INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

*Training members for Global Mission and Outreach*

General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries

Course Syllabus

LCL103 “Techniques of Board Management

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Course Requirements

LCL103 “Techniques of Board Management”

Course Description: Boards govern churches and schools as well as other institutions and organizations. Committees are basic tools for planning and coordinating tasks to accomplish a mission or a purpose. This course will examine principles and processes involved in being a member of such groups, and the skills needed for leading or chairing them.

Course Objectives:
1. The participant will begin formulating a theology regarding group decision-making.
2. The learner will understand various types of committees or boards and when they should be used or not be used.
3. The student will understand basic group dynamics as applied in a work group, such as a committee or board.
4. The individual will be able to prepare agendas and minutes, and understand other organizational tools such as terms of reference and quorums.
5. The student will be able to use basic principles of parliamentary procedure as a committee member in order to keep order and move committee processes forward.
6. The learner will be exposed to communication skills, group roles, and problem-solving techniques.
7. The participant will understand the duties and responsibilities of a member of a committee or board.
8. The student will be sensitized to the presence of conflict in group situations and be given some basic tools for dealing with it.
9. The individual will understand various voting techniques and the differences between voting and consensus decision-making.
10. The person will learn the roles and responsibilities of a chairperson.
11. The participant will understand a basic framework for problem-solving in a committee context.


Student Requirements:
1. Read the textbook as listed above.
2. Attend the four hour class sessions.
3. Complete four of the seven exercises given on pages 7, 10, 21-22, 22-23, 26, 30, and 41-43.
**Bibliography** (resources for further study)


**Course Outline**

I. Foundational Principles for Working in Groups.
   C. Seventh-day Adventist understanding of leadership in the Church.
   D. Appropriate use of groups or committees.
   E. Boards and committees as groups.
   F. Types of committees.

II. Basic Board Management
   A. Terms of Reference.
   B. Quorum
   C. Executive Session
   D. Agenda
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   F. Parliamentary Procedure
   G. Consensus decision making.
III. Being an effective board or committee member.
   A. Preparation
   B. Participation.
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   D. Group roles.

IV. Roles and Skills of the Chairperson.
   A. Duties
   B. Helpful practices.
   C. Chairing tense meetings
   D. Problem-solving
   E. Summary and Evaluation of Committee Work
I. Foundational Principles for Working in Groups.

A strong leader may be able to make decisions quickly and efficiently, but such decisions may not be readily accepted by the people involved. People like to have a say, or at least be represented, in the matters that affect their lives. Participation in problem-solving and decision-making is necessary in order for individuals to be satisfied with a particular course of action and take ownership of it.

A. Seventh-day Adventist understanding of leadership in the Church.

1. Brief review of leadership principles.

   Biblical theology assigns the role of rulership to God. Only He is all wise enough to rule human beings. Note what responsibility God originally assigned to humankind:

   Genesis 1:26, 28  (Answer: Rule over the natural world)
   
   God reserved human beings for Himself to rule:

   Genesis 2:16  (Answer: “God commanded the man...”)

   Human beings are equal to one another before God.

   "In that age of caste, when the rights of men were often unrecognized, Paul set forth the great truth of human brotherhood, declaring that God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.' In the sight of God all are on an equality, and to the Creator every human being owes supreme allegiance." EGW, Acts of the Apostles, 238.

   In addition, human rulers reflect the weaknesses of sin and are often short-sighted, which leads to injustice and mistakes.

   It is true that sometimes God raised up individuals, such as the prophets, to stand against groups of people who were moving in wrong directions. The majority is not always right. Under the theocratic type of government in Old Testament times God gave explicit messages to these individuals to bear to the people. We are not under a theocracy now. But even today, God works through leaders to give certain messages of direction and instruction. In some cases fledging groups need experienced leadership to guide them along a certain path. But leadership must always be treated as a trust from God, not as a right. It must be carried out humbly, recognizing the leader’s own human weaknesses. Godly leaders will seek to
educate and strengthen the people for participation in leadership roles. And there must always be the acknowledgement that God is the true leader of humankind.

While there is an important responsibility for leadership, God has also established an equal if not greater role for groups of people, both for decision-making and for action. The founding of the church was for the very purpose of encouraging His people to plan and work together, to find a sense of unity and purpose.

