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Effective Church Management: Best Practices for Modern Congregation

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Abstract: This essay explores the essential strategies and methodologies that can enhance church management practices in contemporary congregations. It aims to provide insight into effective leadership, community engagement, and resource allocation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Management is the process of dealing effectively with the affairs or business of an organization or institutional structure. It involves such activities as decision-making, planning, staffing, budgeting, evaluating, and innovating (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). Congregations need to manage their facilities, people, finances, programs, events, and volunteers for effectiveness. The growth of the church is dependent upon workers who contribute their time, talents, and money. Managing these resources wisely extends this resource and returns a bounty so that it multiplies. The church is involved in a myriad of activities besides the worshipping services ranging from spiritual counseling, community service, social justice, education, recreation, and social group functions. There are ethical boundaries concerning what the church should or should not do as these may not agree with popular social values such as celibacy, pacifism, or environmental concerns even if they are in harmony with scripture. The church cannot ignore The Great Commission or the Greatest Commandment.

There is a need to reflect on the church as an organization in order to comprehend how best to manage church affairs. Consideration should be given to how Jesus and his disciples engaged in the founding of the church as an organization. The management assets of the early church may be identified that are relevant for current congregations. The various parts of the church (buildings, people, programs, worship services, outreach, groups, and administration) may be recognized and appreciated for their contribution to and function within the church organization. There should be awareness of outside forces, inherently linked to the church organization, which reside as threats or opportunities impacting church sustainability. At an early era of church expansionism, "mega-church" participants of thousands were managed without the aid of computers, machinery, or complicated budgets and management theories. It is important to understand them and discover what can be adapted to the current social context. The marketplace is effecting trends in society that alter the traditional understanding of the church. There is a pronounced decline in church attendance paralleled with a striking increase in those who identify themselves as "spiritual" but not "religious". At first glance, the changing spiritual demographics of North America indicate discontent with a traditional interpretation of the term "church". The church is not immune to the shift of values in a given society. It is urged to adapt to social changes; to remain relevant so that it may continue to fulfill the doctrines, decrees, and prophesies given to the church by Jesus and the prophets. By examining the structure and actions of the early church as it grows, those with responsibilities in the church may apply them to issues currently faced. In doing so, the church may continue to grow, to serve, and hopefully endure.

A. Purpose and Scope of the Work

A church, as an institution, is also an organization. Like other organizations, it needs to be managed effectively and efficiently over different seasons of life to be sustainable as long as it has a social function, and even more so for it to achieve its expressed goals and objectives. The purpose of this work is to assess approaches to managing a religious community across the ages, and the methods used to achieve this in the present day in parliamentary congregations, African Independent Churches, and mega-churches, with relevant suggestions. From its Hebrew roots "church" means a congregation or assembly of God's people. The unique framework of the church as an organization creates the illusion that church management is not as complex as it is in other organizations. The church consists of various components such as physical goods, church staff and the congregation. In order to maximize benefits, each of these components needs to be managed effectively and efficiently (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). Congregational leaders should maintain equilibrium between all these entities.

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Failure to manage church components properly at appropriate levels can have a devastating effect on the church organization. It is argued that church management cannot be neglected to ensure the church's sustainability in delivering its unique services. Although congregational leaders should be visionary and led by Christian values, it is not enough. Modern market conditions also determine needs that should be fulfilled by the church in order to be in touch with the congregation. Church organizations have always strived to meet the needs of their believers through different means. This is particularly relevant in South Africa where church organizations have been in the foreground for the restitution of human dignity. The organization called Church Land Program (CLP), to be studied in this thesis, is also one of those that place its mission as addressing social and economic challenges alongside a spiritual one. Some of their activities are focused on providing relief for the poorest of the poor, such as drought relief, vegetable seeds provision, or the provision of bicycles for children. Some are aimed at increasing the self-reliance and independence of those who have resources such as reviving community gardens, implementing a goat or beekeeping scheme, or skills-training on specific trades. None of these individually will contribute to significant poverty reduction, but combined and empowered communities, which work together on these prioritized issues through a development focus, have achieved such results.

II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH MANAGEMENT

The development of management as a scientific discipline is relatively recent, only getting underway the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century. For this reason, it is advisable to seek the starting points of modern management in ecclesiastical organizational texts. From this historical perspective, significant milestones such as the writings of Pope Gregory, the Hildebrandine Reform and especially the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 are considered. It is possible to observe changes in the mode and expectations of government and control of ecclesiastical institutions through time (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). The exploration of the development of church management is crucial as it provides a backdrop and a point of departure in the evaluation and identification of the most adequate strategies for the governance of these institutions.

