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Gospel Assimilation: Building an Integrated Christian Fellowship in the Congregation

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GOSPEL ASSIMILATION

Building an Integrated Christian Fellowship  
In the Congregation

by  
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for  
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## GOSPEL ASSIMILATION

### Building an Integrated Christian Fellowship In the Congregation

One cold January day at a church in Chicago, a greeter stood at the front door to receive a latecomer who was a small, uncared-for boy. The youngster's cap was missing. His coat was too small and was held together at the neck with a safety pin. He wore no socks, and his shoes had belonged to someone else first. His legs were blue from the wind which came with numbing coldness off Lake Michigan.

Scooping the boy up into his arms, the man began rubbing the legs to encourage circulation. Standing him down at arm's length, the greeter asked, "Sonny, where do you live?"

The boy reported that he lived in a certain area which the greeter quickly calculated to be approximately two miles in one direction away from this Sunday school. Surprised, he shot back, "Why did you do it? You must have gone by a dozen church doors this morning in order to come to our Sunday school. Why did you walk over here in the cold this great distance in order to come to Sunday school?"

With the kind of honesty a boy has when he does not know a prepared answer but only gives the first thing that spontaneously comes to mind, the lad dropped open his jaw and said, "Sir, I guess it is because they understand a fellow over here and show us Jesus."

(J. Huebner, Integrating the New Member, Essay presented to the Florida Conference of WELS South Atlantic District, January 24, 1979, p. 12.)

In that lad's statement lie the two keys for building a Christian fellowship. One is to show Jesus, crucified for our sins. The church's heart beats in these gospel words. The other is the gospel in action--that we "understand a fellow over here." We listen to and love and lean on one another. The whole work of the church is summed up in gospel words and gospel actions. If we are to build an integrated Christian fellowship in the congregation, it must be done by gospel assimilation--bringing members closer together by speaking and living the gospel.

## Gospel Words

The natural assumption behind a "how-to" topic is for the writer to provide all sorts of handy tips and neat tricks for achieving the goal in mind. I will bring up many practical suggestions in this paper, for I hope it can be of practical use for others in their ministry. However, I would run a great risk if I were to begin there and make this a how-to manual. The risk involved is to overlook the only thing which makes a church a church, the only thing which can attract, assimilate and sustain members in a church. This one thing is the gospel. To bring people in the church's front door and to keep the back door closed as well, the gospel is the tool. In the introduction to his book, Close the Back Door, Alan F. Harre assumes the same position:

When a congregation promotes membership on the basis of considerations like its success, the social class of its members, its clever programming, and a variety of other claims to fame, that congregation is communicating a gospel of cheap grace much more reminiscent of the way of the world and its standards than of the costly grace which undergirds the Gospel message. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984, p. 9)

So let us begin with the gospel message. It is this gospel message that Christ has commissioned the church to preach, these gospel words that we treasure as heirs of the Lutheran Reformation. In the Lutheran church, gospel words find perhaps their most prominent place in preaching, the forum in which these words are heard by the largest number of people on a regular basis.

### Preaching

The importance of good gospel preaching for bringing members into the church and keeping them there cannot be overemphasized.

God's people have a need for God's Word, and God's preachers have a responsibility to bring it to them. In the Wisconsin Synod, the art of sermon-making is very strong, especially when contrasted against the glut of dismal homiletics produced in other church bodies. Yet we as a synod and the preachers as individuals still and always have vast room for sermon improvement, both in content and delivery. In every sermon the gospel must stand out. Preaching must be contemporary, applying the gospel's power in a way pertinent to people living in late 20th-Century America. The way a sermon is delivered and just the personality which the preacher shows forth are also important.

Members tend to respond more positively to preaching if it comes from clergy who are judged to have genuine love and concern for the members of the parish. Such love and concern are manifested when the pastor knows everyone by name, is willing to minister to people in every condition of life, and lives his life in congruity with what he preaches. (Harre, p. 35)

More on the minister's personality and friendliness will be taken up later. For now suffice it to say that gospel words from a stale cookie tend to leave a bad taste in a person's mouth. The gospel is a message of joy. Let's proclaim it as such.

### Worship

The joy of the gospel exhibits itself not only in preaching, but in the whole of public worship. "Public worship should always be dignified, but it is unforgiveable to make it dull." (Harre, p. 35) Christians can easily be tempted to stay away from the Sunday service if it is mostly meaningless to them. It is our job to make it meaningful.

To honor God's Word properly, we will want to plan each

worship service carefully. Similarly, we will want to impress on each member his responsibility to honor the Word with his regular presence at worship and his fullest attention while there. Appendix A of this paper, entitled "Getting the Most Out of the Worship Service," is one tool to encourage members toward meaningful worship. It is in use by the elders of Christ the Lord Evangelical Lutheran Church, Houston, TX. Another helpful resource is the series of articles headed "In the Pew," written by Professor John Braun of Northwestern College and printed in several of the 1985 Northwestern Lutheran issues.

#### Christian Education

Christ not only commanded us to bring new members into his Body, but also to teach them everything he has taught us. With this in mind, it becomes evident that the assimilation of members is a process which never ends.

#### Cradle Roll & Sunday School

Assimilation begins already when new members are born into the congregation. Gospel teaching is for the children, too. Parents look to the church for help in bringing their youngsters up in the training and instruction of the Lord. This training as augmented by the church should begin with a good cradle roll program--(Northwestern Publishing House has an excellent one)--and continue with year-round Sunday school. Sunday school must never be looked upon as a lesser priority to worship or adult Bible class. It is impossible to develop a strong church without a strong Sunday school.

## Christian Elementary School

As expensive as they are, Christian elementary schools often form the backbone of a church. From an early age, children there learn to bring all things under the Lordship of Christ and not to be influenced by human-centered philosophies. Not only this, but in the assimilation process, a school brings children together into lasting relationships and acquaints parents more quickly and thoroughly than could have been done otherwise.

## Catechism Class

The Bible truths learned in Sunday school and Christian day school are woven together and applied in instruction from the catechism. This is a vital step in training disciples. Catechism class needs to be alive and practical for the children, for we hope and pray that the sound doctrine learned in the catechism classroom will stick with them in life so they remain true to the faith to the end.

## Adult Instruction

A good share of new members, (and perhaps the ones you expected this paper to focus on), first come into the church by means of basic Bible instruction. When you consider that most of our communicant members have received instruction in the church for ten years before confirmation, the twenty or so weeks of an adult instruction course appear quite short. The point is this: "Don't rush your adult class in order to get them counted as members right away." (Huebner, p. 14) Bring the people to a clear understanding of Christ's teachings; help them to develop new Christian attitudes of selflessness and love; encourage them to acquire new Christian habits such as regular Bible reading,

family devotions and weekly church attendance. Lead them to a realization that when they become church members, they are not at the finish line but only the start. If you do so, your new members will hopefully share the sentiments of Manuel Vega, Jr., convert and now elder at Gethsemane Church, Corpus Christi, TX:

Even as a new convert and member the gospel made me as much a part of this church as the oldest member was. I felt this way because I had been taught that I was a part of the body of Christ, the church. And as part of the body of Christ, we are all equally important. To me it simply meant--my Christ, my church.  
(Manuel Vega, Jr., Integrating New Members Into the Church, Essay delivered to the Pastor-Delegate Conference of WELS South-Central District, January 24, 1985, p. 2)

One practical way to cultivate this feeling, a way which helped Mr. Vega, is to include established members in the adult instruction classes as a sort of welcoming committee for the newcomers. They will grow in their own faith by reviewing the basics of Christian doctrine, and they will make the transition from newcomer to member much easier for the confirmands of the class.

#### Bible Class & Bible Study Groups

Study of the gospel Word does not end at confirmation. God's children love his Word and continue in it all their lives. Year-round Bible class at church is a big factor in keeping members interested in the Word. Productive Bible study must have a purpose. "Somehow, just 'learning about the Bible' doesn't excite most of us, and that's good. It shouldn't. For studying the Bible isn't an end. It's a means." (Lawrence O. Richards, Creative Bible Study, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1971, p. 17)



Let us have the end or purpose of Bible study be a closer relationship with God and a closer relationship with fellow children of God. Sunday Bible class is useful for this. A special class as a follow-up to the adult instruction course may also be helpful to keep new Christians active and growing in the Word. Pastor Jim Huebner of Grace Church, Milwaukee, WI, offers a Bible survey course to each graduating class after adult instruction. To date, only one person has ever turned him down. A sample of one of his lessons is attached as Appendix B.

