

CHURCH MANAGEMENT

Presentation by Zwelisha L. Shembe

Introduction:

This is a very vast subject since it encompasses planning, administration, management and financial management.

It is unfortunate that at Bible Schools and Seminaries, not much is taught on this subject, even though it so important for the pastor to run his church successfully. It would be a good idea if a pastor running a ministry or working within a denomination could take a course in management and finance. In my years in the church as an administrator, pastor and overseer, I have discovered that a number of pastors resent involvement with administrative work; they feel as if it is not what they have been called to do. Some feel that they belong to the pulpit and other people should worry about management.

Our perceptions of administration and management are sometimes wrong, thus the negative attitude towards them. Administration helps us to get the work well done, or rather it is supposed to. Management is about organising our resources (time, people and material) in such a way that we can get the job done as effectively and efficiently as possible.

PLANNING:

There is a saying that goes, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Planning is the key to success.

There are different aspects that should be dealt with in planning. To succeed in the planning process one must formulate a vision and mission statement for the church; make a situation analysis of your church; do medium and short term planning for your ministry; and draw up a plan of action for the activities in your church.

VISION AND MISSION:

A **vision** is a dream. Your vision for your church would be the dream you have for your church. This is not a dream separated from reality. The vision should include a reference to the most important characteristics of your church. It should be a realistic dream. It could read something like this:

"The vision of the Free Methodist Church is to be healthy, biblical communities of holy people, multiplying disciples, leaders, groups and churches."

A mission is a statement which summarises your goals related to your vision. Here you say what you are doing and how you are doing it from the perspective of your vision. It could read something like this:

"The mission of the Free Methodist Church is to make known to all people everywhere God's call to wholeness through forgiveness and holiness in Jesus Christ, and to invite into membership and to equip for ministry all who respond in faith."

I think that it is important for every church to state its reasons or aim for existence. This will give direction to its activities and can be an instrument to measure if you are still on the way towards achieving your main aims.

A. STRATEGIC PLANNING:

Strategic planning basically entails that you plan your activities taking the broader situation into account.

Steps to take:

- a) **Situation analysis** – if we do a situation analysis, we want to draw a picture of our total situation. This includes geographic, historic, economic, demographic, social and religious analysis. This is to make sure about what you most probably already know.

i) The geographic situation: The geographic situation influences your activities and planning. If you are ministering in an urban area, you will have to plan the majority of your activities in the evenings or weekends as the majority of members may be working in the city during the day. In a rural area you will probably have to take distance into account, as the people stay far apart and then you'll have to take travelling time seriously. Transport may be a bigger problem in rural areas than in urban areas. In urban areas there may also be greater 'competition' as other organisations apart from the church may make demands on the time of the people. The youth may have to choose between going to church or to places of recreation. If you are in a rural area and plan for a festival or convention during harvesting time, there may be a serious clash of interest. We must know that definitely that the geographic situation does have an influence.

ii) The historic situation: Every single place has a history. It may be a long history or a newer town may have a short history. This history influences the character of the area. It may be a rural area where a certain tribe had been living for centuries. It may be a township that was established by the previous apartheid government based on their policy of separation and for economic reasons. The social & religious interaction in the communities depends on a number of factors, including history.

iii) The Economic situation: I'm sure that you know the economic situation of your congregation. If you intend planting a church in an area, you have to also do some research in this area. In your situation analysis you only need to look at the financial situation / position of your congregation & have a picture of the average member of your church.

iv) The Demographic situation: The word demographic refers to the composition of your congregation or church. How many people are there? Then you have to divide this number into age groups. How many are children? How many are between the age of 18 – 35? How many are in the age group 35 – 60? How many are older than 60? How many young married couples do you have in your church? How many women and how many men? This is very important. The activities of the church with mainly elderly people will differ from a church with a majority of young people. Your planning & activities will differ if the majority of your church are single women compared to a church where the majority are married couples with children. It is of the utmost importance to have a demographic analysis for your planning and activities.

v) The Social situation: Factors which could influence your planning are: the general level of education of your members, unemployment, are many people affected by HIV?, educational & recreational facilities in your area, child care facilities for working mothers, people working away from the area in which they live for long periods. These factors will determine, for example, whether you need to run a literacy or sewing programme, start a crèche, initiate a care group for people with HIV, etcetera.

vi) The Religious situation: look at your community. How many churches are there? Are there people of different religions? What interaction is there between the different groups? What is the general attitude of the members of your church towards other churches and religions?

