

A Christian
Educator's
Book of Lists

israel galindo

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This one is for Barbara, Doug, and Tom,
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Introduction

Have you ever needed a piece of information that you weren't sure where to find? Did you ever lose an hour tracking down basic information because you didn't remember where you filed it? Has a Sunday school teacher ever asked you, "Which came first, the Book of Esther or the Battle of Sennacherib?" and all you could do was respond with a blank stare? Have you ever been asked to give an impromptu lecture and felt your brain freeze? Have you ever wondered who were the best Christian educators of the century? This resource may be for you.

I've often found myself during a typical workweek needing to access a basic piece of information—either for developing course material, answering a student's question, or trying to help someone during a telephone conversation. Of course, that information is spread among various books on library shelves or buried somewhere in a filing system. Eventually I acquired the habit of carrying a file of frequently-used lists in my electronic handheld PIM (personal information manager). But often I've wished for a single source of basic information and collected wisdom upon which to draw.

It is my hope that this book will help fill that need by providing basic information and collected wisdom Christian educators and teachers should have available. For experienced Christian educators and teachers, this book serves as a reminder of what they already know. For novice church educators, this book provides suggestions on where to begin pursuing more in-depth information on a wide range of subjects. At the heart of this book is the desire to make available to churches and their leaders a handbook of basic, practical information for effective Christian education. Part encyclopedia, part

trivia resource, part practical “how to” compilations, part teaching manual, and part general knowledge index, the book is a handy reference tool for every church educator.

Administration

Administrative Functions of the Christian Educator

- Enlistment and development of church educators
- Budget development
- Planning, development, and maintenance of educational programs
- Training and supervision of paid and volunteer staff
- Coordinating educational resources (budget, time, personnel, physical plant)
- Leadership in key educational and ministry committees, teams, and groups
- Maintenance of vital records related to educational ministry

Administrative Meeting Agenda (Sample)

1. Prayer
2. Reading and call for acceptance of minutes
3. Pastor's or moderator's report
4. Financial report
5. Program areas reports
6. Committee reports
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Review and assign actions to be taken
10. Close

Blunders, Common Administrative

- Lack of clarity in vision and mission
- Lack of sufficient or realistic planning
- Lack of on-going mission- and values-centered goals and objectives

- Lack of supervision of staff, personnel, participants, or players
- Lack of honesty with people and constituents
- Lack of practicing the courage of convictions
- Lack of attention to resources and budgeting
- Lack of clear decision-making procedures and philosophy
- Lack of honest evaluation
- Lack of clear communication with constituents
- Lack of congruency between responsibility and authority
- Lack of intentional organizational oversight (budget, policies, procedures)

Church Governance, Types of

Congregational (Baptist, Congregational, Lutheran)

Episcopal (Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran)

Apostolic (Monarchial, Roman Catholic)

Presbyterian (Calvinist, Presbyterian)

Church Growth

Types of Numerical Growth

1. *Biological*—those born into member families and baptized into membership
2. *New converts*—new believers from non-churched backgrounds
3. *Transfer of membership*—those joining from other churches or denominations
4. *Transitional memberships*—those joining the church for predetermined period of time or purposes

Signs of a Stagnant Congregation

1. Dwelling on the past glory days
2. Lack of intentional plan for growth
3. Uninformed membership
4. Criticism of leadership and staff
5. Control group(s) and decision-makers comprised of “old guard”
6. Overemphasis on resource conservation
7. High dependence on paid staff
8. Perpetual anxiety over finances

9. Neglect of physical plant

10. Generational gaps in membership (young adults, young families)

Conflict, Types of Church

Doctrinal

Personality

Leadership

Organizational

Justice

Cultural

Moral

Financial

Generalized anxiety

Congregations, Life Stages of

1. Establishment and Organization Stage

“Birth,” incorporation

Dependent on founding members and/or pastor

Vision-oriented

2. Formation Stage

Early development

Systemic identity dynamics form

Systemic emotional systems form

3. Development Stage

“Adolescence”

Programs development

Core groups patterned

Corporate values formation

4. Plateau Stage

May happen in adolescence through maturity

Homeostatic forces a primary dynamic

5. Second Development Stage

Re-visioning

Struggle toward growth

6. Survival and Decline Stage

If capacity for re-visioning and resilience are not present in the corporate identity, the church may move toward decline and eventual death. The congregation needs to handle internal and external deficit forces well in order to move back to a new (third) development stage.

Families, Life Stages of

1. Married Couples (without Children)
2. Childbearing families (oldest child is birth-30 months)
3. Families with preschool children (oldest child is 30 months–6 years)
4. Families with school children (oldest child is 6-13 years)
5. Families with teenagers (oldest child is 13-20 years)
6. Families as launching centers (first child gone to last child leaving home)
7. Middle-aged parents (empty nest to retirement)
8. Aging family members (retirement/death of both spouses)

Functions of a Church

1. Worship (Praise)
2. Witness (Proclamation)
3. Education (Discipleship)
4. Ministry (Missions, Service)
5. Fellowship (Community)

Group Problem-Solving Process

1. Identify the problem.
2. Gather information.
3. Clarify the problem and define the issue the group will address.
4. Determine decision-making process (vote, consensus, delegation).
5. Explore alternative solutions (brainstorm, listen).
6. Evaluate best possible alternative solutions and anticipate outcomes.
7. Decide on the solution approach.
8. Assign roles and responsibilities.
9. Determine deadline for actions.
10. Summarize problem, decision, and actions.
11. Provide for feedback and evaluation of actions.