Another method of Bible study to increase faith and fellowship is that of the small prayer group meeting in homes or at the church. Gethsemane of Corpus Christi uses such a system to attract both non-members and members in an informal setting. Trained lay leaders conduct the meetings, which combine Bible study, fellowship and prayer. The special value of prayer groups in assimilating new members is that the studies can be started up frequently with flexible time schedules and duration. Prayer groups give the new member and opportunity to get immediately involved with other members of the congregation and to remain in contact with the words of life, the gospel words that make church membership worthwhile.

### Spiritual Shepherding

I have written at length about the corporate use of the gospel to assimilate members. I emphasize this so strongly because this is where assimilation has its roots. Every congregation is assimilating members if the gospel words are preached and taught to all.

Before I go on to the next major point of gospel actions, something should be said about the use of gospel words on a one-to-one basis in spiritual shepherding. People have needs and problems that often cannot be met or discussed in a group, as well as ideas and suggestions they are afraid to raise except in private conversation. To build up the fellowship of the church, a spiritual shepherding plan is essential. One such plan is included in Professor David Valleskey's notes on The Theology and Practice of Evangelism, pages 120-122 (available from the Seminary Mimeograph Company).

Perhaps the greatest need for personal visits by representatives of the church is during the individual's first several months of membership. Here a program which assigns sponsors for each new member could be extremely beneficial. A summary of a sponsor plan in use at Garden Homes Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI, appears at the end of this paper as Appendix C.

### Gospel Actions

The primary motivation for initial and continued affiliation in the church is commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gospel words meet people's needs. Yet words that are not also reflected in action are hollow. (See, for example, St. James' epistle, 2:15f.) Gospel words need to be backed up with gospel actions. The gospel is a message of joy, of invitation and acceptance. Gospel actions make this joy evident with open-arms acceptance of all members. "Religion is light and warmth, not gloom and ice." (Andrew W. Blackwood, Evangelism in the Home

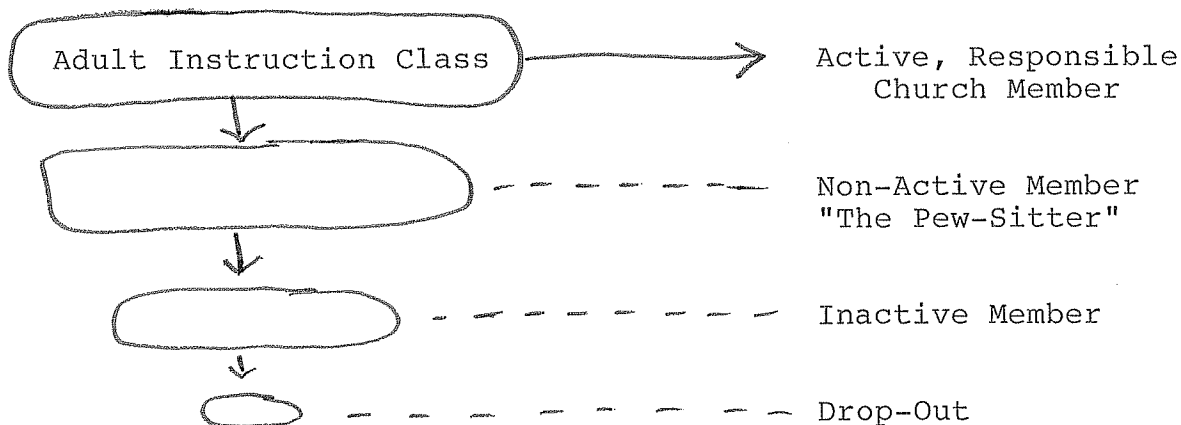
Church, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942, p. 143) "If you get right down to it, that is what the gospel of Christ teaches--to be friendly to each other. In truth, an unfriendly congregation is not giving a true representation of the gospel of Jesus Christ." (Vega, p. 1)

How does a congregation put the gospel into action to show friendliness and warmth? Any answer to that question will only be able to share methods, not the infectious spirit of gospel joy. Still, having a plan is helpful to get started and to keep the gospel-assimilation process going. Assimilation is a process--not short term, but long term; and applies to all members, not just the newcomers. For the fibre of the church to grow ever stronger, members old and new, old and young need to be continuously integrated with one another to build a fellowship of the whole church, not just parts. So let's look at some practical ways by which to assimilate each type of member in the congregation.

#### Adult Confirmands

Our first thoughts of assimilation are generally directed toward the member who enters the church by adult confirmation or profession of a common faith. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome can strike at any time if the babe in the faith is not always held close by watchful parents. (I must credit Evangelism's Executive Secretary Paul Kelm with that phrase, in Tell, vol. 6, #2, p. 4.) As has been said by Russell Bow, "Integrity of membership requires live births--dead babies don't grow. It requires spiritual nurture--abandoned babies soon die." (Oscar E. Feucht,

Everyone A Minister, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974, p. 29) New confirmands will usually take one of two paths represented on this chart:



What can be done to put newly confirmed adults on the right path? First of all, provide a meaningful entrance into the congregation, as suggested in Prof. Valleskey's notes on evangelism (p. 114). The notes suggest a special worship service, posting of new member photos, a newsletter article, a new member dinner and in-home visits using sponsors. I have just a few comments to add in some of these areas.

Photographs: At Holy Word Lutheran Church in Austin, TX, there is a large bulletin board featuring pictures of all the members. One of their members explained, "It's easy for the old members to recognize the few new people. It's much harder for the new folks to recognize and remember all the faces they meet. So we keep current pictures of everyone posted." I consider this a great idea if at all feasible in your congregation.

New Member Dinner: A possible element to include with such a meal is for some established member(s) to share an informal

history of the congregation, using slides and photographs along with some humorous anecdotes from the past.

In-Home Visits: Some sort of plan for visiting members is, in my estimation, the most important of all assimilation methods. Earlier I spoke of shepherding and sponsors. I will not do so again here, other than to say it would be wise to use members who attended the adult instruction course as sponsors for new members produced from that class.

At this point I want to specifically key in on the New Member Call--a visit to be made by the pastor or elder assigned to the new family, which acquaints them with the purpose and procedures of the congregation. An outline for such an initial call used by Christ the Lord, Houston, is attached (Appendix D). The same congregation is beginning to put into use a slide presentation on rear-screen projector to accomplish the same purpose. The script of this presentation appears as Appendix E. (Incidentally, Appendix E is the one appendix to this paper for which this author can take credit.) This initial call on the new members is to be made before the Sunday on which they are received as members in the worship service. At this time each new member is also given a new member packet, which at Christ the Lord includes: Applications for membership; stewardship talent questionnaire; church constitution and officers' manual; information on the Mary/Martha Guild; pictorial membership directory and telephone directory; "Getting the Most Out of the Worship Service" (cf. Appendix A); statement on close communion excerpted from Armin Schuetze's Guidance from God's Word; an insert on the stewardship of money; a plan for daily Bible reading; This We

Believe; and order blanks for Northwestern Lutheran and Meditations subscriptions.

### Members by Transfer

I see no difference in the need or methods for assimilating transferred members than for the new adult confirmand. The only real difference is that a transfer comes in with previous experience. Because of this strength of transferred members, here I cite the importance of involving the member in some role or task soon after he or she joins the church. (This will be true for all members, but I have to arbitrarily divide my material somehow!)

One does not become a good member of the organization by joining it any more than he becomes a good husband by getting married. (Huebner, p. 3)

Assimilated members are involved members. "There is a reservoir of hidden talent in every church, waiting to be tapped." (David S. King, No Church is an Island, New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1980, p. 41) The only way to discover and use this talent is to ask. A sample talent survey is included in the Valleskey evangelism notes, pp. 128,129. Two other sample talent surveys are attached, from Christ the Lord, Houston (Appendix F) and from St. Mark's, Watertown, WI (Appendix G).

### Youth Confirmands

The concept of member assimilation is most commonly applied to new converts and, to a lesser degree, new members by transfer. If we let assimilation end there, we have missed the mark. Perhaps the most important group to assimilate--since it represents the largest group coming in the front door and the largest per-

centage going out the back door--are the youth confirmands. The church drop-out rate is highest during the teen years, estimated at 15.5%. (Harre, p. 17) The youth confirmands will be the core group of tomorrow's church. Failing to assimilate them would be a tragic mistake.