2. Brief review of an Adventist theology of the church.

Adventists hold that the highest authority in the church is found when its people come together in a council. The highest authority is not the leader (like the papal system). This is based on the understanding that God’s Spirit seeks to work through the hearts and minds of all of His people, and as they come together in agreement, God’s will is manifest.

Moses involved people in the decision-making and shared leadership responsibilities of his time. See Deuteronomy 1:9-18.

Jesus instructed His people to take their difficult problems “to the church.” See Matthew 18:15-17.

The apostles asked the congregation to choose seven men to serve “the tables.” See Acts 6:1-3.

It is interesting to note that in the New Testament the reference to “elders” is almost always in the plural, suggesting that they work together. See Acts 20:17; I Timothy 5:17; I Peter 5:1.

Perhaps the most detailed example of group participation in solving a difficult problem is in Acts 15. Read this chapter from the perspective of the process used and the results achieved. Of course, they were open to the leading of the Holy Spirit who was then able to use the process for the glory of God.

Here is some of the counsel of Ellen White on this subject:

“In counseling for the advancement of the work, no one man is to be a controlling power, a voice for the whole. Proposed methods and plans are to be carefully considered so that all the brethren may weigh their relative merits and decide which should be followed. . . . So far as possible, committees should let the people understand their plans in order that the judgment of the church may sustain their efforts. Many of the church members are prudent and have other excellent qualities of mind. Their interest should be aroused in the progress of the cause. Many may be led to have a deeper insight into the work of God and to seek for wisdom from above to extend Christ's kingdom by saving souls perishing for the word of life.” EGW, Testimonies for the Church, 7:259.

“As laborers together with God they should seek to be in harmony with one another. There should be frequent councils and earnest, wholehearted co-operation. Yet all
are to look to Jesus for wisdom, not depending upon men alone for direction.”  EGW, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:109.

“Men whom the Lord calls to important positions in His work are to cultivate a humble dependence upon Him. They are not to seek to embrace too much authority; for God has not called them to a work of ruling, but to plan and counsel with their fellow laborers. Every worker alike is to hold himself amenable to the requirements and instructions of God. . . . Any human being who spreads himself out to large proportions and who seeks to have the control of his fellows, proves himself to be a dangerous man to be entrusted with religious responsibilities.”  EGW, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:270.

“The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council. . . . Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was personally taught by God, he had no strained ideas of individual responsibility. While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship.”  EGW, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199, 200.

“God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. . . . Let none be self-confident, as though God had given them special light above their brethren. Christ is represented as dwelling in His people. Believers are represented as ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’”  EGW, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:291-292.

“The power vested in the Conference is not to be centered in one man, or two men, or six men; there is to be a council of men over the separate divisions.”  EGW, *Christian Leadership*, 26.

“God has not set any kingly power in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to control the whole body or to control any branch of the work. He has not provided that the burden of leadership shall rest upon a few men. Responsibilities are distributed among a large number of competent men.”  EGW, *Testimonies for the Church*, 8:236.

“I have been shown that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered. Your error was in persistently maintaining your private judgment of your duty against the voice of the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth.”  EGW, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:492.
3. Exercise #1:
   a) Compare this previous section with Tennyson, chapter 1 (the textbook). Does the Old Testament model where decisions come through one person in leadership apply to us today? Why or why not? (Note the fact that a theocracy existed in OT times.)
   b) Write a summary of what you have learned from the Scriptures and Spirit of Prophecy references regarding the theology of the role of groups/committees in the church.

B. Appropriate use of groups or committees.
(Read Tennyson, chapter 2 in conjunction with sections I. B. and C.)

As important as is respect for groups and committees in the church, one must be balanced in their use. There must be balance between the role of leadership and group decision-making. There are some things that groups cannot accomplish and individuals must act. There are other things that should be done by a group and not by individuals alone.