What is the purpose of doing a situation analysis?

If you know your situation, you will not only know the people you are serving and be able to plan your ministry better, but you will know the strengths and weaknesses of your community.

Doing a situation analysis is not a waste of time. It does not only give you a clearer picture of your church, but will help you in planning the activities of your church, making your activities viable and topical.

MEDIUM TERM PLANNING

If we want to plan our activities well, the best is to start with a medium term plan. At this stage we have a vision and mission which is our 'end goal'. How are we going to achieve this 'end goal'? Medium term planning implies that we plan for the next five years. This need not be a detailed plan with activities ascribed to each day, but rather a broad plan, referring to the main tasks and broad completion dates.

The reason for starting with a medium term plan is that you can then ask yourself: where am I now and where would I like to be in five years time? In this your vision and mission will play an important role. The advantage of first doing the medium term planning is that you will be able to decide on goals you want to achieve, but can't achieve in one year.

There may just be too much to do in one year. Say for example, you would like to build a church. This will not be a one year project. You will have to plan to raise money over three years; to build the church the fourth and fifth year and dedicate the church in the latter part of the fifth year.

You may dream of having a series of training programmes running in your church. In the first year you may start with the training of lay preachers; in the second year with the training of elders and officials, in the third year with women's, men, bible study and cell leaders groups; in the fourth year with training Sunday school teachers and youth workers and in the fifth year with training of the youth and specialised groups.

In order to do medium term planning, you need to design a five year planner. Here is an example:

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												

Drawing up a medium term plan is the first step towards becoming organised and goal directed. Some people may have objections and say that we don't know what will happen in the meantime. It is true that we don't know what the future holds. It is, however, important to have direction. Otherwise we can end up walking in circles and getting nowhere.

SHORT TERM PLANNING

By 'short term planning' we mean planning for one year. What would you like to achieve this year? How are you going to do it? What needs to be done each month in order to reach your goal? Your short term planning will be based on your medium term planning and will refine the medium term planning.

Start with a year planner. This is a broad planning document. In this you only plan the greater and ongoing projects. In our case this would include church board meetings, conventions and greater events. Remember to include your holiday planning on your year planner. The advantage of a year planner is to spread event and activities in such a way that you will be able to cope and have enough time to prepare for all the activities. The goal of the year planner is to enable you to plan in such a way that you can achieve your goals for the year. The point of departure is the question: what do I want to achieve this year? Once you have clarity in your mind, you can start planning how you would like to achieve that goal or these goals. You can find printed year planners from some stationers such as Waltons, CNA and Makro.

The month planner contains more details. You need to carry the major events over from your year planner. It is best to schedule some time at the end of each month to do the month planner for the next month. Once again, this plan need only be a broad and basic outline. There are many things that you can't plan a month in advance, such as sudden illness or death. What you can do, is to make provision in your month planning for such events. Leave enough time to fit such events in when necessary. Many good diaries contain month planners. Your year and monthly planning are broader plans. Your week planning is more detailed. Generally it is a good idea to set aside some time at the end of a week to do the planning for the next week. By now you should already have some appointments and activities in your diary. Now

you can complete the picture by adding more detail. Remember to keep your year and month planners in mind. In other words, don't forget your dreams for the year. Keep your goals in mind and work towards achieving them.

WEEK	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1												
2												
3												
4												

Plan your days: Day planning is of utmost importance so that you may not spend your day running around in circles. Plan your daily programme in such a way that it suits you personally. If, for example, you are more creative in the morning, you should schedule creative tasks for the morning and schedule less creative and routine type of work for the times that you are not so creative.

