feared might happen, but at the right time and place. Specifically, Jesus spoke about planning in one's life, when he said:

> Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able tn finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'this man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, sends an embassy and asks terms of peace.[8]

Christians should plan because they are challenged to lead orderly lives. The apostle Paul stated, "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace."[9] Furthermore, Christians are commanded, "But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner."[10]

Christians should also plan because they need to be moving toward the

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[7]Gal. 4:4.

[8]Luke 14:27-32 (RSV).

[9]I Corinthians 14:33 (RSV).

[10]I Corinthians 14:40 (RSV).

satisfaction of goals, not simply putting out fires. Again Paul said, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things...Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air."[11]

As members of a faith community the chapel parish must imitate the admonition of Jesus when they begin the process of doing God's work - they must effectively plan their ministry. To implement the planning process as a vital ingredient of the chapel parish program is to "engage the parish in a reflection of their individual and collective call to mission."[12]   The crucial link between belief and productive programs is proper planning.

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[11]I Corinthians 9:24-26 (RSV).

[12]Harms, "Necessary Ingredients and Steps to Parish Planning,: p. 43-44.

CHAPTER III

PHASE ONE - DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR PARISH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."[13] Planning is

part of the process which produces or encourages vision in the people of God.

Likewise, when people have a vision they need a method of turning that vision

into reality. Planning is the process which can accomplish that feat. The first

step in the planning process is understanding what needs the parish has. If

there are problems or opportunities for service in which the chapel parish can

be involved, what are they?

Defining The Terminology Of Needs Assessment

It is often true that the process of planning is made difficult because the

terminology is not understood. Without an understanding of three important

concepts - goal, objective and strategy, the process quickly bogs down and

either stalls or dies.

1. Goal - A goal is a clear statement of a desired direction or activity in

broad, general terms.[14] When the planning is completed, the goal is the end

result which the parish hopes to achieve. In structuring the goal there are four

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[13]Proverbs 29:18 (RSV).

[14]Rademacher The Practical Guide For Parish Councils, p. 178.

characteristics which it should possess.

    a. It should be a guide to action. A desired outcome or result should clearly be stated.

    b. It must be general in its direction.

    c. It needs to be challenging and inspiring.

    d. It should provide a time limit for satisfaction.

To be successful a parish goal must be established by the parish council - not the Chaplains or Chapel staff. The Chaplains and Chapel staff should participate in the process but not dominate it. An example of a goal for the chapel parish might be: "During the period of September 1989 to August 1990 the Anywhere AFB Protestant chapel parish will take the message of peace, love, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to the people of our base and community, through the effort of our words and actions." If a goal becomes too specific it becomes an objective; if it is too vague then it is useless. Important ingredients for the goal statement are introspection, both parish and personal, thought and discussion among the parish and parish council, and importantly, prayer.

2. Objective - An objective is a specific and realistic statement of what the parish council is going to do and when. An example would be: "To sponsor

for the protestant parish a series of lenten luncheons during Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing every Wednesday until Easter." A good objective has seven main characteristics:

    a. It produces a single key result when accomplished.

    b. It specifies for or with whom an action is done.

    c. It has a specific target date for accomplishment.

    d. It is quantifiable and measurable.

    e. It is clear and understandable.

    f. It is realistic and attainable.

    g. It is in satisfaction of the parish goal.[15]

3. <u>Strategy</u> - A strategy is a specific action which will assist in attaining the objective. If a retreat is planned, one strategy might be to secure a resource person to lead the retreat. Whereas the goal and objective are established by the parish council the strategy is formulated by the specific committee or agency which will satisfy the objective. More will be said about the process later in this paper. Attention must now be directed toward the first phase in the planning cycle- a phase which must be given the proper attention - needs assessment.

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[15]William D. Hitt, <u>The Leader-Manager: Guideline for Action</u> (Columbus: Battle Press, 1988), p. 108-110.

Who Participates In A Needs Assessment?

There are two primary players in the game of needs assessment. The first is a member of the parish council (all members of the parish council are actually involved), and the second is a member of the chapel parish or base community who is not a member of the parish council. The process is simply that of obtaining from a parishioner or base personnel what they consider to be needs which the parish council should address. Although the process sounds easy several problems often occur which result in incorrect results. Key points to remember when gathering information are:

1. How long has the informant been attending the chapel? If they began just last week perhaps they do not know the program well enough to list needs. What often happens is that needs from a former parish are projected as a need at the present parish. This may be the case, but maybe not. Especially if the survey is written it is important to ascertain how long the person has been at the base and if they are students or TDY personnel, not that their statements should not be taken seriously, but they should be judged appropriately.