1. When to use committees or groups.

   Of course, committees must be used when they are established by the governance policies of an organization. But there are also times when good judgment suggests that a committee should address the situation.

   a) For important or major decisions. People don't trust one person for major decisions that will affect their lives. For example, spending their money, major plans, or nomination of leaders.

   b) Where group judgment is needed. We live in an age of complex problems and specialization. One person cannot know enough for good judgment in all situations.

   c) When coordination is important. For example, when several departments need to coordinate their plans.

   d) As a sounding board for ideas and decisions. Brainstorming and creativity is enhanced by interaction among people.

   e) For the training of subordinates. In a group inexperienced persons can learn from those of longer experience. There should always be an eye toward training new leaders.

   f) To obtain continuity of planning and policy over time. Individuals in an organization may change, but the committee can help keep a continuity because there will be some experienced members. It is best not to completely change committee members from one term of service to another.
g) For evaluation or judgment issues. When there are promotions, appointments, demotions, discipline, or dismissal, one person can be biased, unfair, or have overlooked something.

2. **When not to use committees.**

   a) When cost is important. If the value of all the time of committee participants is added together, it is significant. And in some cases there is also the cost to the organization for travel, lodging, meals, etc. So consider the costs both to the individuals as well as the organization. In many cases teleconference calls are more economical.

   b) Where the decision is not a highly important one. Don't take up group time with trivia. One church board was observed spending quite a long time debating where the deacons should keep the offering plates, under the pulpit or in the foyer.

   c) Where speed is vital. There is no time to call a committee when there is an emergency.

   d) When the problem is one of execution rather than decision. As a whole committee, nothing can be done beyond discussing a plan, solving a problem, or making a decision. A committee cannot write a document, or fix the furnace. It can coordinate the action, or individuals on the committee can share a task that is broken down into individual parts.

   e) When qualified personnel are not available. In that case, a committee is pooled ignorance.

   f) Where divided responsibility and compromise actions need to be avoided.

   Adapted from Robert E. Firth. *Guidelines for Committees and Board Members.* 1973, 30ff

C. **Boards and committees as groups.**

Much information is available about the principles of group dynamics. When attention is paid to these principles the purposes of the group will be achieved much more effectively.

Groups can be formed for various purposes. Growth groups may be formed primarily for Bible study, sharing, or worship, for the benefit of the members in the group. Mission or task groups have as their primary purpose the accomplishing of some goal outside of itself. Committees are a type of task group. Their purpose is to plan, make decisions, and ask individuals to carry out tasks for the benefit of the organization.

Both types of groups are affected by the same principles or dynamics. Therefore, it is important to be aware of these principles.
1. Essential elements of a group.

   a) **Group Building.** All groups need some type of group building. Group building includes getting acquainted, building a bond of relationship, and developing cohesiveness. This develops trust.

   (1) **History-giving.** This is the first step to help accomplish group building. It involves inviting each committee member to share information about himself or herself. Sometimes this is called “history-giving,” or “telling your story.” This is especially important when a new committee gets together or when a new person joins the group. It can also be done occasionally throughout the life of the committee. This sharing must start with non-threatening information and over time move to more personal experiences, feelings, and goals. Asking appropriate sharing questions can help people know what to say.

   Examples:
   - Write your name on a piece of paper and draw something that symbolizes what you do or what your interests are.
   - (More personal) Tell us something about your family.
   - (Even more personal) How did you become a member of the church?
   - (Asking for expression of feelings and goals are even more sensitive.)

   Sharing this kind of information is the basis for building trust. People will not trust you if they don’t know you. Trust is necessary if a group is to be open and honest with one another and achieve harmonious progress. Even in local church boards we think we know each other, but it is usually on a superficial level.

   Be sure to follow this rule: Never ask for a deeper or more personal level of sharing from group members than the level of relationship and trust that has been established through group building.

   (2) **Affirmation.** Another tool of group building is giving affirmation. It is telling another person what the others appreciate about him, or what are seen as her strengths. After a person has shared some of their story, she needs to be affirmed or else she may feel vulnerable and exposed, not sure what others will think. The group leader can help to model this practice, or lead in a type of structured affirmation exercise.

   (3) **Covenant.** Part of building the group is to have a set of understandings about how the group will conduct itself. When and how often it will meet, how it will conduct its business or activities, what its goals will be, how group members agree to relate to one another, and what its values are. Talking about such things at the start will give members a certain security and confidence about what is appropriate and how to solved problems.

   (4) **Celebration.** It is important to have some occasions in which the group relates together socially outside of the business setting. This will enable better working relationships when challenging tasks are confronted.
b) **Personal Growth.** A growth group focuses on this aspect of the group life. But even task groups need some spiritual growth, study, worship, and prayer, or they will burn out and lose sight of their vision.

c) **Task or Mission.** A task group focuses on this aspect of group life. But growth groups should also have an outward activity lest they become too ingrown and stale.