Assimilating teenage members involves the same basic principles as any other new communicant members. Meaningful worship and preaching are especially important to youth. If they don't like the service, they just plain won't come. A special Bible study group only for youth can be more poignant for them than the Sunday morning adult class, simply because most teenagers will be hesitant to speak up in a roomful of adults. St. Mark's of Green Bay, WI, is one example of a congregation that runs a youth Bible class at the same time as the adult class on Sunday mornings. There the vicar teaches it. In other situations one or more of the elders (on a rotating basis in the latter case) or any capable adult member could be trained to lead the class.

Getting youth involved in service roles and tasks within the congregation is important, too. What they may lack in mature responsibility they make up for in youthful energy. St. Mark's, Watertown, uses teenage boys as ushers with one adult as the head usher for each worship service. Special projects like banner-making, painting or vacation Bible school crafts can be excellent opportunities to use the talents and enthusiasm of youth.

An active, Christ-centered youth group is also a good tool to keep young people active in the Word and in fellowship with Christian friends. Such a group can also provide opportunities

for fellowship with the adults of the congregation. The youth group of Christ the Lord, Houston, often has joint activities with the adult singles organization there. I won't bring singles up under a separate heading in this paper, but they deserve special attention for their unique needs as much as do the youth. Yet though both merit special groups of their own, both also need to find a comfortable relationship with the whole of the congregation. At Christ the Lord, all adult members are frequently invited to participate in activities and outings of both groups. I will always call to mind one outing in particular which epitomized good group assimilation. Twenty-five people, including youth, singles, married, an older widow and several non-members went inner-tubing down the Guadalupe River near New Braunfels, TX. A good time was had by all on this all day excursion--even the widow who took a bruising spill over a set of rapids! More importantly, a varied group of people grew much closer to one another as a result--assimilated with one another, if you will.

### Children

Already before confirmation the assimilation process begins. Christian day school children feel quite at home in the church, but the others often feel left out. If your church has an elementary school, be sure to include both day school and non-day school children in the Sunday school program. I remember from my own childhood at St. Mark's, Watertown, how we day school kids thought the Sunday schoolers were all wingnuts (though we didn't use that phrase in those days), and mocked them annually when they joined with us in the Christmas Eve service. That's hardly



in keeping with the spirit of the gospel. Gospel assimilation calls for even children to be friendly to one another. For kids, this has to start by getting to know each other. In addition to whole-congregation Sunday school, Lutheran Pioneers and regular whole-family events (church picnics, sports & games festivals, family talent nights, etc.) may help to build friendship bonds between the church's children.

Children can also profit from a special worship service on their level, using simple songs and object lessons. I don't recommend using part of the worship service time for this, as some churches do. Better would be to have children's worship for the opening 15 minutes of Sunday school. This may require adding some length to your Sunday school hour, but I believe it's worth it.

#### Established Members

It is easy to forget that every member of the church, no matter how long-standing, is still in the process of assimilation. Established members may be further along the line, but there is always room to grow. Established members are integrated in reverse when they get to know the new members by serving as sponsors, greeters, etc. But in most churches it is not only the new members whom the old members don't know. Often they don't know the other long-standing members, or at least not all of them. One way to get established members acquainted with one another is through cottage meetings. For the 1985 spring stewardship program at Christ the Lord, a slide presentation was prepared to show at small meetings in members' homes. The stewardship board asked for volunteers to host the meetings. Then

the board decided who would be invited to attend each cottage gathering. They made sure that every invitee knew at least one other person there, but would make several new acquaintances that evening as well. Cottage meetings work very successfully for a stewardship program; you may find other contexts for them also.

#### Difficult Members to Assimilate

Unchangeable circumstances make some members very difficult to assimilate into a close fellowship in the church. An obvious type which comes to mind is the non-resident. For this member living out of town or overseas, or for those away at school, a constant flow of information is about the only link they have with the church. Better than just mailing them newsletters, though, is in addition to remember them on special days (birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas) with greeting cards, and also for the pastor and friends within the church to occasionally telephone them. Mailing cassette tapes of Sunday services is usually much appreciated, too. Two cassettes can hold four weeks worth of worship services and can be mailed quite cheaply under 4th Class postal rates for sound recordings. Be sure if you mail out tapes that they are clearly labelled and accompanying service bulletins are also sent, so the recipients can easily follow along with the services. A rotating tape ministry of this kind provides an additional side-benefit--it creates a task to involve other members in service to the church.

Shut-ins are often ignored as far as assimilation is concerned. They are under the pastoral care of the minister, but that's about as far as their connection to the congregation goes.

Why not involve members of the church who can get around in a caring ministry of visiting those who are confined to their homes? Christ the Lord of Houston had one shut-in during my experience there: a gentleman by the name of Richard Dudas. A small group of choir members would accompany me to his home on special occasions--birthday or holidays--and we would have mini-worship services in his home, complete with four-part choral singing. (The idea to start this came from the pastor's wife, Ruth Glaeske.) These loving people sang "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" for Mr. Dudas in his hospital room on Easter weekend . . . two days before he died.

Similar in some ways to shut-ins, the handicapped require our special attention. If you build a new church, wheelchair access will be mandatory. If you go to an old church, urge the church council to provide wheelchair access. When extending dinner invitations or at congregational pot-lucks, don't forget the handicapped who really can't get out much on their own.

In Luke 14, Jesus taught that true hospitality was extended as an act of mercy, not for personal reward or promotion. So he challenged us to invite the poor, crippled, lame, blind to our parties--not our friends, relatives and the influential people around us.  
(Bruce A. Rowlison, Creative Hospitality as a Means of Evangelism, Alhambra, CA: Green Leaf Press, 1981, pp. 17,18)

The WELS Special Ministries Board has valuable materials for reaching the handicapped and nourishing them in the gospel. Currently Special Ministries is making an urgent plea for more concern to be given to the deaf. SMB will subsidize someone in your congregation to train as a signer. If this does not seem feasible, try advertising and making available copies of your

sermon manuscript (assuming you write one). You may get some takers. If your church can reach out to one deaf person, odds are that you will have several deaf worshippers in a hurry. Word of mouth--or should I say "word of hand"--travels fast.

### Closing Comments

I have attempted to cover every aspect of member assimilation that I could dream of . . . perhaps too big a chunk to chew. The added length of this paper and the references to methods employed by existing churches are intended to give the reader resources for his own ministry. I hope what you've read will be of help to you in at least one area of assimilation which has been discussed. Before I close, I have just two further comments.

The first has to do with the role of the pastor in gospel assimilation. As with most congregational matters, the pastor is the greatest single influence. His personality, his warmth and enthusiasm will rub off on the congregation. The flipside, of course, is that a dull and disinterested pastor will reproduce those attitudes in his church. Remember that our Lord was not dull or disinterested during his time here on earth. "People were so comfortable with Jesus they wanted him at their parties." (Jerry Cook, "Less Pressure, More Loving," Leadership, vol. 2-Spring 1984-p. 16) Jesus' compelling love for souls was evident to all. As pastors, let's try to follow his model.

Secondly, a word is in order about self-evaluation of an assimilation program. You will find an assimilation self-study as the final attachment to this paper, Appendix H. The input for this assimilation self-study, appropriately enough, comes not

only from the elders or church council, but from all members, new and old, by means of surveys. You may find it helpful.

In closing I only wish to reemphasize the gospel emphasis that all of our words and actions must take in the assimilation process. Any assimilation which is not gospel assimilation is not of God, and thus counter-productive. In our words and our actions toward every member, let's always and only seek to fulfill the words of St. John the Apostle:

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

- 1 John 1:3

Getting the Most Out of Worship Services  
or  
Spiritual Growth at the Lords House

Spiritual growth is an important aspect in your personal life. Your attendance at worship at Christ the Lord has one primary purpose- to provide you an opportunity for spiritual growth. Are you using that opportunity to it's fullest? Do you sometimes leave church feeling good and happy to see your friends, but only later realize you don't remember the message that God sent to you that day through the preaching of the Pastor?

We all feel that way from time to time. But how do we change all that? How do we get the most out of Gods message on any given Sunday? Well, it takes some work on our part. It takes getting to church on time, getting into the chapel early to allow yourself time to wind down from the runaround of daily life, and getting prepared to hear God's Word. It's something like going on a vacation. You can just pick-up and go on vacation and have a good time. But, when you plan it out and make good preparation, you really have a memorable time. The same thing goes for church. When you put in the time and effort to prepare properly, you get so much more out of it. Here are some ideas to help you prepare;

-Arrive early enough to visit with your friends and say hello and still have time to get into the chapel 5 or 10 minutes before the service starts. The organist is there playing an interlude to make this a quiet time for everyone to unwind and begin to prepare to hear God's word.