2. What is the age of the person providing the information? All inputs are important and the needs of the young, single and elderly are just as important as the middle age couple in the parish. Knowing the age of the person, however,

tells you if you have a survey which includes all groups in your parish, or instead if you are listening to the needs of only one particular group.

3. Provide the parish council with <u>all</u> the information you receive. Don't make decisions on which needs are important and which are not - take them all to the parish council and let the group make the decision.

Direct and Indirect Methods of Information Gathering

Two methods of information gathering can be used - one is by means of a survey and the other by personal solicitation of the thoughts of people. Before an examination of these two types, some important aspects of information gathering needs to be understood.

First, it is important to remember that we live in a constant state of change. As our surroundings change so also do our needs. The information collector needs to avoid the pitfall of thinking they know the problems even before they solicit information. Especially those who have attended a chapel for a number of years and over time, without realization, have become blind to the needs around them.

Second, care needs to be taken in defining the membership of the chapel parish. Because chapel parishes do not maintain membership rolls the problem is simplified. Everyone who attends the parish should be considered a source of

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information. It would seem that a person who attends only once a year would not have as good an input as someone who attends each worship service. That may sometimes be the case but not necessarily so. The observation of a casual observer can often see things which a seasoned, "we do it this way," observer cannot see. The point is - don't exclude someone because you feel they don't attend worship services as frequently as you might desire. If you listen to them perhaps they will attend more often.

1. <u>Direct Method of Information Gathering</u> - This method concerns acquiring verbal feedback from parishioners concerning the needs of the parish. Members of the parish council should assure that notices are placed in the worship bulletins, daily base bulletins and the base newspaper, which state that the parish council is open to suggestions concerning needs which exist in the chapel/community which the parish council might address. Parishioners are much more apt to tell you their thoughts than spend the time writing them down.

When this information is obtained it should be written down so it is neither forgotten or confused with other information. Likewise the name of the person who gave the information should be taken down in case you need to consult them later to clarify any points.

Attention should be given to all persons regardless of age. Small children, the elderly, singles, airmen, can see needs which we cannot see simply because we might not be a member of that group. Listen to everyone and consider all information as important.

A final note is that although this process of listening should go on throughout the year, a specified period prior to the parish council planning retreat should be set aside as a special time for information gathering. Parishioners have a way of responding when they know you are looking for information.

2. Indirect Method of Information Gathering - I refer to the use of a survey or questionnaire. There are several advantages to this tool of information collection.

a. It is a time saver in that it can be accomplished on a specific Sunday.

b. Results are easily compiled and interpreted.

c. It can be carried out by a few appointed individuals.

There are, however, several disadvantages.

a. Depending on the questions asked or not asked, the information can be slanted in a specific direction.

b. Some people cannot adequately express themselves in the survey

method.

    c. To do a good job it requires a person with some expertise in the area of putting together a survey.

    d. Unless the survey is accomplished over a period of Sundays many parishioners who are "out of town" may not have an opportunity to participate.

There is not a "best" way to assess the needs of the parish. The use of both indirect and direct methods is the preferred course of action, with both tailored to the specific environment of each base.

An excellent tool entitled <u>Assess and Evaluate: A Chaplain's Guide To Needs Assessment,</u> was distributed several years ago by the USAF Chaplains Resource Board. It is recommended reading for any chapel parish before beginning a needs assessment.

Prioritizing The Needs

When the process of information gathering is completed a parish council one-day retreat should be conducted to prioritize the needs. By this time the parish council has already arrived at its goal, and the process of needs prioritization is the step between establishing the goal and developing objectives to satisfy the goal.

The individual leading the needs prioritizing process should be familiar

with the entire planning process. Often, but not necessarily, it is best to have a chaplain lead this section, simply because he/she is in a position to see the overall planning process on a day-by-day basis. It is imperitive, however, that caution be taken that the chaplain does not impose his/her personal preferences on the process. It is my observation that chaplains have a tendency to tarnish the process through the imposition of their own desires. Three primary steps are essential to complete this portion of the planning process.