Healthy groups need all three of these elements to some degree.

**Note:** For more details and sample exercises, see Lyman Coleman’s materials on small groups, such as his *Serendipity Encyclopedia*, or other similar resources.

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**Exercise #2:** Think of three ways by which you could involve your group in affirmation of one another. Explain how it would be done.

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D. **Types of committees.**

(Read Tennyson, chapter 3 in conjunction with section I. D.)

1. **Governing Bodies.**

   a) **Constituency Meeting.** In the Seventh-day Adventist Church the most authoritative governing body is the constituency meeting or session at the general conference, union, and local conference levels respectively. Representatives are chosen by the next lower level of organization to come together for doing the business of the higher organization. In a local church this type of meeting is called the business meeting and all local church members are able to attend and participate.

   b) **Boards or Executive Committees.** Between constituency or business meetings, executive committees or boards are elected to conduct the business of the organization.

   There is some difference between a presidential system and a committee system of governance in how these boards function. In a presidential system, the board sets the over direction, elects the president, and that person has power to lead the organization and make any further operational decisions needed. In a committee system the president or leader is more closely tied to the governing committee even in operational decisions. The church operates on a committee system, whereas our educational and healthcare institutions tend to operate more on a presidential system.

   In a local church, the church board is the most authoritative body between church business meetings. The pastor or elder plays a leadership role, but cannot over rule the board.

   c) Boards may create **subcommittees** with assigned responsibilities, but they usually must report back to the board that established them.
2. Decision Making Committees

Other committees may be established in an organization that have decision making power for defined areas, as defined by their terms of reference, working policies, official manual, or constitution and by-laws. These would include administrative committees, or in a local church, committees such as a youth council, personal ministries council, board of elders, etc. For some matters the decisions of these committees may need to be referred to the church board for final decisions.

3. Advisory Committees

Some committees are formed simply to discuss matters, gain ideas, research an issue, or give advice to governing bodies. These committees are referred to as advisory committees or councils.

4. Ad Hoc Committees or A Task Force

An ad hoc committee is one that is appointed for a very specific purpose with a limited time frame, and once their work and report is completed the group disbands. A task force is a similar type of group that has some specific activity to complete, and usually has a little longer life. But when the task is completed it also disbands.

II. Basic Board Management

A. Terms of Reference.

Whenever a committee is established, it is helpful and often mandated that it have terms of reference. Terms of reference define the committee’s purposes and tasks, what kind of power the committee has in those areas, and who the members of the committee include. Terms of reference help to keep the committee on its rightful task without it straying into areas that are outside its domain.

Here is a sample of a Terms of Reference:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARABIC LANGUAGE MATERIALS COMMITTEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOTED, by the 10/40 Window Committee, to appoint an Arabic Language Materials Committee (April 14, 2003).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERMS OF REFERENCE</th>
<th>AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop a strategic plan for the production of a wide variety of evangelistic materials (radio, TV, print, internet, etc.) for use among Arabic-speaking, Muslim peoples.</td>
<td>1. Power to Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Search for ways to fund the essential elements of the strategic plan.</td>
<td>2. Power to Recommend to 10/40 Window Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Catalog and develop awareness of materials that are presently available for use with Arabic-speaking Muslims.

4. Assess the effectiveness of the materials that are currently available.

5. Assess the effectiveness of various new approaches and materials.

6. Recommend ways that the various organizations might work together in accomplishing the plans that are established

**MEMBERS**

(name), Chairman  
(name), Vice Chairman  
(name), Secretary

(name)  (name)  
(name)  (name)  
(name)  (name)  
(name)  (name)

**B. Quorum**

A quorum is the minimum number of members of the committee that are required to be present to conduct business. The standard quorum is 51% of the total members. But a quorum can be a specific number, or simply the members present. A quorum is defined by either a governing document, such as the by-laws, or by a higher authoritative body, or by the committee itself if no other higher rules apply.

**C. Executive Session**

Sometimes committees or boards not only have their official members present, but may also have invitees, visitors, or guests. But in Executive Session, no one but the official members may be present. This option is used for dealing with very sensitive items.