-Start with prayer. Ask your Lord and Savior for his help and guidance in what you are about to hear. He has told us where two or three are gathered together in his name he is there also. Talk with him and seek his guiding hand. The bulletin has a suitable prayer at the top of the first page each week and makes it easy to get off to a good start. The first page of the hymnal also has suitable prayers.

-Read the bulletin. Read through the descriptive write-ups on the old testament lesson, Epistle and Gospel. Each are written to give you a greater understanding of God's message and makes the words of the Bible text read during the service have greater meaning.

-Get your hymnal ready. Find and mark the pages where the liturgy begins. If the bulletin indicates a psalm for responsive reading, look it up and mark it. If there is time read through the psalm to get some idea of what the psalm writer is speaking about. Some people like to follow along through the propers as they are read during the service. Their page is also listed in the bulletin and can easily be marked for quick reference. The propers vary with the church year and carry a theme for the worship service. Look up the hymns. Reading through them gives you some idea of their subject and how they fit into the theme of the service.

-Read and study the sermon outline. The title of the sermon is printed in the bulletin along with a brief outline. By studying the outline you will have the skeleton of God's message in your mind and as the sermon is delivered the life giving message will begin to take on form and even greater meaning.

-If its a communion sunday, make final preparation to receive the sacrament. Psalm 51 on page 134 in the hymnal is a good guide to use in preparation for the sacrament. Also many of the hymnals have "The Christian Questions" glued inside the front cover. Their use should become a regular part of your preparation for the Lords Supper.

Notice the news and calendar items in the bulletin follow the items we have been talking about. That's because, while they are of interest to many, they are of secondary importance to getting ready to hear God's word. If you don't have time to read them before the service begins, there will be time to catch up on them after the service is over.

Following preparation, execution is the next most important aspect of getting the most out of the service. It is our intent to make the service as edifying as possible for everyone, that's why we ask that talking and other activities of distraction be kept to a minimum. There are two major reasons. Out of respect for God's house and so that our conduct is not a distraction to others who are trying to hear, study, and learn from this time in God's house. That is why our choir sits in the back of the chapel. So that we can concentrate on their message without the distraction of seeing who is singing which part. Likewise, when we enter the chapel, talking should be subdued and standing in the back of the chapel to talk with others should only take place after the service.

There is another area of execution that's important: Concentration. Researchers tell us that it takes about 10% of our brain capacity to process the information we receive through hearing. That leaves 90% to do other stuff and still be able to understand what is being said. Our nature is to use that 90% to think about home, work, the whole list of things you have to do whenever there is time, and a whole multitude of other things. The trick is to focus as much of that 90% as you can on hearing and understanding what is said. That's tough, but honestly, it is worth it. Try looking right past that fly on the head of the person in front of you. Force yourself to not look at every little movement within your field of vision. Focus your eyesight, your hearing, and as much of your mental capacity on the pastor and the hymnal and fully process every word. When you get so you can do that, then you have good execution. Someone explained this process as imagining your looking at the preacher through one of those cardboard tubes that wrapping paper comes on. All other distractions are blocked out by the tube and your total attention is on the face of God's messenger speaking God's word. Sometimes closing your eyes during prayer helps to block our distraction and focus your attention on the words. Following word for word in the hymnal may likewise be helpful.

Beyond preparation and execution there is only one other area. Conduct. If you conduct yourself in a manner that eliminates distractions for others, it will also eliminate a source of distraction for you. Comfortable clothing and making stops at the restroom and drinking fountain before the service are usually helpful. This is especially true for the youngsters.

For those with children some other points for consideration are worth review. These are presented in a companion paper "How Youngsters Can Get The Most Out of The Worship Service". We trust these ideas and suggestions will be received in the spirit they are given, as an opportunity to learn and grow from the life giving word we seek every Sunday. May your understanding of God's message be ever greater and your spirituality continue to grow.

Your Brothers in Christ,  
The Elders of Christ the Lord Ev. Church

GRACE EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH  
BIBLE STUDY

Unit IV, Lesson 2 - Paul's 3rd journey; 1 & 2 Corinthians

PAUL'S 1st JOURNEY (Ac 13-14) - about 1½ yrs, 45-47 AD  
(a horseshoe trip into Asia Minor)

PAUL'S 2nd JOURNEY (Ac 15:36-18:22) - nearly 3 yrs. with 1½ yrs. at Corinth, 49-52 AD  
(through Asia Minor and a loop around Aegean Sea)

PAUL'S 3rd JOURNEY (Ac 18:23-21:16) - nearly 4 yrs. with 2 yrs. at Ephesus, 53-57 AD  
(through Asia Minor and a horseshoe trip around Aegean Sea):

Paul and companions set out from Antioch in Syria; Galatia and Phrygia; Ephesus (stayed a little over 2 yrs.) - *1 Corinthians* written; through Macedonia - *2 Corinthians* written; Greece (probably at Corinth for 3 months) - *Romans & Galatians* written; back through Macedonia; Philippi; Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Miletus; Cos, Rhodes, Patara, past Cyprus; Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, Jerusalem

1 Corinthians

2 Corinthians

From whom?

To whom?

When?

From where?

Why?

KEY PASSAGES 1 Cor 1:23; 2:13-14;  
10:12-13; 11:23-29;  
15:55-58; 16:2

2 Cor 5:18-21; 9:7; 13:14

Outline for 1 Corinthians -

"Solving Problems in a Christian Congregation"

- I. Unity vs. disunity, 1-4
- II. Order vs. disorder, 5-14
  - Christian discipline (5)
  - lawsuits (6)
  - marriage (7)
  - food (8-11)
  - worship (12-14)
- III. The resurrection vs. its denial, 15
- IV. Personal matters, 16

Outline for 2 Corinthians -

"A Defense of Paul's Ministry"  
the defense 1-7, 10-13  
(Christian giving, 8-9)

SOME QUESTIONS

1. Discuss a few areas of worship life on the basis of these statements (Agree/Disagree):
  - Excommunication is a fancy word for dropping someone from membership.
  - A person who is excommunicated will go to hell.
  - A Christian should not take another Christian to court.
2. Discuss the practice of close communion.
3. Is confirmation necessary?
4. What are the 4 main points of Christian stewardship? (see 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8-9)
5. Read 1 Cor 12:8-10; 28-31. Make a list of the gifts of the Spirit. Discuss the supernatural gifts of the Spirit: What are they? Do they occur today? Are some spiritual gifts more important than others? Does every Christian have some spiritual gift? Does the possession of certain spiritual gifts make some Christians more important than others?



## 2. The Sponsor System

- a. The sponsor system assigns an established, active family of the congregation to serve as "sponsor" for each new family coming into the church. The sponsor system will be part of the Deacon/Deaconess program's on-going work.
- b. Sponsors will be matched with newcomers according to age, size of family, occupation, personal interest and general social background. The best sponsors are those who "fit" the newcomers.
- c. Those serving as sponsors will be briefed so that they understand their responsibility. Basic, is a reasonable understanding of the entire program of integrating the new member. During the briefing period the sponsors will be provided with information regarding the organizations, their purposes and when they meet. They should also be given the statistics of the congregations' size, current programs, plans for the future, and any other data that may be of interest.
- d. The sponsors should meet the newcomers as soon as they have become members of the church. A date should be made to pay a personal call in the newcomer's home. If at all possible, the sponsor will be introduced to this family personally at church.
- e. On the first visit the sponsor will explain our congregation. At this meeting he should try to determine the particular talent which the new member might have. It would be best not merely to invite him to an organization's or voter's meeting but to offer to pick him up and attend the meeting with him. Usually one will feel more comfortable being at a meeting with a friend at his side.
- f. During the period of sponsorship the sponsor "looks out" for the newcomer assigned to him. If the newcomer is absent from church for two Sundays, a friendly telephone call or visit is in order. At organizational meetings or social get togethers the sponsor should see to it that the newcomer is not left standing off to one side like a lost sheep!"
- g. To make the visitation more purposeful the pastor may, in some cases, privately give information regarding the newcomer to the sponsor before a visit is made.