1. <u>Brainstorming</u> - During this period the collected needs obtained from the parish through both direct and indirect sources, are listed and displayed in such a fashion that they can easily be seen by the participants. I have found that taping them temporarily to a wall on butcher paper is most helpful. An alternative method is to use the Needs Inventory (Appendix 1) , having them filled out by committee members and turned in prior to the meeting. The needs could then already be listed saving members time.

Often there is duplication of the needs and therefore several needs can be combined due to redundancy. When this is completed a new list should be made and the old lists taken down, to avoid confusion.

2. <u>Ranking of the needs</u> - Each need is numbered and the list, hopefully, will not exceed fifteen needs. Experience shows that fifteen needs or less is

the normal situation. The Ranking Sheet (Ref: Appendix 2), is distributed to each parish council member. Beginning with what the council member determines is the most important need and progressing to the least important need, they place the number assigned the need in the respective box. If "Marriage Enrichment Retreat" has been assigned #5 on the need list and the member believes this to be the "most important," then a "5" would be placed in the top box, and so forth until the least important need is listed.

If there are more needs, say eighteen, than boxes on the ranking sheet, that is no problem. A parish council can only address so many needs in one year. You can either extend the list or limit it to fifteen. I suggest limiting it.

When the ranking sheet has been completed by each member they should be collected and the tally process can begin.

3. Tally - Using the Tally Sheet (Appendix 3) the scores are tallied. The assigned need numbers are listed on the left side and the weighted scores given each need by members who participated in the program are listed under the heading, "weighted value." The total of these weighted values determines the ranking of the need, i.e., the need with the heaviest weighted value would be the top need in the Parish, and so forth down to the last need.

Following the scoring process a new listing of the needs should be made

and displayed for the assembled parish council. Likewise results of the voting should be published in the following weeks newsletter to inform the entire parish of the results of the work.

This leads to the next phase - developing objectives or programs to satisfy the goal and needs of the parish.

CHAPTER IV

PHASE TWO - PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Assuming Responsibility For The Satisfaction Of Objectives

An important yet often overlooked procedure is that of allocating the responsibility for development and implementation of programs. Several vital points must be kept in mind. If the responsibility for programs are given to a committee who has no interest in the program, or to a committee which is filled with enthusiasm but not ability, then goals will never be achieved and failure will ensue. Points to remember are:

1. Programs, to be effective, must be owned by the committees and ultimately the parish. Assignment of specific programs to committees is not advisable, however, assignment of specific needs to committees and allowing the committee to design their own program will produce results.

2. The parish council should give committees needs in relationship to their respective areas of concern. The Religious Education Committee should not have responsibility for food collection for the chapel pantry, but instead issues dealing with their area of expertise. Likewise, time should be allowed for committees to pray about and discuss their willingness to accept certain tasks.

3. When needs are accepted by committees an agreement should be reached between them and the parish council as to when they will report back to the

parish council as to their plan for satisfying the need. Along with the type program, other important items such as dates, proposed advertising, and funding required should be reported.

4. When all committees have reported their planning to the parish council and the council has approved the plans, then work can begin. Prior to approval, however, the council should insure that the overall program is balanced, that is, the programs will satisfy the parish needs and thereby the parish goal.

5. The final aspect concerns communication. The congregation needs to be kept informed of the work of the parish council and committees. If participation is anticipated then the people must be kept informed. The parish will not support programs they know nothing about.

The Problem Of Action Without Strategy

Once a committee assumes responsibility for the satisfaction of a need and designs a program as a tool to satisfy the need, it is vital for them to develop a strategy for implementing the program.

If you board an airliner and after takeoff discovered that although the crew was in good health and the aircraft had plenty of fuel, there was no strategy for arriving at your eventual destination, and the crew was going to aimlessly fly around the country and hopefully arrive at the destination, you would be

worried.

One of the big mistakes committees often make is coming up with an idea for a program without developing an infrastructure or strategy upon which the program can be guided. In such cases many undesirable results occur.

1. There is undirected activity. People are doing busywork, yet seeing no results, and their frustration level quickly rises. A key in determining if you are working in a realm of undirected activity is whether you are working in the activity simply for its own sake, or instead for a higher purpose. Simply ask the question, "What is all of this about - Where is it leading?"