**D. Agenda**  
*(Read Tennyson, pp. 44-48 in conjunction with section D.)*

An agenda is a numbered list of the items of business that are to be considered at a meeting. The agenda is usually set by the chair and/or the secretary of the committee.
Members can request that items be added to the agenda, although in more formal meetings there may be a cut off time when the agenda is closed for any new items. In constituency sessions and many boards, the body votes the approval of the agenda and then it is closed. In more informal meetings, agenda items may be added at the beginning of the meeting. It is not wise for people to suddenly bring up items that were not presented at the beginning of the meeting. This makes it hard to maintain a timely progress in the meeting, and often the sudden raising of agenda items can be used in a manipulative way.

In a conflictual situation where the chair does not permit something to be placed on the agenda, parliamentary procedure would allow a member to appeal the decision of the chair and it would be voted by the body. (See the section on Parliamentary Procedure.)

A standard church board agenda might look like the following:

1. Greeting, sharing, devotional thought and prayer (group building)
2. Clerk’s Report – to review the minutes of the last meeting and make any corrections needed. This report needs to be voted since it becomes the official record of the decisions that the body has made.
3. Membership Transfers – These are considered and recommended to the church as a whole for vote.
4. Treasurer’s Report – It is helpful to have this report early in the meeting since other discussion items may be determined by finances.
5. Other reports and announcements.
6. Old or Unfinished Business – these are things that are carried over from a previous meeting.
7. New Business – New items for this meeting. A church board must make sure it includes in its agenda the spiritual life and mission of the church, not simply maintenance and business items.
8. Set the next meeting time if it is not a standard appointment.
9. Adjournment and Prayer

It is helpful to have a printed agenda (or written on a writing board) so that all the members know what items are to be discussed. It helps to make the process transparent and avoid manipulation. In a written agenda it is also good to list the names of all the official members of the body at the top of the agenda so that everyone knows who is responsible to participate.

In many governing boards the agenda contains, for each item, a brief description, a list of any documents available regarding that matter, and a suggested (well thought out) action that might be taken. Of course, the Board can modify the action if it desires. Such an agenda is sent out ahead of the meeting so that the membership has time to consider the various items before the meeting.

E. Minutes (See Tennyson, pp. 75-79.)

Every type of committee needs to keep minutes, that is, a record of actions taken at a meeting. Memories fade and conflict can arise if careful minutes are not kept. Usually every committee has a secretary, or it should appoint one. Minutes can be brief, simply reflecting the items officially voted. Or minutes can, in addition, include a listing of items
discussed, but where no official action was taken. It is cumbersome and prone to inaccuracy to try to record all the points made in the discussion. A summary is sufficient if more than the voted actions are desired. Every member of the committee should receive a copy of the minutes soon after the meeting.

Minutes should have the name of the committee at the top, the date and time of meeting. Next should be a list of the members present. Many times a list of the members absent is also included so that the entire committee membership is represented. A reference to the devotional thought and prayer is usually recorded. The various items from the agenda that were dealt with are then recorded with the careful wording of any voted actions. Sometimes a short preamble or background statement is written to prior to the action in order to place it in context when the action may be read at a later date and the discussion has been largely forgotten. A summary heading for each item is also helpful.

Often the officially voted actions are numbered for easy reference. A numbering system might include the year and then the consecutive list of actions through the year. For example: 04:5 would be the fifth voted action in the year 2004. Finally a recording of the next meeting time, the adjournment, and closing prayer are recorded. When the minutes are prepared, usually signature lines are provided for the Chair and Secretary to indicate that they have reviewed the minutes. In addition, those minutes need to be presented to the committee at the next meeting for approval. It is an important responsibility of the committee members to check the minutes since it is an official record of the decisions and discussions of that particular meeting.

Here is a sample portion of a set of minutes:

| Arabic Language Programs and Materials Committee |
| Sub-committee of the 10/40 Window Committee |
| (Date), (Time) |

“Minutes”

Members Present: (name), chair; (name), vice chair; (name), secretary; (name), (name), (name), (name)

Absent: (name), (name), (name), (name)

Prayer: (name)


03-06 VOTED, to approve the Minutes of the October 7 meeting as presented.

2. Terms of Reference for this committee

03-07 VOTED, to approve the terms of reference as presented. (Copy filed with original minutes.)