- h. Beware! The sponsor should make sure he is not hounding or snooping into the private life of the newcomer with his constant presence. Give the newcomer every opportunity to participate on his own initiative. A genuine love for the soul is vital. This will help to keep the relationship in its proper balance.
- i. The Deacon/ness will act as a newcomers sponsor for six months. During this time the efforts of the sponsor should gradually taper off. By the end of six months the newcomer should be an "old timer" - an integral part of the body of believers.
- j. The newcomers will now be the logical ones to use as sponsors. This, too, will help the problem of their own integration in the congregation. We will always try to keep our Deacon / Deaconess program growing.

NEW MEMBER CALL PROCEDURE

Items to be covered in a new member call are:

- 1) Acquaint the new member with the reception procedure;
- 2) Inform the new member how the congregation is structured;
- 3) Discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Elders to all the members;
- 4) Discuss the responsibilities of the new member to the church. Take along a constitution and organization chart, church officer's manual, enrollment form, Bible reading schedule, talent sheet, and directory.

I. Acquainting the new member with the reception procedure:

- A. New member should arrive early enough to check in with Pastor and an Elder.
- B. New member should try to sit near the aisle.
- C. Elder or usher on duty will escort the new member to front of chapel (in front of steps) during singing of last verse of the first hymn.
- D. Pastor will open service and proceed to recite the reception procedure and ask for the member's response.
- E. Elder or usher will motion the new member back to his seat at conclusion.

II. Congregational Structure (See organization chart)

A. The Church Council

1. Composed of the Board chairmen and Church officers—the Chairman of the congregation, the Vice-chairman of the congregation, the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, Head Usher, and Chairmen of any standing committee.

a. Church officers are elected to one year terms at the December voters' meeting.

2. The Church Council sees to it that the Boards are active and functioning properly.

B. The Boards

1. Presently consist of a chairman and 3 other members. The Chairman

is elected by outgoing Council in December from the newly elected board members. Exceptions are the Boards of Trustees and Elders which have a chairman and five other members.

- a. Trustees
- b. Stewardship
- c. Education
- d. Evangelism
- e. Elders (Discussed under III)

(Discuss from officer's manual)

2. Board members are elected for 2 year terms;  $\frac{1}{2}$  of each Board is elected each year in the December voters meeting.

### III. Duties of the Elders

- A. Elders are to concern themselves with the spiritual life of the congregation and every member thereof.
- B. Elders are to admonish members who are neglecting the Means of Grace.
- C. Elders are to see that Christian discipline is carried out (Briefly explain the Office of the Keys).
- D. Elders are to assist the Pastor in cultivating a spirit of harmony among the members.
- E. Elders are to visit new members and seek to bring them into the life and work of the congregation.
- F. Elders are to regularly visit the membership and make every effort to promote their spiritual growth. We encourage each member to ask "Are you growing spiritually". We encourage home devotions, Church and Bible Class Attendance.
- G. Elders are to constantly endeavor to improve the worship services so that they are meaningful and edifying.
- H. Elders are responsible for communing the Pastor.
- I. Elders are to assume primary concern for the temporal welfare of the called workers.
- J. Elders supervise, through reviewing minutes or whatever other means seem advisable, church sponsored groups such as the Mary-Martha Guild, etc.

NEW MEMBER CALL PROCEDURE

- K. Elders serve as the means through which non-voting members may get their input, suggestions, and criticisms before the voters assembly.
- L. Elders assist the Pastor in making calls and in any other appropriate activities.
- M. Elders prepare the Sacramental elements for Baptism and Communion and see that they are Scripturally administered.
  - 1. The common cup is used the second Sunday of the month, individual glasses the fourth Sunday of the month.
  - 2. Members are asked to announce by signing the communion register, a week in advance if possible.
  - 3. A list of Christian questions is inside the front flap of the hymnal for use in self examination. Several Psalms are also in the forepart of the hymnal. We suggest Psalm 51.
  - 4. Elders screen eligible participants.
    - a. Communicants line up behind the usher and take their cues from him. (the first person to the rail is the last person to leave)
    - b. If common cup is being used, communicants can assist the Pastor by placing a finger or two beneath the cup and guiding it to the mouth.
  - 5. WELS practices close communion. We ask that members explain this practice to friends and relatives who might visit with them on a communion Sunday if the visitor is not of our confession. Pastor and Elders will be glad to assist in such explanation if requested. Those in fellowship with us desiring guest privileges should speak to the Pastor or an Elder before the service.

IV. Responsibilities of members to the church

- A. As fruit of the faith God has worked in our hearts and as a response to the love He has shown us, we gladly and willingly divert our first fruits of time, talent, and treasure back to Him who gave them.
  - 1. Time: particularly to partake of the means of grace. We stress regular home Bible study and devotions, regular attendance at church, Bible class, Sunday school, and regular participation in the Lord's Supper.
  - 2. Talent: We all are given one or more specialized talents which God intends for us to use to the glory of His name. Consideration should be given to serving on a Board or contributing effort in some other facet of church work as a satellite to existing Board functions. (See talent sheet and run through the Activity list).

NEW MEMBER CALL PROCEDURE

3. Treasure: We support the church with our money, as God has prospered us, with a cheerful spirit, so that the Kingdom may grow and prosper. Envelopes will be supplied for your use. If you use them the Financial Secretary will keep track of your giving for tax purposes.

APPENDIX "A" - Fellowship Groups and list of opportunities to serve.

APPENDIX "A"

1. Boy Pioneers (WELS alternative to scouting)
2. Girl Pioneers (WELS alternative to scouting)
3. Mary-Martha Guild (all adult female members are members of this guild)
4. Anchor (Young adult singles group)
5. Choir
6. Cleaning the facilities
7. Mowing
8. Participation in workdays
9. Service on Boards
10. Service as a church officer
11. Teach Sunday School
12. Volunteer work at the school

Board of EldersAudio-Visual New Member Call

## Second Revision

[BRACKETED PHRASES INDICATE THE ACCOMPANYING VISUAL FOR EACH SCRIPT PORTION]  
 \* Indicates the slide or negative is available from an existing source

1. [Pastor Glaeske standing in front of church doors]

Welcome! As your pastor and on behalf of the entire congregation of Christ the Lord Evangelical Lutheran Church, I express our joy that you have come into our midst.

2. [New member being received into membership--shaking Pastor's hand]

I'm sure that you also are very happy that you are becoming a member of our Christian congregation, knowing the many blessings which the Lord gives through active membership in his church.

3. [Cartoon character with question bubble]

Yet, you may still be full of questions as to all of the things which membership might involve.

4. [Pastor at desk \* Evangelism]

I hope this presentation will answer your questions and calm any misgivings you might have. If you still have questions or problems now or in the future, speak with your elder or myself, the pastor.

5. [Congregation mingling outside church \* Mierendorf]

Perhaps the best place to begin is to share with you some of the history of Christ the Lord Evangelical Lutheran Church.

6. [Hwy 59 Freeway sign showing mileage to Houston or a Houston exit]

This congregation began as a mission in 1965, when I was serving a church in Edna, Texas, and was asked to begin exploratory work here in Houston.

7. [Ramada Inn]

The first worship service in Houston was held at the Ramada Inn on the Gulf Freeway on July 24, 1966, with 27 people in attendance.

8. [Houston skyline \* Evangelism]

The Lord blessed the work in Houston greatly, enabling Christ the Lord to grow and to found five other congregations in the surrounding area.

9. [Members gathered outside church \* Mierendorf]

Today Christ the Lord Evangelical Lutheran Church has over 200 communicant members and operates a Christian Day School for Grades Kindergarten through 8.

10. [Congregation at worship \* Mierendorf]

As a group of believers who gather together to worship the Lord, we recognize Christ Jesus as the real head of our church.

11. [Church sign \* Evangelism]

In fact, this attitude is reflected in the name we have chosen for our congregation: Christ the Lord.

12. [Christ with outstretched arms over people \* Stewardship]

As St. Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:23, "Christ is the Head of the Church, his body, of which he is the Savior."



## 13. [Globe or world map]

As the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus has given us a Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations . . ."

## 14. [Infant baptism \* Check some of our families]

. . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, . . .

## 15. [Doctrine Class]

. . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

## 16. [Organizational Chart done up in color graphics]

In order to carry out Christ's Commission, we have set up an organizational structure for operating our church. To be effective in spreading and teaching the Gospel, we must work in an organized manner, . . .

## 17. [Bible open to 1 Corinthians]

. . . even as the Lord says, "Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor 14:40).

## 18. [Science text picture of human anatomy]

As each part of our bodies has a separate function, so each part of the church--the body of Christ--has distinct functions and responsibilities.