Day		Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Task to perform	Pri A	ori B	ty C	Delegated to	Completion date
	1									
	2									
	3									
	4									
	5									
	6									
	7									
	8									
	9									
	10									

This table should go up to 31 days.

Compiling year, month, week and daily planners is laborious. Once you are used to doing it, it will not take that much time and will help you to work in a directed, effective, efficient and productive way. It can save time in the end and assist you to be in control.

ACTION PLAN

Once you have done your strategic planning, and have drawn up medium and short term planners, it is time to put flesh to your planning. This is not always easy and may take some time, especially at the beginning. You need to do it if you want the work to be done.

Often people have wonderful ideas, excellent ideas, excellent decisions are taken, but nothing ever materialises. Frequently this can be ascribed to a lack of a plan of action. To draw a plan of action you must sit down and have a clear picture of what needs to be done to achieve what has been decided on.

Then you must break the plan up into steps. If I want to achieve this, then I must first do this, then that and then the following.

Using the analogy of building a house: first draw-up a plan, then have the plan approved, have finance approved, then we draw an action plan.

This includes among other things: building the walls, doing the carpentry, fitting the roof, doing the plumbing & electricity, painting the walls, laying carpets, fitting cupboards and planting the garden. We need to spell out the action steps in logical order. We can't first do the plumbing, then the roof and then build the walls.

The plan of action includes, besides the activity, also the names of the persons responsible for each specific task as well as a proposed completion date. Who will do what? How much time does everyone need? When do we start and when must this task be completed? A plan of action is necessary for all our activities.

Example: plan for the wedding

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	COMPLETION DATE
1. Pre-marital counselling	Rev.....	Next 5 Tuesdays (18:00 – 20:00)
2. Conducting the wedding	Rev.....	Date of wedding
3. Booking the church	Father of the bride	Next Monday
4. Arranging for music	Father of the bridegroom	Next Monday
5. Arranging refreshments	Parents of the bride	Next Monday
6. Arranging the celebration	Parents of the bridegroom	Next Monday
7. Arranging the lunch	Parents of the bride	Next Monday
8. Post – marital counselling	Rev.....	2 month later next 4 Tuesdays (18:00 – 20:00)

You can also do an action plan for a Sunday service using the same form as above.

A plan of action should be drawn up in consultation with all that are involved. This serves as a motivation tool for all. It is further more necessary for record keeping and assessment. Should anything happen to prevent you from carrying out the plan, someone else can carry on with the plan and doesn't need to start from scratch. You will find that once you are in the habit of setting up plans of action, this becomes second nature and eases your burden.

Summary

Planning is a vital key to success.

If we would like to achieve something, we need:

- A dream (vision and mission)
- To know our situation (situation analysis)
- To have medium and short term planners
- A plan or plans of action

B. ADMINISTRATION

Administration is about getting our primary tasks done as efficiently and effective as possible. Administration is about being organised. For this reason there cannot be a single recipe. Attention needs to be given to the situation and the personalities of the people involved. The administration of a small church differs from that of a big church. An administrative system will differ from person to person.

2.1 Be Organised

To be organised means that we need to plan. In the previous section we dealt with this aspect. It is, however, one thing to plan and another to set the plan in action. This requires discipline. In many work situations there are senior persons seeing to it that we work in accordance with set plans. In the ministry we frequently don't have someone telling us what to do and when to do it. We need to do it ourselves. For this reason it is important to regularly look at our planning and to ask ourselves whether we have achieved what we planned.

If we did not reach our goals, we must ask: why? If the plan was too ambitious, we need to scale it down, if we spent too much time on other things, we should ask whether we could not be more disciplined and reach the goals. We should also ask ourselves if we had not spent too much time on less important aspects or did things too thoroughly, or were there other ways in which we could achieve the goal?

The crucial questions I always need to ask myself are: Do I do my best? Am I efficient? Am I handling all tasks to the best of my ability and within the shortest time?

2.2 Keep Records

It is of vital importance to keep records. Equally important is to keep these records in such a way that you can easily find them. Records include financial records, records of members of the church, minutes of meetings and records of important correspondence (that is letters you have received and letters you have written).