3. Guidelines for material preparation (Grid)
03-08 VOTED, to accept the grid, Guidelines for Material Preparation, as a work in progress, with the understanding that the C1-6 categories of contextualization will be removed leaving only the descriptive phrases, and asking that each entity bring back a plan of materials preparation that can be added to this grid. (Revised copy is sent with these minutes.)

4. . . .

5. Next Meeting

03-10 AGREED, that, tentatively, the next meeting will take place on April 8, 4-7 p.m., with supper.

Closing Prayer – (name)

Adjournment

Approved December 3, 2003

____________________________________  __________________________
(name)      (name)

F. Parliamentary Procedure  (See Tennyson, chapter 10.)

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules to guide the conduct of business in a meeting. Its use is intended to provide order, fairness, and discipline to the process. However, in small, informal groups, it can actually become a hindrance to the friendly smooth flow of discussion by its rigid, formal, requirements. Let’s take a closer look.

1. Basic Concepts of Parliamentary Procedure

The basic concept of parliamentary procedure is that only one item of business is to be dealt with at a time. In other words, only one main motion is on the floor at a time. This motion, once it is made, requires a second in order to demonstrate that another member supports the proposal.

However, other kinds of motions can be made that relate to the discussion of that main motion, or to the procedure of the discussion. These other motions have an order of precedence, which means that some must be listened to and acted upon before others. This all contributes to orderliness.

Each of these other motions also have rules that are associated with them -- such as whether they need a second, are amendable, can interrupt a speaker, are debatable, the type of vote needed, etc.

It would be helpful to obtain a resource that contains a table of motions where the rules can be seen at a glance. Sometimes formal meetings will use a parliamentarian who will help to advise the chair regarding the rules for various procedures.
The General Conference has published a small booklet that outlines basic parliamentary rules for its own meetings. It is available from the Secretariat of the General Conference. It is listed as a reference for this course. It states that “other church organizations, such as local churches, boards, and faculty meetings, may use these rules of order.” In certain international locations customary practices may require some modification of these rules.

It is helpful for each organization to specify what rules it will follow for their meetings. The following description basically follows the traditional Roberts Rules of Order.

2. The categories of motions (with a few examples of the most likely ones to be used)

a. Principal motions. These motions relate to a proposition or idea; there is no order of precedence within this group, but only one can be offered at a time.
   1) Main motion – This motion introduces new business by offering a proposal to the body.
   2) Take from the table – This motion reintroduces discussion on a proposal that was previously introduced as a main motion, but then tabled, that is, put off for a later discussion.
   3) Reconsider – A motion that allows for reconsidering a decision made earlier in the same meeting.
   4) Rescind (Repeal) – This motion changes a decision made in a previous meeting. Some situations may require a 2/3 majority vote in order to pass.

b. Subsidiary motions – motions that act on the main motion
   1) Amend – This is a motion to seeks modify main motion in some way, but it cannot change more than one point in the original motion.
   2) Refer to Committee – This motion refers a proposal to a committee for further study and therefore delays the process.
   3) Extend or Limit Debate – This motion is used to set a time for debate to close and voting to take place; it requires a 2/3rds majority vote in order to pass.
   4) Order previous question (or Stop Debate) – This motion seeks to close debate; it also requires a 2/3rds majority vote to pass.

   Note: Sometimes a person in a meeting will “call question,” thinking that debate must close and voting must take place just because they said that. This is a misunderstanding of the process. Just calling question by an individual, at the most, simply means that that person is ready to vote. In order to close all debate, a motion to close debate (or order the previous question) must be offered, seconded, and voted by a 2/3rds majority. It is not debatable.

   5) To Table – With this motion an item of business will no longer be discussed, but it will wait for a later time in the same meeting or another meeting to be “taken from the table” and thereby reintroduced. It cannot be debated and requires a simple majority vote.

c. Incidental Motions – These motions relate to questions that arise from the business; there is no order of precedence here.
1) **Point of Information** – This is simply a request for information; no 2nd is required.

2) **Withdrawal of a motion** – This action allows a person who made a motion and the person who seconds it to withdraw a motion. It is usually approved by the chair or by common consent. If there are objections, then it must be voted upon.

3) **Point of Order** – A member can rise to assert their rights, usually to draw attention to a wrong procedure. No second is needed and the chair rules on the question.