## 19. [Voters' Assembly]

Under the leadership of Christ and following the guidelines of his teaching, the decisions of the congregation are made by the voters' assembly--all of the adult males of the congregation.

## 20. [Husband and wife arm in arm]

We believe, as Scripture teaches, that God created man and woman as equals, but serving in different roles. Already at creation God assigned to the man the responsibility of decision-making.

## 21. [Highlight 1 Timothy 2:12]

This is why St. Paul wrote to the pastor Timothy, "I do not permit a woman to have authority over a man."

## 22. [Family discussion at home]

We follow God's design when we allow the men to make decisions in the interests of the whole congregation. The head of each household will discuss important decisions of the Voters' Assembly with his wife and family, so that their home is represented as a unit.

## 23. [Elder visiting single woman]

Single women within the congregation may voice their opinions through the elders, who then represent them at the Voters' Meetings.

## 24. [George Vorpagel posting minutes]

Minutes of all Voters' Meetings are posted at church, so that everyone can be kept up to date on the decisions of the congregation.

## 25. [Pastor preaching from pulpit \* Stewardship]

Through the Voters, the congregation calls a pastor to serve them by instructing them in the Word of God . . .

## 26. [Split screen - Baptism / Communion]

. . . administering the Sacraments . . .

## 27. [Pastor in counseling session]

. . . and counseling them according to the principles of God's Word.

28. [Several of elders in discussion in Pastor's office]

The pastor also serves as an advisor to the various congregational boards as they go about the Lord's work.

29. [Classroom activity]

To operate our Christian Day School, the congregation calls a staff of synodically certified teachers, to teach our children in all subjects according to the principle: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps 111:10).

30. [Picture of Vicar \_\_\_\_\_]

The congregation also calls a vicar, who is a student pastor serving a year of internship. He assists the pastor in the various functions of the ministry.

31. [Color graphic of organizational chart]

Out of the Voters' Assembly, church officers and board members are elected to plan and supervise the work of the congregation.

32. [Church Council meeting]

The officers and the chairmen of each board comprise the Church Council, which is responsible for organizing and administering the activities of the congregation in accordance with the desires of the Voters.

33. [Color graphic - "Officers" portion of organizational chart]

The church officers are the President and Vice-President of the congregation, the Recording Secretary, Head Usher, Treasurer and Financial Secretary.

34. [List of the 5 Boards]

The five boards which are active at Christ the Lord are the board of Trustees, the Board of Evangelism, Board of Education, Board of Stewardship and the Board of Elders. We will next take a brief look at each board's duties and how they are carried out.

#### BREAK FOR INTERMISSION

35. [BOARD OF TRUSTEES headline with several policies and documents.]

The Board of Trustees, along with the President, is entrusted with the church corporation and represents the congregation in all legal documents and proceedings.

36. [Lawnmowing]

The Trustees are also responsible for the physical property of the congregation, all equipment and upkeep. To do this, the Trustees enlist the help of all members of the congregation in regular lawnmowing and cleaning . . .

37. [Work Day activity]

. . . as well as occasional "Work Days," where everyone pitches in to help beautify and maintain our property.

38. [BOARD OF EVANGELISM headline with clip-art logo]

Next we come to the Board of Evangelism.

39. [More evangelism clip-art]

All Christians have the responsibility and desire to "evangelize"--that is, to share the Good News of Christ as our Savior. As St. Peter exclaimed, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard!" (Acts 4:20)

40. [Evangelism tracts]

The role of the Evangelism Board is to organize our congregation as witnesses for Christ, providing the training, opportunities, and materials they need in order to be effective in reaching out to our community.

41. [BOARD OF EDUCATION headline with sketch of desk and schoolbooks]

At Christ the Lord, the Board of Education supervises Christian instruction, particularly of the children, by operating a Christian Day School, Sunday School, and in the summertime, Vacation Bible School.

42. [Children on playground \* Mierendorf]

The Christian Day School, grades Kindergarten through 8, charges no tuition. It is fully supported by the congregation as a part of the regular Sunday offerings.

43. [Mr. Pappenfuss - in action]

The current faculty at Christ the Lord Christian Day School consists of the principal, Mr. Paul Pappenfuss, who teaches grades 6-8 . . .

44. [Miss Bock]

. . . Miss Suzanne Bock, teaching grades 3-5 . . .

45. [Mrs. Wilson]

. . . Mrs. Diane Wilson, teaching grades 1 & 2 . . .

46. [Mrs. Glaeske]

. . . and the kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Ruth Glaeske.

47. [Vicar \_\_\_\_\_]

Vicar \_\_\_\_\_ teaches Word of God in the 5th & 6th grades.

48. [Pastor Glaeske in Catechism class]

. . . and I teach the Word of God according to Luther's Catechism in the 7th & 8th grades.

49. [VBS Sign]

The Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs give instruction in God's Word to children in the congregation, and are mission arms which reach out with the Gospel to children of our community as well.

50. [BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP headline with clip-art from A-V program]

The Bible refers to each of us as a steward, or manager. Christ the Lord has a Stewardship Board to encourage our members to be faithful managers of their whole life under Christ.

51. [Stewardship clip art or bulletin art or someone in work of service]

Scripture encourages us to this end: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10).

52. [BOARD OF ELDERS headline over Bible and communion elements drawing]

The fifth and final board is the Board of Elders.

53. [Elders meeting \* Mierendorf]

The Board of Elders cares for the spiritual needs of the congregation, working together closely with the pastor and vicar.

54. [Elder in-home visit]

Each elder takes personal responsibility for the spiritual well-being of a portion of the membership. Since you are becoming a member, an elder will be assigned to you to look after your spiritual needs.

55. [Elder preparing communion elements]

The Elders have the responsibility to prepare the elements and usher for the celebration of the Lord's Supper growth for all members.

## 56. [Communion distribution]

Our practice in regard to this sacrament is called "close communion." This means that those who commune together are in close fellowship with one another, agreeing on all doctrines of the Scriptures which God has given us.

## 57. [Last Supper painting]

Scripture fully supports this position. St. Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth concerning unity of doctrine and the Lord's Supper,

## 58. [Highlight Scripture passage -1 Corinthians 10:16-17]

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf" (1 Cor 10:16-17).

## 59. [WELS synod seal]

In keeping with this Scriptural practice of Holy Communion, we celebrate the Lord's Supper with those who confess full agreement with us on all the doctrines of Scripture. This would naturally include all members of our congregation and of sister congregations within our fellowship.

## 60. [Usher pointing people to altar]

In receiving the Lord's Supper for the first time in our worship, please follow the direction of the ushers.

## 61. [Pastor giving benediction]

The elders urge all members to make full and regular use of the Means of Grace offered through the church in the spoken Word of God and in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The elders will voice their concern and admonish anyone who willfully neglects these ways in which God pours out his forgiveness on us.

## 62. [Drawing of outstretched hand]

The elders take primary responsibility for showing the love of the congregation by trying to win back those who are in danger of falling away from Christ.

## 63. [Drawing or photo of skyscraper suicide jump]

Just as we wouldn't let a loved one jump out of a window to his death, we cannot let a fellow Christian turn away from God and leap into sure destruction.

## 64. [Pastor at desk \* Evangelism]

We have seen how the church's mission of gaining and training disciples is carried out at Christ the Lord under the direction of 5 supervisory boards, making it an effective and unified effort. After a short break, we will look at some of the opportunities for service to the Lord and fellowship with each other which are available for you and all members of Christ the Lord Lutheran.

BREAK FOR INTERMISSION

## 65. [The Lutheran Hymnal]

There is a familiar hymn verse which reads:

## 66. [Hymn 400]

"Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise."

## 67. [Jesus calling disciples to be fishers of men]

Certainly we all want to give our hearts and lives to the Lord in praise and service. How can we give ourselves to the Lord totally when we aren't full-time servants in his church?

## 68. [Ushers taking offering]

One way of serving the Lord is through financial support of the church.

## 69. [Pastor placing full collection plates on altar]

Our offerings are a vivid illustration to acknowledge that "every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17).

## 70. [Box of envelopes with some pulled out for display]

Envelopes are issued to all congregation members so you can make plans for regular giving to God's kingdom work. The financial secretary will be issuing envelopes to you shortly.

## 71. [Quarterly offering statement]

If you use the envelopes, the financial secretary will record all your gifts and give you quarterly statements for income tax purposes.

## 72. [Money \* Stewardship]

But money is not the only thing we can give to help God's kingdom. We can also give of our time.