Church management began as a strategic effort by religious leaders to coordinate the workforce and the faithful members of the congregation and used different hierarchical methods. It has evolved over the centuries as technological progress has deeply influenced the historical development of parish and diocesan institutions. The last fifty years of technological advancement have considerably transformed the healthcare and welfare departments, improving the access and quality of their services. On the other hand, recent improvements in transportation and telecommunications have made redundant the material presence of the parish priest locally; they can preside not only over one but over several congregations scattered along urban or rural areas. Broadly, church organizational changes due to progress in the arts and sciences have had a significant effect on modern methods of ecclesiastical control. Up to a certain point, this evolution has been positive and successful. However, the last quarter of a century has witnessed a more rapid change than it ever happened before. Ultimately, it follows some recommendations based on past success and failure in the endeavor of government and control of religious institutions, with the aim of inspiring further consideration and even innovation on the matter.

A. Evolution of Church Management Practices

Church management practices have evolved markedly since the establishment of the church in embryonic form in the first century AD. The modus operandi of Paul with his early churches was notably different from the complex, multi-faceted organizations that many congregations have become today. The early church largely consisted of itinerant groups inspired by apostolic teachings, rather than the brick-and-mortar organizations, often with hierarchies, charities, and peripheral enterprises, seen in modern congregations (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). These organizations are involved in a plethora of activities other than simply those of tending to the flock. While many things have not changed, such as the necessity of inspiring provoking thoughts and enabling fellowship with one another, the mindset, paradigms and means have. The past fifty years, in particular, have witnessed an increasing involvement of reflective, intentional action by congregations, often collaborating interdenominationally, to enable both the witnessing of Christians more broadly, and to increase the membership numbers of the church.

Exploration of the Church Growth Movement, Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Church, present some notable milestones. There have been clear flexing of the times and seasons with different concepts of church leadership and church government being modish. Denominations have flexed their dogmatic muscles also, sometimes eclipsing cultural practices. In the USA, this has included, inter alia, federal parsonage and tax exemptions, particular interpretations of separation of church and state jurisprudence, and even trade barriers built to protect burgeoning church banking enterprises. A recent example of effecting strategy has been an increasing devotion by church bodies large and small to techniques borrowed from business management and business psychology in order to enhance the outworking of divine spirituality.

Although this church management history involves both the utilizing and repudiation of secular tools and have differing receptivities due to differing theological underpinnings, they constitute some of the major religious-cultural shifts that have shaped current conceptions of congregational organization. With this in mind, it is possible to disaggregate theological movements and sociocultural shifts to a greater extent in order to consider the progression from first-century Christian gatherings to contemporary megachurches.

III. KEY COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE CHURCH MANAGEMENT

Architecture, heating, sound systems, and other physical and environmental components of a place of worship are items that modern congregations think about much more deeply than their predecessors. However, these are not the elements that undergird the church as an organization that will sustain service and worship through generations. Those key components are leadership, governance, and financial stewardship.

Leadership: The focus here is on vision clarity, relevance to the setting, and nurturing a healthy congregation (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). Leadership is not about being the biggest man in the room – it is about making the best decisions and, more importantly, empowering others to thrive. Church leadership can also be unique or challenging in many ways, and so intentionality in the role is critical. Staff leadership, in particular, has been given a lot of attention lately based on the stark reality that many clergy are not trained to be supervisors, managers, or administrators. Governance: Few Christian fields might be so blatantly corrupt as that of televangelism. This calls for better church processes that allow for piety and stewardship to be upheld. Good governance is not often associated with the Church, but as with any other religious or secular organization, an effective leadership structure with support and accountability teams is crucial to preventing moral slip-ups or even just bad stewardship. Knowing who has the authority to make important decisions, who can hold other decision-makers accountable, and what kind of decisions should require consent from the common table are paramount questions for any organization. Governance within a church is especially significant; it is widely known that the Lord High Executioner could be anything from an herbivore deacon with anger management issues to a paedophilic Senior Pastor. Furthermore, the Archbishop of Banterbury delivering "a fiver to all thy good and faithful followers" is not an uncommon portrayal of church mismanagement in the media. Implementing policies to not only bar the wolves but uphold support and accountability structures is difficult but imperative for any apostolic body. Governance is the kind of backbone that is fundamentally invisible until it is broken, at which point it becomes very difficult to ignore. Financial stewardship: In the gospels, Christ rails against the moneylenders – the kind of thing that doesn't exactly put wealth redistribution at the top of the Church of England's priority list. Not everyone is Jesus, however, and unless a church performs miracles like ensuring the water tastes like 30-year-old Highland Single Malt, it is likely that budget management is fundamental to its operation. Churches may receive donations, have a staff salary and utilities to pay, and will need to invest in the upkeep of their building – a floor that regularly houses the presence of the divine is liable to a cracked lick of paint. Proper bookkeeping is essential for financial longevity. Though changes in tithing customs and global recession have led many to see the Church as financially shaky or corrupt, fiscal probity has always been a concern for the ecclesiastical. The early Church held all things in common – a one-off experiment that was pretty quickly discovered to be unsustainable, since raping and pillaging was still a thing back then. Few congregational communities take regular collections but this didn't mean financial planning and stewardship was considered any less important. Ensuring the church abides by standard fiscal practice is not just about making sure it isn't running at a deficit, it is also about protecting it. The porch might be adorned with an antique set of African drums and some lovely blue and red glass panes, but it needs to be more than just a literal and metaphorical veneer. Poor stewardship of a church's worldly wealth is as harmful as the wrath of Gideon. Pelagius may claim that men are not inherently sinful, but it is a great deal harder to argue that the forces of Mammon have no stake in the actions of upright men.