4) **Appeal the Decision of the Chair** – If the chairperson rules in a way that the body disagrees with, a member can move to appeal the decision of the chair. This motion must then be seconded; it can be debated; and its resolution requires a majority vote.

d. **Privileged Motions** – These are motions relating to meeting arrangements, comfort, and member’s rights; they require immediate attention.

1) **Question of Privilege** – This motion allows a member to assert rights, such as dealing with noise, presence of non-members, quarrels between members, etc.; no 2nd is required.

2) **To recess** – This interrupts a meeting for a period of time which can be specifically stated, or according to the call of the chair.

3) **To adjourn** – This motion takes precedence and stops all discussion and debate. It needs a second, must be voted upon immediately and carries by a majority vote.

4) **Fix time, place for next meeting** – This is the only motion that takes precedence over the motion to adjourn. It is debatable and requires a majority vote.

This is a simple summary of motions. There are many more rules that pertain to each one. That is why a reference of some kind is necessary. There is a table of motions in the textbook, Mack Tennyson, *Making Committees Work, 122-125*, and an additional reference book is mentioned in the bibliography, Robert’s *Rules in Plain English*.

3. **Ways of voting**

Voting is a basic part of parliamentary procedure. After a main motion is made and debated, the next step is to vote in favor or against the motion. There are several ways of voting and all of them have both advantages and disadvantages.

a. **General Consent (Silent Assent)**

This type of voting is often used in informal, friendly, small group settings. If one member objects, then there is no longer silent assent and a formal vote must be taken. The chairperson will state: "If there are no objections we will consider this item accepted."

The advantages of this type of voting: It is smooth and quick in small informal settings or where there is likely to be unanimous agreement.

The disadvantages: There must be total unanimity, and it could be misunderstood.
b. **Voice vote (Viva Voce)**

The chairperson calls for those in favor of the motion to say, “aye;” then those opposed to say, “nay or no.” The chair must judge the strength of the audible response. The voice vote is not effective until the chair announces his judgment of the stronger response. The voice vote is the most common method of voting, unless the chair or a member asks for a different method.

The advantages: It is quick.

The disadvantages: It is inexact and could be contested. There is some social pressure, and it requires people to be assertive. If the judgment of the chair in declaring the result is contested, then a vote will need to be taken by division of the house (see next).

c. **By division of the house**

This vote is taken by asking people to raise their hands or stand to declare their vote. The number on each side, then, must be counted.

The advantages: This type of voting is more accurate because it can be counted.

The disadvantages: It puts people on the spot; there is social pressure because the vote must be publicly demonstrated. Furthermore, it takes time to count.

d. **Secret Ballot**

In this case, written ballots are used to indicate the member’s choice and the position of each person is not publicly demonstrated.

The advantages: It de-emphasizes emotions and personalities; it removes social pressure, and is accurate.

The disadvantages: This method takes the most time (unless you have an electronic voting system). It is also subject to fraud (unless you have uniquely identified the ballots in some way).

Nevertheless, it is best to use this type of voting with controversial questions, or when each person's opinion should remain confidential.

4. **Modifications to parliamentary procedure for church use.**

a. Reasons for modifying parliamentary procedure.

Parliamentary procedure, while providing strict rules for controlling the order of a meeting, is often overly rigid and formal. It originated in a militaristic/governmental context. It tends to create divisiveness by its structure for confrontational debate and win/lose voting techniques. Voting divides people according to sides and after the vote some have won and others have lost. This makes it difficult to maintain a harmonious climate.

Furthermore, for the ordinary person it sometimes seems illogical that a motion (solution) is offered before a problem is discussed. (In strict parliamentary procedure nothing can be debated without a motion on the floor.)
Instead, the church aims for a warmer, accepting, collaborative climate where problems are explored before solutions are offered. It is concerned about unity and relationships even among those who see things differently.

b. Appropriate modifications within the context of the church.
   1) Relax the rigidity and formality of address and strict terminology; be more informal and warm. Most church members are rather intimidated by parliamentary procedure. The people who know it often use it as tool of power and are rather irritating. The chair may need to coach people in the process of achieving their intentions.
   2) Allow discussion before a motion is made. This approach is more logical. People will not feel as though the decision is cut and dried before they have even discussed it. In other words, discuss the problem before the solution. This method also contributes to the achievement of consensus, the next point.
   3) Aim for consensus decision-making rather than win-lose voting.