2. Lack of coordination among committees. Although this was initially dealt with by the parish council, committees must continually be in discussion, usually by giving full reports on their work during the parish council meetings, or when they discover duplication and misunderstanding between themselves and other committees. If a committee does not know where they are going they are sure to stray into someone else's area of work.

3. Lack of parishioner support. Two keys to whether a program is on course is the support it receives and enthusiasm it generates. If attendance at committee meetings is low and parishioners seem extremely reluctant to pledge time and energy to your endeavor, perhaps you should examine your

strategy, or lack thereof. People will support programs which have a definite

goal and keep committee members informed.

For every committee chairman who aspires to having an effective and vital

ministry in his/her committee, there is a clear challenge - convert your vision

into reality through a well thought out strategy.[16]

Attributes Of Effective Program Strategy

In his book, _The Leader-Manager: Guidelines For Action_, William Hitt

addressed the subject of the ingredients of an effective strategy and listed

five, all of which are adaptable to the strategies which will fulfill the

objectives of particular committees.[17] An important question to keep in mind

when formulating strategies is, "Does the strategy produce results, and will it

assist in satisfying the objective or instead just occupy busy time?" In

answering this question the following checklist may serve useful.

1. _Responsiveness_ - If the planning process has been followed, the parish

council has already responded to the desires of the members, prioritizing the

needs they offered and establishing objectives to satisfy those needs. The

responsiveness which is referred to in this section concerns the committee

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[16]Ibid., p. 108.

[17]Hitt, _The Leader-Manager: GUideline for Action_, p. 115f.

responsible for planning the strategies, that they not delay in beginning their efforts. The natural tendency if one is planning for a retreat in the spring, and it is only October, is to wait until later to begin the work of putting the separate strategies together. The dual efforts of thought and effort cannot begin too early.

2. Focus - It is essential for success to concentrate or focus on that particular effort to which your attention should be directed. There are enough people in a parish so that no one person need be overloaded with so many responsibilities that they are unable to properly focus on the strategy before them. To focus means to direct your undevoted attention to an effort. Any less contributes in some measure to not fulfilling your objective.

3. Communication - I have found that periodic committee meetings, more frequent as the program date approaches, is the best way to maintain an open line of communication. Each individual responsible for a strategy cannc. go their own way, thinking that the overall objective will be ratified, without confusion resulting. Each committee member should be encouraged to let the other members of the committee know their work progress.

4. Flexibility - The entire planning process is designed with flexibility in mind for without flexibility, a program cannot be successful. This applies to

strategies as well. The use of strategies in the planning process pays off only if you have alternative strategies. Every plan is based to a large extent on assumptions, and particular events which are likely to occur. Everyone knows that those events you expect to take place do not always do so. An alternative plan, regardless of how minute the strategy, builds flexibility into the successful plan.

5. <u>Commitment</u> - Don't confuse stubbornness with commitment. Commitment is dedication to see the task through to completion because you believe in the value of the program. Stubbornness stays with a project to the end even if it has no value. This is an important distinction as occasionally a program has to be cancelled for a variety of reasons. A significant step toward success is when each member verbally expresses commitment to the program and shares their perception of the value of the program.

A strategy characterized by these five ingredients is likely to succeed but the lack of one of them should be reason for concern. The development and implementation of strategies is the bedrock upon which the planning process is built.

Funding Considerations

An important aspect of planning which integrates into this part of the

overall cycle is funding. Funding is a crucial segment not only to a particular program but to the overall funds management which is exercised by the fund council on behalf of the total parish. Two important aspects of funding should be kept in mind.

1. <u>Funding is an important aspect of programming.</u> If a committee has no idea how much money it will take to execute a program, chances are they will spend a lot more money than they need to spend. Just as important is that they have the funds they need when the time to spend it arrives. A two month lead time is required for requests to the fund council, demanding that a program which will be held in the early fall have its funding request submitted as soon as possible to the fund council (See Appendix 4).

2. It is important that funding requests be established as soon as possible (usually this would be by 1 September) so the parish budget can be prepared by 1 October. Funding requests which are submitted by committees might be out of line with the monies available to the parish, and consequently will have to be readjusted. It is much better to make the adjustment before committments are made than to have to undo decisions as a result of poor monetary planning.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE THREE - THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

An effective planning process requires that accurate and timely information concerning in progress programs be channeled back to those committees responsible, to insure their efforts are on course.