A. Leadership and Governance

1) Introduction

The focus of effective church management is on dealing with the organized factions that serve a specific faith conviction. Churches, in all their various expressions, dispossession congregations with resources, also financial, in order to express and enact the convictions of that faith in the wider and diverse ecosystem. As all organizations act within a specific ecosystem characterized by shared and restricted resources, relations of power and a myriad of cultural artifacts, and as all organizations seek to invoke the programmático of memory, it should not be surprising to discover that churches are æ societally diagnostic, revealing the levels of economic inequality in a society that tends to elude 'modern' economic analysis. At the core of such organizations are notions of what enables traditions to be transmitted; central to understanding how churches manage the multi-level and complex ecosystems within which they operate, can be accounted for by the theory of supply chain management, after all every church is a unique organization.

2) Leadership and Governance

Effective decision-making and involvement are fostered where leadership styles are more democratic (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). This insight is pertinent to the traits of church management: attending services, participation in projects, and involvement in groups are aligned with a consensus management style of church leaders, whereas there is no relationship with either an instrumental or a mobilization leadership style. The livelihoods of the contemporary church are exposed as a peculiar remaining of religious, managerial, and political judgments, in which power relations are maybe less visible or evident, but still performative. The focus is an ethnography of the congregation, which puts clarity on the management techniques of their ethos of "delicate gestures" that governs relationships among groups and individuals, the church, and the wider community. Skills-setting emerging from empirical research about conflict within congregations will also be adopted. Churches are cancerized as "total institutions" and are celebrated as "void of props" upon which they build these management techniques, as sorts of capital, in order to sustain their heritage activity. At the end, this engagement with the management of church power relations underscores discussions in the conclusion about church heritage provision, as this delicate other part of the livelihoods emerges as resolutely at odds with any critical and politically articulated stance.

B. Financial Stewardship and Budgeting

Financial stewardship also known as fundraising and a sound budgeting process is key to the long term success and survival of any not for profit organization, including churches and religious organizations. Many pastors and church staff feel that it is unspiritual, at best, or unethical, at worse, to budget church spending. However, it is both wise and expected that the church's spending should be managed well, reflecting the values and beliefs we teach and preach. Churches large and small, rural and urban, wealthy and poor, can do excellent financial stewardship and must. There are some excellent free tools available to congregations of all sizes either online or through church denominational organizations. Church staff or lay leaders charged with financial management can learn how to use and modify spreadsheets to create, maintain, and monitor a church budget. A good budget reflects the church's shared mission and accompanying values, and the unique year by year needs of the particular time. It also allows endlessly for God breaking in with new and unpredictable ideas and actions. A budget too large to be raised does not reflect God's good News or Good News Plan; a too small budget puts in jeopardy the church's commitment to be the unique and special body of Christ in this time and place. Churches are encouraged to budget with openness, respect, and hope for the community they seek to serve (Orsborne Gleaves, 2017). However, financial stewardship includes so much more than budgeting. Budgeting is only the roadmap of how we plan to be brilliant World Changers of beauty, goodness, and grace. How we manage our resources, including fundraising and how we gather, use, and re-purpose our wealth demonstrates how we tell, and live out, our story. It is crucial to use good fundraising tools and ethical resource allocation strategies in order to grow our ideas and ideals. And our actions that distribute our wealth should always be public and reflect our public preaching of peace, justice, and love. We must also offer our congregants the skills to understand and participate in church financial decisions, so that we all can take communal responsibility for living out who we are called to be. Becoming financially literate and fiscally healthy is a very important way to be a good and moral steward of God's relentless and unwieldy abundance. Hence, churches of all sizes are encouraged to take this up as a never-ending theological and financial dialogue, and a form of adult religious education. In so doing, church leaders and their congregations will become more confident in promoting and guiding ministry and outreach that serves the greater good, and more adept in defending and sustaining such actions, especially when public resources are threatened.