Records of The Members of Your Church

You need to know who your church members are. It is important to have a record of your members for various reasons. The most important is that you don't lose track of some of the members. If someone becomes a member of your church, you should take all his / her particulars and put them on record. You may need this information when applying for a bond or purchasing a church site.

It is recommended that you have at least two membership record forms. The one containing information about each individual member and the other an alphabetical list of members.

In this electronic age it is very easy to keep such records or if you are challenged in this area, you can keep a number of these forms in stock and complete one as soon as someone becomes a member of your church. These forms may contain confidential information and should be kept in a safe place.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD
(INDIVIDUAL, PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL RECORD)

MEMBERSHIP RECORD NUMBER:

SURNAME		
FIRST NAMES		
ADDRESS	RESIDENTIAL	POSTAL
TELEPHONE NUMBER		
CELL NUMBER		
OCCUPATION		
WORK ADDRESS		
WORK NUMBER	TEL	
DATE OF BIRTH		
NAME OF HUSBAND/WIFE		
NAME(S) OF CHILD(REN)		
DATE OF JOINING THE CHURCH		
RECORD OF VISITS	DATE	TOPIC OF DISCUSSION
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
COMMENTS		
1		
2		
3		
OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION		
DATE OF DEPARTURE, DEATH OR LEAVING THE CHURCH		

MEMBERSHIP RECORD

(ALPHABETICAL RECORD OF MEMBERS)

SURNAME	INITIALS	DATE OF ENTRY AND DEPARTURE	MEMBERSHIP RECORD NUMBER

RECORDS OF ACTIVITIES OR COMMITTEES IN YOUR CHURCH

Have a file for each activity in your church. In the front of the file of each of the activities or committees you should have a list of the names of the people involved in the activity or members of the committee. Minutes of the meetings or reports of the activities should also be kept in these files. By doing this, you can make sure that you know what is going on.

Meetings:

Meetings of various church groups / committees usually take place on a regular basis and for some formal agenda and minutes are necessary. Some churches specify in their constitutions how often the church board should meet, but if not, the Church Board should meet once a month to keep members up to date with financial and other matters. It is a good idea to choose a specific day for the meetings, so that members know to keep that time available.

Agendas

The Secretary or some other person appointed to do this should send out an agenda to all people who should attend, two weeks before a meeting is to be held. The agenda contains all the items to be discussed at the meeting.

Minutes

These are an accurate record of what takes place and decisions taken during the meeting. They can be drawn up using the same headings as appear in the agenda. The Secretary should take notes during the meeting and then circulate them to all members. If this is not possible, the minutes must be read out at the start of the meeting, before they are approved. The Chairperson must sign the minutes and fill in the date on which they are signed. As indicated above, a copy should be filed. The minutes can also be pasted into a minute book.

Records of Important Correspondence:

Important letters and forms should be kept. This includes letters that you receive as well as letters that you write. Whenever you write a letter, it is advisable to make a copy and put it in the relevant file.

Develop a filing system:

Having a filing cabinet is essential. Documents and letters should be arranged in such a way that you will be able to easily lay your hands on them. There are, however, a few principles involved. Related matters should be together; there should be a logical order and you must be able to find the files easily.

Administration should not be a burden. It should help us perform our duties effectively and efficiently. We are all administrators and should set ourselves the goal to improve our administration so that we can minister to the best of our abilities.

C. MANAGEMENT

The goal of management is to get the work done in the most effective way; to get the work done in a proper way and to ensure good order.

As we all know, it is not always possible to do the work on your own. More than one person is involved in performing duties, especially in the church. The task of the manager is then to oversee the work so that everyone is not working on his/her own and we end up with a lot of fragmented tasks, but with a task well done.

Management Structure

The church should have a meeting of members and decide on what they would like to achieve. Then you need to identify leaders or managers. In each church there should be a board that manages the church affairs in general. This board should be democratically elected for a specific period, taking note of gifts that people possess.