## 73. [Clock]

There is an old saying which goes, "If you can't take time, make time." If the Lord truly holds the first position of importance in our lives, we will always include Sunday worship, family devotions, and works of service to the church in our schedules.

## 74. [Sunday School Classroom - female teacher]

Within the congregation there are any number of ways you can serve the Lord. The range of opportunities includes teaching children the praises of God in Sunday School or Vacation Bible School;

## 75. [Cleaners at work vacuuming]

General cleaning, lawnmowing and upkeep to make the house of the Lord beautiful to look at;

## 76. [Ushers handing out bulletins]

Serving as an usher to help in conducting our worship services;

## 77. [Cry room]

Babysitting in the nursery during Sunday morning Bible Class.

## 78. [Organist &amp; Instrumentalist(s)]

If you have musical talents, you can use them to enhance our worship on the organ or other instruments. . .

## 79. [Choir singing for service]

. . . or perhaps to sing in the Senior Choir. The choir not only offers you an avenue of service which benefits the whole congregation,

## 80. [Choir mingling around piano at rehearsal]

but also provides an environment in which you can enjoy Christian fellowship with other members.

## 81. [Softball team in action \* Check coaches]

Christ the Lord congregation offers many opportunities for fellowship among its members, including sports activities and picnics . . .

## 82. [Boy &amp; Girl Pioneers in uniform]

. . . plus several special groups like Lutheran Pioneers for children . . .

## 83. [LYONS activity]

. . . LYONS for high school youth . . .

84. [ANCHOR Bible study]

. . . ANCHOR for single adults . . .

85. [Mary/Martha Guild Meeting]

. . . and the Mary/Martha Guild for women.

86. [Cross]

All of these activities are extra benefits which we can enjoy in the company of fellow believers. Our faith is founded on the cross of Christ, and the cross is the center of all our activity at Christ the Lord Evangelical Lutheran Church.

87. [Pastor \* Evangelism]

With the words of the Apostle John, I welcome you, then, as a new member of this group:

88. [Bible]

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3).

END OF PROGRAM

This program would be almost comprehensive. At the first intermission, the elder would point to the organizational chart in the new member folder. At second intermission the elder would declare himself as the assigned elder or inform the new member who his elder was if not himself. At the conclusion of the program the elder would give the new member a Stewardship Talent sheet and then discuss how the reception procedure would be handled in the church service.

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MEMBER QUESTIONNAIRE FROM THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP

I. VITAL STATISTICS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ (Zip) \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MILES FROM CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF RECEPTION INTO WELS: \_\_\_\_\_

II. EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE RECORD

EMPLOYED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OR TYPE OF WORK: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK SCHEDULE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOBBIES OR FAVORITE PASTIMES: \_\_\_\_\_

CHURCH OFFICES HELD: \_\_\_\_\_

III. TALENT SURVEY

Since I recognize the Savior's will, that both small and great talents be used in the building of His kingdom, my love for Him leads me to offer my time and talents in His service. I am indicating by check marks the services I am willing to perform for my Savior.

A. CHURCH SERVICES

- Greet visitors
- Serve as organist
- Sing in choir
- Serve as usher

B. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

- Teach Sunday School
- Serve as substitute teacher
- Teach V.B.S.
- Help with V.B.S.
- Assist with audio-visual aids
- Assist in sending out nursery materials
- Assist with church/school library

C. SERVICE TO OTHERS

- Visit the sick
- Visit prospective members

D. SPECIAL TALENTS

- Musical
  - Piano
  - Organ
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Art
- Printing
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

E. ORGANIZATIONS

- Attend Women's Guild
- Serve as counselor to youth groups
- Help enlist young people in the church's programs
- Join youth group

## F. MISSION ENDEAVORS

- Survey neighborhood for unchurched
- Provide transportation
- Invite unchurched to services
- Bring unchurched to Christian Doctrine classes

## G. CHURCH/SCHOOL OFFICE

- Help with typing
- Have typewriter
- Do not have typewriter
- Help with church records
- Help with mailings
- Help print bulletins and newsletters

## H. CARE OF CHURCH PROPERTY

- Care of altar linens
- Church grounds and landscaping
- Painting
- Carpentry
- Electrical work
- Plumbing

I also stand ready to work with the regular elected Boards of the congregation on such services as may be requested \_\_\_\_\_ (yes - no).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



TIME AND TALENT SURVEY  
ST. MARK'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH - WATERTOWN, WISCONSIN

Appendix G (1)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE - HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE - BUSINESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE READ AND FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING FORM. IF YOU ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES, PLACE A 2 IN FRONT OF THE ITEM. IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCED IN AN AREA, PLACE A 3. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN AN ACTIVITY OR PROGRAM, PLACE A 4 IN FRONT OF THE ITEM.

2 = ACTIVE    3 = EXPERIENCED    4 = INTERESTED

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

- Bethesda Thrift
- Meals on Wheels
- Help at Nursing Home
- Helping Sick
- Helping elderly

**PROMOTION**

- Poster/Art
- Public speaking
- Sign painting
- TV/Radio
- Writing

**BUSINESS**

- Admin.
- Banking
- Bookkeeping
- Mailings
- Purchasing
- Secretary
- Typist
- Personnel work

**DEVELOPMENT**

- Estate Planning
- Investments
- Loans
- Trusts
- Real Estate

**PROFESSIONAL**

- Architect
- Contractor
- Engineer
- Financial
- Legal
- Medical
- Nursing
- System Analyst
- Teacher
- Other
- 
- 

**TECHNICAL**

- Audio Visual
- Computer Prog.
- Driver
- Lighting
- Mechanic
- Printer
- Sound
- Video
- Mimeographing
- Agriculture
- 
- 

**REPAIR/CONST.**

- Carpenter
- Carpet Layer
- Electrician
- Gardener
- Handyman
- Glass Work
- Janitor
- Landscaper
- Mason
- Painter
- Plumber
- Heating/Cooling

**DRAMA**

- Acting
- Choreography
- Costume Design
- Directing
- Make-up
- Set Construction
- Set Design
- Sewing Costumes
- Stage Crew
- 
- 

**KITCHEN**

- Baking
- Chef
- Clean up
- Decorating
- Serving
- Other
- 
- 
- 

**CHILD CARE**

- Church Nursery
- In Homes
- In Own Homes
- Days
- Evenings
- Weekends
- Babysit for
- Ch. function

**VOCAL MUSIC**

- Soprano
- Alto
- Tenor
- Bass
- Soloist
- Director
- 
- 

**INSTRUMENTAL M.**

- Piano
- Organ
- Violin
- Cello
- Bass
- Flute
- Clarinet
- Saxophone
- Trumpet
- Trombone
- French Horn
- Baritone
- Percussion
- Guitar

**CAMPING**

- Camping
- First Aid
- Group Leader
- Life Guard
- Other
- 
-

LANGUAGES	CRAFTS/PHOTO	VEHICLES	INDIV. SPORTS	TEAM SPORTS
<input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> Flower Arr.	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Coach
<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Artist	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Archery	<input type="checkbox"/> Baseball
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign Lang.	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop Film	<input type="checkbox"/> Motorhome	<input type="checkbox"/> Boating	<input type="checkbox"/> Basketball
<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	<input type="checkbox"/> Group Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Pickup	<input type="checkbox"/> Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/> Bowling
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Macrame	<input type="checkbox"/> Truck	<input type="checkbox"/> Flying	<input type="checkbox"/> Football
<input type="checkbox"/> BASIC	<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Photo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Auto	<input type="checkbox"/> Golf	<input type="checkbox"/> Soccer
<input type="checkbox"/> (computer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing	<input type="checkbox"/> Van	<input type="checkbox"/> Hunting	<input type="checkbox"/> Racquetball
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Still Photo.	<input type="checkbox"/> Camper	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Skiing	<input type="checkbox"/> Softball
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Calligraphy	<input type="checkbox"/> Snow Plow	<input type="checkbox"/> Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/> Tennis
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Banners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Skiing	<input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ch. Directory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Dartball
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Weight Lifting	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