IV. UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN CHURCH MANAGEMENT

Technology and ministry are not strange bedfellows in today's society; they are thoroughly intertwined. Traditional ways of worship may never be eradicated; traditional parish visitors will never go out all at once. However, to make one or both of these assumptions in a changing world can cause a community center church to dwindle and even die. Congregations are changing, with more people not having grown up in church and viewing technology as an everyday part of their lives (D Wellington, 2017). Families are spread out quite literally all around the globe, yet this very same technology can bring those families into a more social religious circle. Moreover, reaching these unbelievers can be more productive online than door to door. Ministry and mission fields are changing which requires a new and altered evangelistic approach, of which technology is a big player and must be shown churches to newly use these now-foreign tools. This approach violates every reason people come to church, no longer feeling the presence of God and the angels, no longer quiet, instant uncomfortableness, feeling disoriented and misplaced, feelings of being in a wrong or bad place, and feeling like narrowly escaping danger; all the while adhering to cliché preconceptions about holiness.

A. Software Solutions for Churches

What churches should do to their church management will greatly help determine what kind of software may be beneficial to the church. Software management for congregational management are in accounting, communication, mental management, providing packages, process packages, and Sabbath of worship in the church. 208 software packages ready to church members, all of these, or anything in between. The following will address the above software classification in detail, the discovery of goods and services of the relevant market, and give some recommendations for the use of software in different types of congregations.

For any kind of organization, the importance of good church management is paramount, including, but not limited to, churches. Effective church management "is the efficient exercise of authority within the church, in order to meet its objectives within the time frame of God's will" (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). This is the key to achieve the church to deal with maintenance and expansion. With the development of science and technology, it is now possible for churches of all sizes to utilize software as an effective management tool. There are different types of software. Here's a breakdown, along with a generic example of what the software may have to offer. Many software packages suitable for small congregations (less than 100 members) are ideal, as they are either free or affordable for congregations. This software provides features for the church's accounting (pay attention to individual contributions and budget), communication (create bulletins, newsletters), and member management (maintain addresses, birthday reminders) needs. On a more comprehensive scale, some larger congregations (over 100 members) offer member management systems that integrate many of the above-mentioned features, as well as provide assistance in managing the church's volunteering, check-in, and child care needs. However, these software solutions are designed for larger congregations, and the needs of small congregations generally have fewer features. It is important for the church to utilize its software solutions as early as possible to orient the staff of the software. Practical training is also available in some software packages. It is also important to ensure a good level of ongoing support. This software provides many benefits for the church, managing its resources (equipment, human resources, volunteers, etc.), dealing with available time skills, and facilitating the management of the above routine and time-consuming administrative tasks, thus freeing church members and administrative workers to perform more pressing tasks and increase time spent to establish community engagement (for example, through informal correspondence). Of course, these benefits cannot be realized without properly interacting with software. Use generic examples as an opportunity to consider potential software packages, but it is important to research market and software options specifically for the church. This means considering budget-related issues (especially for larger congregations), and can invest in scalable software or initially focus on specific needs (for example, accounting only, account management systems).

V. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CHURCHES

Effective church management needs more than just the establishment of any Christian offices. Understanding the skills and competencies required to successfully manage the different components of the church is imperative to realizing its basic functions. Can any congregation operate successfully without ensuring that the management of its organizational components is engaged effectively and in sustainable ways (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015)? The many activities of every church are planned, coordinated and monitored – and across and between the different offices making up the organization. Success is not merely a matter of performance and reward, sometimes, important and productive activities are in conflict, or they are compromised by limited resources, unrealistic or trifling objectives. Ensuring that the many activities carried out are in accordance with Italy's wider aims is just as important as seeing that they are done properly. Public finance management is now not just a requisite administrative task but also a providence instrument, enabling broader participation in decision-making and setting the foundation for more cohesive lifestyles. Fixed assets, human resources, and giving have limitations. The congregations have to select between alternative uses to which these resources might be put, always recognizing that alternatives have consequences, economic, social and political. How one choice is made and implemented, what degree of priority is given to making company with received norms, and what process is followed, are central to questions of management. It is just as important as organization management is clearly put in place. The present work is concerned with the management of the church's human resources and it attempts to highlight the changes that need to be made in the routine operation of the modern, tax-paying church in order to help achieve an efficient harmonization among its members and other offices. Inclusion is made for further reading on free staffing and training, and details of 18 related work works are given.