Group Process Functions

1. Group formation
2. Group organization
3. Group membership decisions: expectations, roles, and tenure?
4. Group decision-making processes: vote? consensus? fiat?
5. Group control and direction: Who's in charge and where are we going?
6. Group information processing: Who gathers information?
7. Balance of process roles: initiating, seeking consensus, summarizing, challenging, clarifying, compromising, relieving tension, encouraging
8. Group values and culture: dependence/independence; reciprocity; level of trust; level of commitment; confidentiality; openness

Hiring Staff

Job Description Outline (Sample)

Position title

Hiring process datelines

Position summary

Position duties

Position specifications

Education or training required

Ordination or certification required

Experience required

Physical demands of the job

Supervision

Working conditions

Background check if required

Responsibilities specific to job

Steps to Hiring Staff

1. Determine the need for the position.
2. Review policies related to hiring and supervision of staff (congregational vote needed?).
3. Determine the scope of the position (full-time; part-time; specialization).

4. Determine financial package.
5. Budget for the position.
6. Seek the best person for the job; professional, academic, personal qualifications.
7. Publish job description, timetable for hire, and hiring process.
8. Involve individuals and groups affected by the hire.
9. Accept applications.
10. Check and double-check references.
11. Set up interview process.
12. Make decision and invitation to hire.
13. Follow up with all applicants.
14. Establish formal orientation process for new hire.

Steps to Dismissing Staff

1. Discuss situation thoroughly with Senior Pastor and/or administrator.
2. Review church policies on staff dismissal process.
3. Discuss matter with Personnel Committee and present recommendation for action. Review personnel documentation and set date for dismissal.
4. Supervisor and member of Personnel Committee meet with the staff in question to present decision, review terms, and answer questions.
5. Arrange to have last paycheck ready for dismissal day.

Leadership Styles

1. Autocratic
 - Firm control and authority is an issue.
 - Seldom consults others on decisions.
 - Orders are given to be followed to the letter.
 - Leader has total responsibility for results.
 - Will not delegate authority lightly
 - Tends to be aggressive
2. Democratic
 - Relies on group decisions

- Guides work of groups and makes good delegation of responsibility
- Group helps formulate policy.
- Leader may be perceived as weak.
- Leader usually feels secure in job.

3. Laissez-faire

- Provides vision
- Functions as a resource person when needed
- Workers are left on their own within their responsibilities
- Needs constituents who are mature, self-motivated, and need little supervision
- Leader susceptible to sabotage from immature or willful people

4. Paternalistic

- Identification between leader and constituents enmeshed
- Leadership tends to be well meaning but weak.
- Family style decision-making processes
- Discipline is difficult to maintain.

5. Managerial

- Leader functions as CEO.
- Stress on efficiency
- Task- and results-oriented
- Leader works out of policies and procedures.

Management Process

- Planning (Programs)
- Organizing (Administration)
- Motivation (Leadership)
- Controlling (Supervision)

Office Forms to Have On-Hand

- Accident Report
- Application Interview
- Application Reference Check
- Books Borrowed

- Building Key Sign-out
- Building Maintenance & Repair Request
- Building Use Application
- Check Requisition
- Computer System(s) Backup Schedule Checklist
- Fax Cover
- Hospital and Shut-ins Visitation
- I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- Inventory
- Membership Transfer Request
- New Employee Orientation Checklist
- Preschool Area Sign-in/Sign-out
- Purchase Order Request
- Staff Vacation Sign-up
- Tax Exempt Status Letter
- Telephone Message (“While you were out”)
- To-do List
- Usher’s Sunday Service(s) Attendance and Incidents
- Vacation Request
- W-4 & W-2

Operating Documents for the Church

1. Church Covenant
2. Church Constitution and By-laws
3. Statement of Policies
 - a. Hiring and dismissal
 - b. Personnel
 - (1) Salary and pay scale
 - (2) Vacation and sabbatical
 - (3) Clergy misconduct
 - c. Building use
 - d. Business meetings
 - e. Membership
 - f. Budgeting and finances
 - g. Church officers and elections
 - h. Weddings and funerals

4. Articles of Faith
5. Articles of Incorporation
6. Church Budget (should be considered a “theological document”)

Organization, Principles of

1. Provide clear objectives.
2. Coordinate actions, tasks, and goals.
3. Consolidate specializations (avoid duplication of efforts and resources).
4. Facilitate focus of leadership (who is in charge?).
5. Maintain locus of control (who is ultimately responsible?).
6. Ensure that authority and responsibility are congruent.
7. Delegate to furthest level.
8. Flatten span of control (supervise as few organizational “levels” as possible).
9. Provide structure and processes for efficient communication.
10. Maintain balance of purpose (avoid special interests not consistent with the vision and mission of the organization).

Planning, Principles of

1. Maintain clarity about issues related to identity, purpose, mission, and function.
2. Identify need(s) and/or vision.
3. Articulate goals and objectives.
4. Identify resources and assets to achieving goals.
5. Prioritize needs and action steps.
6. Identify current and potential limitations and inhibitors achieving goals; anticipate problems and their solutions.
7. Invite and facilitate broad participation in the planning process.
8. Assign responsibilities, accountability, and authority related to actions.
9. Establish new pathways of communication for the planning processes.
10. Do not over-plan—move ahead when enough elements are in place to begin action steps and be flexible enough to adapt to changing situations, surprises, and unanticipated obstacles.
11. Establish evaluation processes and checkpoints.

Time-Wasters to Avoid

- Inefficiency in executing tasks
- Indecision (When information is lacking and unobtainable, or when pros and cons are in balance, *any* decision is better than none.)
- Anxiety
- Environment that hinders work (messy desk and unorganized office)
- Communication systems that hinder maintaining open channels of dialogue and information
- Junk mail (throw it out)
- Junk e-mail (delete it)
- Salespeople making a “cold call” (politely hang up or refuse to see them)
- Meetings with no agenda or clearly defined purpose
- “Drop-in” visits (politely encourage them to make an appointment)