There is a need to remember that feedback can point to four possible directions in which the committees efforts might be headed. First, the results might signify that the program is on target yet because the need is greater than first anticipated should be expanded from its original position. Second, feedback might signify that the program is not satisfying the need and should be corrected to enable it to do so. Third, that the program is not acceptable, for any number of reasons, and needs to be cancelled. Finally, feedback might indicate the program is doing just fine and should be continued.

The Value Of Accountability In The Evaluation Process

To be a Christian is to be accountable.[18] Although accountability might be a consideration given little import by modern Christians, it remains a basic doctrine in biblical studies. If we are to take evaluation seriously we must first recognize our accountability.

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[18]I Corinthians 4:2 (RSV).

Accountability is expected of each citizen in their responsibilities toward the state, their employer, and to their families. Why should we think it inappropriate to expect accountability from a person who volunteers to work in a parish program. In a kind yet understandable manner, each member of a program should recognize and subscribe to their accountability to the leadership of the committee. In fact, accountability is a multi-dimensional responsibility and four specific areas demand attention.[19]

1. <u>Accountability To God</u> - As already stated, all christians are accountable to God for their work as stewards.

2. <u>Accountability to the church universal</u> - Although an individuals view must be focused on the program, as already stated, that does not mean they should be blind insofar as responsibility to the church universal is concerned. The attitude of each member of a program will hopefully be one where they see themselves as part of a much larger church than their local congregation, and in that regard what we do locally effects in an important way what is done universally.

3. <u>Accountability To The Chapel Parish</u> - It is from the parish, at least in part, that individual members of the parish are "built up," "encouraged," and

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[19] Rademacher, <u>The Practical Guide For Parish Councils</u>, p. 208f.

from which their faith is made strong.[20] Each member of the committee must maintain a view which senses their individual responsibility to each member of their local "team" - the chapel parish.

4. **Accountability to other members of the committee.** Such support can be exercised in two ways. Prayer for the other committee members is of first priority and should be done on a regular basis. Also, prompt attendance at meetings and faithful performance of assigned duties is a sign of one's acceptance of accountability to fellow members of the committee. If one part of the body is ill, the body is ill. If one member of a committee is unaccountable - the entire committee suffers.

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process carries with it a specific set of problems. Because it is almost exclusively based on performance, personality traits, which can either promote or destroy a program, is an area difficult to measure.[21] With that in mind it is important to remember that the evaluation process should not be based only on whether the objective was accomplished or not, but likewise

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[20]I Corinthians 14:12,26 (RSV).

[21]Tosi, Henry L., _Management By Objectives_ (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973) p. 82.

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the quality of performance utilized to achieve the objective. Remember – the evaluation is for two groups; first, for the committee itself as a means of monitoring its own efforts; and second, for future committees who may attempt the same project, so they might understand the possible pitfalls as well as shortcuts in working such a program. Evaluation is a tool to improve the overall parish program, not an instrument to point out committee flaws.

With this in mind the following appraisal of performance is suggested.

1. Qualitative aspects – Were good relations initiated and maintained with the parish council and the chaplains as well as with other committees?

2. Deadline considerations – Were established suspenses met?

3. Proper allocation of time – Was there enough time to accomplish the respective tasks in the objective or should time allocation be redistributed?

4. Facilities scheduling – Were facilities scheduled well in advance of the program?

5. Efficient use of resources – Was the committee able to stay within their budget and were there any unexpected expenses or windfall reserves?

6. Coordination and Cooperation – Were Chapel Management Personnel included in the program planning and was their advice sought on all points pertinent to their expertise?

7. Funding – Were funds requested on time within the guidelines

established by the chapel accounting procedures?

8. <u>Advertising</u> - Was the program properly advertised and was it advertised at the correct time prior to the program to solicit the best response?

The means of actually accomplishing the evaluation is multi-dimensional. One member of the committee should be charged with the responsibility of keeping a record of progress. This serves the purpose of having a written memory of facts easily forgotten yet important to the next committee working a similar program. Likewise, evaluations need to be made by several sources in order to obtain a rounded and hopefully complete view of the committee efforts. A standard evaluation form which is simple and easy to complete is a necessary ingredient in the evaluation process. Recipients of the evaluation forms, depending on the program, might be:

1. Committee members.

2. Selected participants in the program.

3. Chapel Management staff.

4. Others with which the committee interfaced during their work.

The feedback obtained on this form will hopefully give an adequate appraisal of the success of the committee efforts, but just as important make

the process easier for the next committee to undertake.