A. Recruitment and Training of Staff

The first steps in effective church staff management are recruitment and training. Recruitment is the process of recruiting volunteers or paid staff to serve in a church.

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An effective recruitment strategy only recruits those who embrace the mission, vision, values, and goals of the church. Volunteers may be recruited through materials, surveys and questionnaires. Paid staff may be recruited through advertising in the local newspaper. Projects and job descriptions should be provided. Once the recruitment process is complete, the screening process must begin. Volunteers and paid staff may need a background check. This check should be paid by the church, as the church may have discounts. Reference checks may also be needed (F. Robinson, 2018). After the screening process is complete, new volunteers and paid staff may be provided with training. Training is the process of educating volunteers or paid staff to fulfill their role within a church. It is extremely important that the training is in place, as it will ensure the on-going professional development of the church staff. This may include volunteer staff, interns, and paid staff. It is also important for paid staff to have the opportunity to mentor interns or volunteer staff. This will also provide the opportunity for church staff to provide reflection and feedback on their progress. A conducive working environment that encourages all possible learning and collaboration will ensure that volunteers and paid staff will have the opportunity to develop and engage. Mentors should be provided if possible (Wright Gittens, 2019).

VI. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Success and longevity of church communities are inspired or thwarted by the efficacy or ineffectiveness of communication. The present administration team is tasked with the care and governance of the church body (H. Tate, 2019). In their exercise of administration, they rely on consistent and clear communication in order to create a hospitable community, to embolden a Godly vision, to cultivate healthy congregational rhythms and patterns, to relay and remind of the church's Gospel-Driven Tradition, to tender care in times of sorrow and joy, or to hold members to account in matters of love or discipline. The first best practice of communication strategy is transparency in mission-driven values. In the day-to-day practice of structured church communication, pay mind to the sanctification of both internal and external projections. This includes both congregation-facing and outside-facing. Transparency is the handmaiden to stronger connections in that it begets a healthier trust. A congregation who trusts its leadership desires to walk faithfully beside it, working in lock-step to accomplish the same mission-driven values. Out of that trust a greater account is taken of the church as a whole, stewarding it well. Further, a culture of open transparency calls the congregation itself to accountability of the same sort and fosters a church that is self-accountable. Transparence in church publications and releases should help in the retention of the narrative cohesion. The common thread of the Gospel and the Church's response to it have been constantly knitted through all of its communication such that church cannot help but consider it. If communication is to bolster the presentation and defense of these things then it must on God's word and the things it engenders most dearly. Communication plays an active role in the church's sanctified rhythms, helping it to remember its roots and stay engaged in the right storytelling.

A. Internal Communication

The foundation of a contemporary management approach is built on effective communications, especially those found in church environments. The Church is a group of believers and a colonial social institution with a history of more than two thousand years. Today, it still plays a key role in the social life of believers and helps them discover the meaning of life. A church organization that is managed efficiently and effectively using a variety of techniques, tools, and methods can meet the demands of this era and help its followers on their spiritual journey. Although there are various approaches to church management, these approaches must be open and forward looking in line with contemporary management techniques. The objective should be well defined, and the management staff must be qualified. Besides, physical resources are another necessary part of church organization management.This study presents modern management techniques directed toward church leaders and those responsible for church management. It aims to demonstrate how church management should be performed effectively and efficiently in order to foster an environment of faith. This paper is focused on parish management in the Catholic Church, but most of the findings are relevant to other types of churches and institutions. Though believers and church hierarchy promote devotional life, the effective management team will contribute to vulnerability to this call. As a result, it is sensible to implement locale improvement actions that were described in order to make parish management more efficient, e.g. setting a strategic plan, defining the parish mission, discovering threats and opportunities, determining the potential, counseling of the pastoral council, organizing training activities and facilitating feedback with the laity (H. Tate, 2019).

VII. CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN CHURCHES

Biblically-rooted advice and general principles about management and management practices have been neglected in church thinking over the past century. Such advice is needed in a global, economically challenging, and marketing-driven world. Management is observed to be needed in all different parts of church functioning, that is, both in the way that the church is organized (its structure), as well as in the process of carrying out the church's work (the ministry and service).