OTHER SKILLS	ROLES	TASKS	GROUPS
<input type="checkbox"/> Historian	<input type="checkbox"/> Elder	<input type="checkbox"/> Absentee Caller	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Choir
<input type="checkbox"/> Librarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Council	<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach Caller	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Choir
<input type="checkbox"/> Narrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible St. Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership Comm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Male Choir
<input type="checkbox"/> Slide Presenter	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach Sun. School	<input type="checkbox"/> Telephoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Ladies Choir
<input type="checkbox"/> CPR	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach Children	<input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Bible Study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach Youth	<input type="checkbox"/> Post Contributions	<input type="checkbox"/> Boy Pioneers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach Adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Bags	<input type="checkbox"/> Girl Pioneers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Usher	<input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Comm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunbeams
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance Comm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Deliver Tapes	<input type="checkbox"/> Buckaroos
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> [counters]	<input type="checkbox"/> (for shut-ins)	<input type="checkbox"/> Christ Teens
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Property Comm.	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/> Ladies' Aid
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Greeters		<input type="checkbox"/> Lakeside Men's Club
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bldg. Grounds Comm.		<input type="checkbox"/> Lakeside Ladies Gld
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Evangelism Comm.		<input type="checkbox"/> School & Home Soc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Video Comm.		<input type="checkbox"/> WELS Christian
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Day School Help		<input type="checkbox"/> Singles
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Work		<input type="checkbox"/> LWMS
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship Comm.		<input type="checkbox"/> Couples Club
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship Service Comm.		<input type="checkbox"/> NWC Booster Club
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Education		<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

GREAT COMMISSION CONSCIENCE  
Questions

Here are ten "Yes/No" questions which give you a clue as to the "Great Commission Conscience" of both members and lay leaders. Seven of ten affirmative answers are an indication of a reasonably strong "Great Commission Conscience:"

1. I see the primary purpose of our church as responding to the Great Commission.
2. I have participated in an outreach training event in the last year.
3. I have invited an unchurched friend/relative to a church event in the last six months.
4. I would support a motion to designate at least 10% of our church budget to outreach events/training/activities.
5. I would prefer the pastor call on non-members more often than members.
6. I would be willing to take a new member/visitor home for dinner once every six months.
7. I have intentionally introduced myself to a new member or visitor in the past month.
8. I have talked to an unchurched person about my faith in the past three months.
9. I have prayed for a specific unchurched person in the past month.
10. I would be willing to be a pioneer in a new group or new church fellowship <sup>group that served a</sup> to help reach new people.

E-707

DEVELOPING AN ACCURATE PICTURE

I. Locating Recent New Members

Using the chart below, rate each new church member's current involvement in your church. List the names of each new member in the appropriate place, then place a check in the box which most correctly describes that person's present involvement. Use additional pages if necessary.

LOCATING RECENT NEW MEMBERS										
	In lay leadership and involvement group	Involved in some leadership role	Regular participant in church school/worship/fellowship group	Attends worship regularly	Attends worship occasionally	In some church activity at least twice a month	Attends an event in the church now and then	A Christmas and Easter member	Gone but not forgotten	Forgotten
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Member's Name:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- II. Below is a 10-question survey of new members who have joined your church during the past 2 years. It will provide you with some important clues as to the incorporation as it is presently going on in your church. The survey is anonymous. (The respondent may want to mail the survey back to the church office.) After the survey's are received, collate the responses and tally all onto one master form with total responses.

## NEW MEMBER SURVEY

1. How do you feel about being a member of this church, now that you have been here for a while?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Couldn't be happier
- \_\_\_\_\_ Generally happy I joined
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes good, sometimes bad
- \_\_\_\_\_ It hasn't been what I had hoped in some areas
- \_\_\_\_\_ About ready to drop out
2. Since you have become a member, do you feel the church has encouraged your participation in church-related groups/meeting/Sunday School classes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, and I am now actively involved
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes, but I have not had the desire/time to get involved
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, but I got involved anyway
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, and I would like to be more involved
- \_\_\_\_\_ No, but I couldn't get involved anyway
3. The number of close friends I have in the church is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I have a specific and regular duty in our church that I am responsible for. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
5. If I were to invite a friend to church I would feel apprehensive that he/she would be ignored, or not feel welcome. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

6. I find that the worship service in our church  
\_\_\_\_\_ consistently speaks to my own needs  
\_\_\_\_\_ is usually a valuable experience  
\_\_\_\_\_ takes patience to find something of value  
\_\_\_\_\_ is generally not a rewarding experience
7. The thing that attracted me most to this church was
8. The new member orientation/training program at our church is
9. The one program, ministry, service opportunity in our church that excites and interests me the most is
10. One of the concerns I have about new members who join our church in the future is

- III. Below are several questions which will be helpful in evaluating the "openness" of your small groups and Sunday School classes. Duplicate the "SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUP SURVEY" and distribute copies to various classes and small groups in the church. The information you compile will be quite valuable in assessing the ability and desire of these groups to assimilate new people.

SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUP SURVEY

Instructions: For each statement, circle the number which most closely reflects your feelings. Note the descriptions under the numbers "1" and "5". If you strongly agree with one or the other, circle the "1" or the "5". If you feel less strongly about the statement, circle the "2" or the "4". If you don't feel strongly one way or the other, circle the number "3". Please respond to each item, and be honest.

1. When I first joined this class I ...

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 had a hard time getting to know other members. found it quite easy to become part of the gang.

2. I presently feel that I "fit" in my Sunday school class like a ...

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 square peg in a round hole. hand in glove.

3. The number of close friends I have in Sunday school is ...

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 0-1 2-3 4-5 6-7 8+

4. I imagine if I were a typical visitor in my class I would ...

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 probably be ignored. be impressed with the friendliness of others toward me.

5. When the class is over, members ...

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5  
 talk only to other members. introduce themselves to visitors.

IV. On the chart below, take a moment to consider your present "system" for achieving the following functions in your church. Write in the name of the person, if there is one, under the question of "Who is now responsible?" If it is now your responsibility, note that as well. Then, briefly describe the current procedures that are functioning, and finally, your estimation of how well they are succeeding.

ACTIVITIES	WHO IS NOW RESPONSIBLE?	CURRENT PROCEDURES	HOW WELL WE NOW SUCCEED
------------	-------------------------	--------------------	-------------------------

Locating and listing receptive people and potential new members			
---	--	--	--

Contacting, inviting, communicating with potential new members			
--	--	--	--

Guiding potential new members to programs, fellowship groups, or Sunday School classes			
--	--	--	--

Follow-up: monitoring progress and responsible for spiritual growth			
---	--	--	--

Tracking involvement pattern of new and old members			
---	--	--	--



## Developing an Accurate Picture

Using the "Preliminary Research" sheets that were sent to you prior to the workshop, consider the questions below and begin looking at your church and the incorporation system that is presently functioning.

1. Is the incorporation "system" in your church generally working effectively? Discuss. (Use #1 as a basis for your discussion).
2. Consider and discuss the involvement level of present new members. (Refer to #1).
3. What are areas of strength and/or need in our church's incorporation system, based upon comments from new members? (Refer to responses on the "New Member Survey").
4. What initial steps might be apparent to improve the incorporation system of new members? (Refer to #II).
5. Do the results of the Sunday school class/small groups survey indicate any significant insights into their ability to incorporate newcomers? (Refer to results of "Sunday school/Small Group Survey", # III).
6. Discuss item IV. Are there any apparent areas of oversight that could be readily remedied?

Suggestions For Futher Reading

Arn, Win and Charles Arn. "Close the Evangelistic Back Door." Leadership, vol. V, #2 (Spring 1984), 25-31.

Harre, Alan F. Close the Back Door: Ways to Create a Caring Congregational Fellowship. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.

How to Effectively Incorporate New Members. Booklet from an Educational Workshop conducted by the Institute for American Church Growth, 709 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 150, Pasadena, CA 91101. [Perhaps more helpful would be to refer to a booklet which has the notes taken at such a workshop. Contact Pastor Paul Soukup, 2211 Stuart Court, Madison, WI 53704.]

Huebner, J. Integrating the New Member. Essay presented to the Florida Conference of WELS South-Atlantic District, January 24, 1979.

Rowlison, Bruce A. Creative Hospitality as a Means of Evangelism, copyright 1981. Available from Green Leaf Press, P.O. Box 6880, Alhambra, CA 91802.

Schaller, Lyle E. Assimilating New Members. Nashville: Abingdon, 1978.

Tell. Volume 6, #2 (Winter 1985). Tell newsletter subscriptions and information: 3773 South 2nd Street, Milwaukee, WI 53207.

Valleskey, David J. The Theology and Practice of Evangelism. Chapter VIII--Assimilating the New Member, 113-133. Mequon, WI: Seminary Mimeograph Company, 1984.

Vega, Manuel, Jr. Integrating New Members Into the Church. Essay presented to the Pastor-Delegate Conference of WELS South-Central District, January 24, 1985.