Sharing The Information

The appraisals should be given to the chaplain who is the liaison between the installation Staff Chaplain and the committee, and he will attach them to the After Action Report. Realizing administrative regulations sometimes prohibit the logical and obvious I would also suggest that the parish council be urged to purchase a file cabinet of their own and maintain their own record system including minutes of parish council meetings as well as all. After Action Reports. To maintain the records serves an invaluable resource for future parish councils.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The thesis of this paper is that every Air Force Chapel program should use a planning program to promote an effective ministry to Air Force personnel. It was important to note several issues a parish must be aware of if they are to be competent in accomplishing their tasks as a community of God's people. As regards the planning cycle itself several important lessons have been gleaned.

An initial and important lesson is that each parish must have a direction in which to travel, or it will find itself journeying in circles. The annual chapel theme which is promoted by the Chief of Chaplains office, although not necessarily intended for this purpose, is used by many chapel parishes to provide a direction in which people might travel, but when so used it fails to give direction, because it is not generated by or from the parish. Any program which is imposed on a parish will fail to provide direction or encourage participation in ministry.

A second lesson is that a planning program such as described in this paper is versatile enough to provide an opportunity for each parish member to find a place to minister. Any parish which attempts to address a dozen or more needs in one fiscal year will need for every member of the parish to be engaged in

ministry. It is better to need lay ministers than to attempt on the spur of the moment to create opportunities for those who might desire to minister. If parishoners are given the opportunity to work they will usually grow spiritually, take a larger part in the work of the parish, and certainly claim the parish as their own instead of viewing it just being "a" parish, or "the" parish, or even worse, the "chaplains" parish.

A final lesson is if a ministry is functioning properly it is driven by a desire to serve God through the satisfaction of either personal or community needs - needs which dreive from the insight of parishoners. It is the experience of this author, however, that many Air Force chapel parishes are driven by what chaplains and chapel staffs see as needs instead of what the parish recognizes as needs, and the stimulus to develop programs and satisfy needs, often comes from the proding of chaplains instead of the initiative of parishes. A planning program permits parish members to recognize and prioritize needs, and develop programs to satisfy them, concluding their efforts with an evaluation. The program is driven by the parishoners desire to serve - not by chaplains need to develop programs to satisfy a requirement. Chaplains can then be shepherds instead of cattle drivers.

The impetus behind this paper has been to produce a product which

addresses a need, is useable in the parish situation, and which contributes to effective ministry in the Air Force chapel context. If this paper fulfills those aspirations then it has served its purpose.

APPENDIX 1

Needs Inventory

Based on your conversations with members of the Chapel Parish and the base community, what needs should be considered by the Parish Council in order to satisfy its overall Goal.

1.

2.

3.

4.

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14.

APPENDIX 2

Ranking Sheet

a. Survey the final listing of needs selected by your Parish Council.
b. Select Needs by number corresponding to your opinion of their importance.
c. Record appropriate numbers of the ranking scale below. <u>Only one number is to be placed in a square.</u>

<u>Weighted Scale</u>

APPENDIX 3

Tally Sheet

Example: Five Participants' Ranking

<u>Need No</u>   <u>Weighted Value</u>   <u>Total</u>
3   6-4-4-3-6   23

<u>Need No.</u>   <u>Weighted Value</u>   <u>Total</u>

Most
Important

More
Important

Less
Important

Least
Important

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APPENDIX 4

FLOW CHART

MAY

Election of the Parish Council

JUNE - JULY

The Process of Needs Assessment is accomplished

August

Parish Council Retreat Is Held

Prioritization of Needs

Assignment of Needs To Standing Parish Committees

SEPTEMBER

Validation of Committee Programs by the Parish Council

Program Funding Approved by the Parish Council

Funding for all Programs Submitted to the Fund Councl for Conditional Review

Preparation of the Parish Budget by the Fund Council

OCTOBER - SEPTEMBER (Following)

Programs are Implemented

Evaluation Process is Ongoing

The objection that these activities are held during the summer when people are traveling and going PCS is invalid. Experiece has shown that if people see the ministry as important, they will arrange to be present. People will complete what they create.

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