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Management can be described as the art and science of getting people together to accomplish desired objectives and goals by coordinating and integrating the resources and necessary tasks with minimum resources (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015).

The practice can be illustrated in the form of planning, organising, staffing, leading or directing, and controlling an organization or group of individuals. Churches, like any other charitable or religious institutions, have received significant negative publicity over the past several years. These institutions could be terminated if the church does not act responsibly and sustainably in response to the numerous challenges and adversities. Hence, it is indeed appropriate to review the different contributions from management sciences that could significantly improve the sustainability of the church in its tasks as an organisation.

Effort will always be made to manage the different parts of any congregation effectively. This includes how financial management is carried out, also how the entire congregation is governed and led, including the sustainability of the different parts or functions of each church. To accomplish its intended goal, the church must be managed properly to focus on its mission.

A. Preventative Measures

In an ideal world, crises don't occur. However, crises can be anticipated. The longer church leaders wait to anticipate or address a growing concern, the higher the potential cost in terms of people, money, and the church's reputation. It only makes sense for churches to want to take proactive measures to avoid preventable crises. Churches that ignore the necessity to be aware and ready for potential crises are failing in their stewardship role. There are proactive strategies that churches can deploy today to identify potential risks, areas of vulnerability, and the current state of readiness to face a crisis (Rockson, 2019). Some risks are natural occurrences. However, the vast majority of problems that give rise to crises can be anticipated and acted upon well in advance of an actual crisis occurring. Attending to a few key dimensions can dramatically enhance a church's organizational ability to manage troublesome areas. A first step is establishing a culture of awareness and preparedness. With a little planning and a watchful eye, much of the impact from a crisis can be avoided. Crises of wide scope can endanger the overall well-being of the church through physical damage, community criticism or stigmatization, and a long-term draining of resources. However, small risks can be extremely manageable if attention is paid to them in a time-sensitive manner. Consistent and regular assessment cultivates a church's ability to be ready and provides a point of accountability. Public and congregational perceptions are managed by transparently sharing an open dialogue regarding the challenges that are currently being faced. No two churches are exactly alike; a crisis plan that works wonderfully at one church may be wholly ineffective at another. Any church truly looking to enhance organizational resilience in the face of crises must actively address the various cultural, physical, demographic, and social differentials that characterize the congregation. It is strongly advised that this toolkit be used in conjunction with a local emergency manager who has experience with crises in church settings. However, the strategies offered here provide a foundation that can be built upon and adapted to meet the unique needs of any congregation. An intelligent response to a crisis can also severely limit the extent of the damage inflicted. Trained staff know how to effectively carouse worried congregants to safe sheltered areas—a Church crisis team, with an action plan that is renewed and practiced bi-annually that includes designated team leaders, a chain of command based on the incident's location and size, methods for communicating and reuniting lost congregants, established perimeter zones and post-crisis stages, and distributes lanyards or other means of identification are five times more likely to ameliorate a crisis's negative impact.

VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Churches are often in the best position to serve their community as they have a diverse group of congregants with different professions and life experiences. Congregants are actively engaged in outreach and service in over 5,000 churches nationwide (Houston, 2013). The primary goal is to engage the outreach projects to foster a common and desired outcome, to more lovingly serve our neighbors with helpful and impacting programs. Going a little deeper into implementation aspects, and how they tie quality research with their own evaluation and strategic planning, will hopefully result in the multiplication of meaningful and transforming outreach opportunities. It is to recognize your community and its needs, then take up worthwhile endeavors that answer those needs in the name of Christ. It is also to engage with and learn from the community, building relationships at ground level with organizations that can provide them with insights into the issues, needs, and gaps they should be addressing. By involving congregants in the process, there is the opportunity to grow ownership and passion among the body of Christ. The projects listed here are not exhaustive as there are hundreds of ways any one demographic can be powerfully served, but merely a taste of the many programs not-for-profits are implementing, hoping it inspires others to reach out in a like manner.

Congregations have a unique ability to serve and positively impact the lives of their community, but it often takes acquiring and understanding knowledge of the target demographic.

The most powerful outreach programs are those that will set out to build relationships with organizations within the community, tapping into a vice that is under a blanket of secrecy to the church. The involvement of law enforcement with these ideas may result in unintended consequences that ultimately damage its mission. The integration of any of these programs into a ministry will likely foster growth, nationally, through unhealthy media coverage. There is a call to get creative, and it is up to the church to know their community and craft the programs that hit hardest. This project sets out to challenge congregations to equip the saints and think outside the box, bringing the life-changing love of Christ to communities as players on the same team.