The Composition And Structure Of The Nominating Committee

It is wise to have a nominating committee composed say of four to six members. It is also advisable to elect members to a three-year term, with two new members being elected each year and no one being eligible for re-election. Such a procedure provides for both continuity and a fresh point of view annually.

It is advisable that an annual church conference (in case of a congregation, their first meeting of the year) be authorised as a place of all church elections. Before receiving nominations from the floor for the nominating committee, the crucial responsibilities of this committee should be clearly outlined to all present. Qualifications for the committee should include a comprehensive knowledge of the work and tasks of the church as well as a broad acquaintance with the leadership abilities of the church members. It is also wise to ask for twice the number of nominees needed. This will prevent the closing of nominations and the acceptance of the first persons named who may not necessarily be the best qualified persons.

The nominating committee should meet once or twice near the end of the church year to discharge its responsibilities. In carrying out their duty, they have to try to discover the best qualified persons for each position, spread the leadership responsibilities so that no one person has too many jobs.

When the nominating committee has agreed upon the slate of candidates, it must still secure their consent to serve if elected. If this is not done, persons may be elected who are unwilling to serve, and the work of the church will suffer. To allow time for contact with nominees, nominations should be completed one month before elections.

D. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

The handling of the church's money is a sensitive and very important matter. Finances must under all circumstances be handled with great responsibility. The money people give to the church is basically money given to promote the work of the Lord. We as pastors are not only responsible to the people and church regarding the receiving and spending of this money, but also to the Lord. Our handling of the money should be a testimony of our trustworthiness and faith in the Lord.

At all times we must distinguish between the church's money and the pastor's money. The pastor is an employee of the church and receives a salary from the church. The money of the church should be used for more than paying the pastor. Every church must have its own bank account(s).

In order to enable us to handle the finances of our church in a way that will be to the glory of the Lord, we need to have a financial committee, a sound financial policy, a transparent and operational accounting system which will be audited annually by independent auditors.

BUDGETING

Drawing up a budget is the first step to be taken and is one of the major activities of the financial committee.

What is a budget? A budget is basically a planning document that reflects your planning and determines the activities of the church for the year to come.

The financial committee should draw up a budget annually, which should be approved by the Church Board. This should be done at least three months before the end of the financial year.

The first step in drawing up a budget, is to have a clear picture of what the church would like to achieve during the financial year.

The financial committee needs to consult with:

1. The pastor about his salary and planned activities, such as, for example, a special evangelism campaign;
2. The Church Board about their planned activities for the year;
3. All committees and groups in the church about their planned activities and the financial implications of these activities.

The financial committee then needs to get information on:

1. The financial statements of the church;
2. Expected increases in telephone and municipal rates;
3. Expected costs regarding bank and auditing fees;
4. Expected income being contributions of members and other possible donations or income such as grants or income from letting the church buildings;
5. Any other information necessary for the budget.

Once the committee has all the information, the actual work on the budget can start.

A spiritual leader being part of the management of the congregation, need to have a good basic knowledge of administrative processes and accounting systems, because you as a leader must oversee these matters and are responsible for what happens in your church.

When your treasurer reports to the Church Board, of which most probably you are the chairperson, then you need to have a basic knowledge in order to guide the deliberations and discussions towards sound decisions.

In order to make sure that the money has been handled in a proper way, the books of the church must be audited.

The financial report should not only be submitted to the Church Board for approval, but also made available to the church as a whole for their information. People want to know whether their money is used in a proper way or not. When they hear a financial report, they are motivated.

In Conclusion

The church is a body of Christ; the light of the world. The church is there to proclaim the Word of God and to guide its members to honor God in all they are doing. This is a very privileged position which also places great responsibilities on the shoulders of the church leaders. The church must be managed in such a way that the community at large can look at the church and honour God.

Works Cited

Campbell, T. C. & Reiersen. 1981. *The Gift of Administration*. Theological Bases for Ministry. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Engstrom, T. W. 1983. *Your Gift Of Administration*. How to Discover and Use It. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Lindgren, A. J. 1984. *Foundations for Purposeful Church Administration*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Swanepoel, F. 2000. *Church Management*. Pretoria: CB Powell Bible Centre.