A. Collaborations with Local Organizations

Churches who partner with local organization(s) can amplify their ability to positively affect the community they serve. Notice also how helpful a good relationship or partnership can be with local organizations. Greater awareness of church activities and greater connection to the community can be the results (Houston, 2013). That can also turn into shared information and resources as well. For example, there were collaborative efforts in after school tutorial programs at the schools. That church was there; they were mentoring kids, tutors were provided, there was an anti-violence campaign, and they did a workshop on how to start your own business. This collaborative relationship with local nonprofits, schools, or businesses can benefit your church by bringing in resources to help reach and aid those in need in the congregation and beyond. In addition, there are mutual benefits that can enable what is being done to be received by the other organizations as well. The benefits are many and can include the following: providing your congregation with more service opportunities, each organization's other partnerships helping to support the other's outreach ventures, the burden of outreach not solely on one organization, support during events, and the congruency of shared missions makes for a better knowledge and understanding of how to support each other. To best demonstrate how churches can collaborate with local organizations or congregations for community engagement, different case studies are mentioned for various types of collaborative initiatives, along with church and organization analysis, and practical guidelines and implications. In a given local area, several churches as well as community organizations and businesses formed partnerships and cooperated to effectively and sustainably address pressing community needs. Four different partnerships or community service efforts are described, analyzed, and followed with recommendations for future initiatives. Finally, church community engagement serves to encourage and facilitate ongoing outreach involvement in the community; a complementary effort is highlighted as well.

IX.   MEASURING SUCCESS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Church administration and leadership can be chaotic and difficult. Today, churches have more resources than ever before to manage. Websites, graphic design, social media, electronic giving, payroll, and facility management are among the many things that a capable staff must consider. While these tools can provide incredible opportunities for outreach and growth, finding the best way to manage them can be a struggle. One common mistake made by congregations is neglecting to measure success. Measuring success, through key performance indicators (KPIs), is critical to good management. Measuring success in a church context is difficult. Many churches become focused on raw numbers and lose track of the critical community service and reformation that takes place. This criticism is valid; metrics must be thoughtful. The church's mission will define good metrics. Common metrics that might be used include: the number of members participating, dollars given through outreach programs, hours of community service generated, job training graduates, salvations, weddings, building new relationships with other nonprofit or government agencies, etc. By defining clear KPIs, churches can assess their progress towards strategic objectives and fulfillment of mission.

While defining proper metrics is important, they are useless if they are not looked at and decisions are not made based on them. Every program and initiative should be continually evaluated. Not everything will be a success. Many might not even fail, but might not be the best use of valuable church resources. From out of history comes wisdom. It is best to share success stories, KPIs, and evaluation with the congregation. Followers of Jesus are called to be open and transparent. Sharing with the congregation makes church management a community action rather than a handful of leaders at the top. The congregation may see data that surprises them. Without this knowledge they may question decisions, doubt leadership, and leave the church. Sharing the data provides the congregation with the same perspective leadership has, and fosters more active participation. Moreover, feedback mechanisms should be constructed to discern what is and isn't successful. Understanding KPI's will better inform decisions. If the metric defined is found wanting, specific changes must be made to the program. Seeing metrics in this way allows for more thoughtful and strategic use of resources. Understanding a KPI's history will inform decisions based on its meaning, knowing what is statistically possible, and understanding what other variables ought to be considered. With this depth of understanding, a church's leadership can set more realistic expectations and strategize resources to obtain a desired result.

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Considering all these insights, knowing that KPI performance is a measure of success, a conscientious leader ought to evaluate the effects and effectiveness of potentially supplementing commercial sound equipment and patron engagement strategies and market the investment in a way that would foster sustainability and growth of the church. After all, sustainability in the future as well as plans for growth are of utmost importance all in order to better honor God (Abdullah et al., 2008).

A. Evaluation of Programs and Services

Contributions of the church to the local community have the potential to be significant. People can volunteer in many different ways such as cooking meals for those in need, building houses etc. Some have professional expertise which they can give but equally important is the support the congregation gives others and helping them to discover their own gift of time, resources, caring talents etc. However, evaluation should be undertaken to determine if we are doing anything useful and if we can do it even better. Are people being helped to help themselves rather than agencies of the church taking on the traditional role of doing for the congregation? There is a need for evaluation of church activities to know such facts and improve future programs and services of churches (Mutanga, 2010). But more importantly, there is a need to know whether or not the objective of the establishment of a church has been fulfilled. It can be seen that any evaluation of church activities involves the setting of specific, attainable, and measurable church goals. If God's glory is an overarching goal of the church, then evaluation requires specifying ministries in which God's glory is to be played out.

Unfortunately, the aspect of accountability does not take on much emphasis in managing the church. Many initially get involved in some type of ministry as required to meet felt needs of the congregation with an open-ended commitment and leave evaluation to the sovereign will of God. However, there are other good ecclesiastical reasons also why churches have to be more consistent in the technique and standard of program evaluation. What faith is about is a challenging discipleship, not the programmatic maintenance of the status quo over long periods with those on the inside needing to request special interviews or training in how to access. Yet Jesus' disciples surely were invited to look at what he was doing, learn from it and, in time, do likewise; is this not a comparative form of program evaluation? In managing churches like any other institution, the planning and delivery of programs can be greatly assisted by a regular review of what has been going on. So asking questions and seeking reliable answers to questions gains in importance. What are the churches actually doing and on what evidence is the judgment based? Preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and caring for the poor are program categories that lack specificity because each term covers such a wide range of possible activity and missionary calls in some instances for very different types of commitment. This places a premium on the choice of a denomination for program evaluation purposes. It follows that in order to be evaluable by the congregation, church goals frequently have to be broken down into a series of smaller parts which form a complementary ministry puzzle. Evaluation is further complicated by the fact that any given church program seldom has just one type of goal.

X. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE TRENDS

The word church denotes the Christian community of believers. This Christian church being the body of Christ forms a religious congregation. The church is a community manifest in the people born of God, and acknowledging Jesus as the Christ. The origin of the Christian congregation was an act of God's transcendence. The first Christian church, in contrast to the synagogue, was not originated by men, but established by God as a faith community in Jesus Christ. The church organization's spiritual significance is based on the founding theological concept that the church is born of God. This implies the unity among the community of believers in a particular congregation (Oosthuizen & Lategan, 2015). In contrast to the traditional or classical function that the pastor also performed the role of manager, this conflict of interests should not be denied but should be broken.

The primary results of the construed investigation underscore the practical significance for church management. That there is an opportunity for transferring management related tasks out of the pastoral office is evident. Although the original experimental design failed to demonstrate a difference in the job performance of pastors and church managers, post hoc analysis demonstrated areas in which laity scored significantly higher than pastors and vice versa. To have a non-clerical church manager perform clerical duties is contradictory to the theological basis of the church as an organization (E. Jr. Rester, 2008). However, while suggesting a separation of specific organizational roles, the theological framework for the church as an organization re-enforces the concept of a responsible church management. Thirty-four passages in the New Testament were identified which shown a variety in specific advice, recommendation, and instruction to the early church in connection with the effective function of the church as an organization, and were presented as a managerial concept.

A. Emerging Technologies in Church Management

Technological inventions every day continue to shape the way churches can say, "Welcome to 2021." There are moving pieces that can open up new ways to engage congregants and streamline processes, often through peoples' smartphones. Mobile apps can now translate any church bulletin, sermon notes, and greeting times into a mobile-friendly format. Platforms can now help churches quickly offer virtual Sunday door classes and events. Electronic giving options are now available too, which can push churchgoers to the next step to give back by a simple tap on their phone within minutes.

For anyone in charge of a place of worship, cutting-edge church technologies can not only push growth forward, but make life easier. When looking at a present-day church environment, many non-profit leaders will peep and see that it is rooted in traditional ways; but the world is changing. In Medieval Europe, traders from Venice were selling at far-out markets in Asia. Emissaries of the Anasazi civilization visited the Great Pyramid of Giza. The borders have been breached for thousands of years on the back of rapid advancements in technology. We're used to technological innovation influencing how transportation is carried out, and retail transactions operate, among other things – but in the contemporary era, the waves have begun to lap on the churches' doorstep (D Wellington, 2017).

This church technology guide will give an indication of the latest electronic machinery, digital advances, and software tools that are causing some inspiration for faith-based leaders to stay ahead of the game in the landscape of modern-day ministry. This booster-shot blog will have it covered when it comes to understanding the impact of the latest technology trends on how to run a church, but it is still a good place to begin. The latest and best church technology tools that are in high demand right now will be highlighted; subsequently, churches will be better positioned for a successful future. It has also been made conscious of the key trends and challenges, to help any forward-thinking congregation be better prepared when making decisions on technology moving forward.

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