G. Consensus Decision Making

Consensus is an agreed upon outcome that was discussed in an open and supportive climate, where group members each have a fair chance to influence the outcome, understand the decision and are prepared to support it. (Adapted from Johnson & Johnson, 1975, p. 60)

In consensus, rather than dividing people on issues with some winning their cause and other losing through voting, a process is followed that seeks to move people closer to each other until they can agree on an option as best for the group even if it is not their first choice. It results in a win-win outcome rather than win-lose.

1. Suggestions for arriving at consensus:
   a. Clarify the problem.
   b. Brainstorm suggestions/options (not motions) for a solution. Continue discussion of all suggestions until each is fully understood by every member.
   c. Narrow the options.
   d. Take seriously the objections the members have to the most popular options. This is what makes the process collaborative.
   e. Apply accountability to those objecting to any suggestion by requiring them to propose alternative suggestions to help find an acceptable solution.
   f. One of the keys to achieving consensus is having flexibility in shaping the solution by taking into consideration the concerns of the various members.
   g. Use straw votes (unofficial indicators of preference) to find the more popular options or to test agreement.
   h. Keep working until one option emerges, or can be modified to emerge, as the one with the most support.
   i. You may then vote on it simply for legal purposes.
   j. If consensus is not entirely reached it may be possible to adopt for the present only those courses of action upon which there is almost unanimous agreement.
k. If differences continue it might be helpful to work toward the choice of one on a provisional, experimental basis.

2. If consensus is not achieved.

a. In some cases consensus cannot be achieved because of deep opposing viewpoints, but a decision must be made. In that case, even if some people prefer another way, they may be willing to support the option chosen by the largest number of the group as long as the process was fair and collaborative. Integrity of the process will go a long way to enlist support.

b. It takes time to move the people to a consensus method if they are accustomed to adversarial techniques. But it can be done. It will become easier as you train your committee or board in these practices. This style is preferable because every person is taken seriously and everyone’s ideas and concerns are heard. It is not merely compromise, or yield/yield, or win/lose (which often leads to lose/lose). Win/win is very demanding. The proposal is modified to address the concerns of various groups until everyone can support it. So everyone feels like a winner. Remember, decision-making gives power to the decision-makers. Consensus building is especially important for voluntary organizations.

3. Factors Determining the Degree of Formal Order

One can still use the elements of a relaxed parliamentary procedure in a consensus decision-making model. And in some situations a chairperson may need to lean toward more formal order and in other situations a much more relaxed approach can be taken. Here are some criteria to determine the degree of formal order that should be used.

a. The size of the group.
   In larger meetings, greater formality is needed to keep order. In smaller groups the meeting can be more informal.

b. The nature of the issue and condition of relationships among the members.
   In a confrontational situation more formality of order is necessary, whereas in a friendly situation, informality is sufficient. The degree of formality may change within the same meeting according the nature of the climate for each agenda item. One agenda item may generate a friendly atmosphere and the next one may cause the members to become tense. People begin to interrupt each other; unfair moves may be made. In such a situation the rules must be followed more strictly.

c. The amount of time available.
   Usually it takes longer to achieve consensus. Voting is quick, but support and relationships may degenerate. However, in a small, friendly situation, it may be quicker to use the informal approach.

4. A typical procedure in a meeting.

a. The chairperson calls the meeting to order.
b. The chairperson introduces an agenda item.
   1) There is a presentation and analysis of the matter. Make sure this is thorough. (Discussion before a motion)
   2) Brainstorming takes place regarding solutions (no judgment of these ideas is to take place at this stage).
   3) The body works through the steps for achieving consensus on a solution. Take the needed time to consider everyone's concerns and shape an idea that addresses as many of them as possible.
   4) As one option emerges, someone is encouraged to formulate that into a specific motion. The motion must be seconded by another member.
   5) Then the chairperson opens the floor for discussion specifically on that motion.
   6) Besides the various points of the main motion, the discussion may involve other subsidiary motions or those taking precedence.

   For example, the motion may be amended, and even the amendment may be amended. However, when an amendment is made and seconded, discussion is to be focused only on the content of the amendment and the latest amendment must be voted upon before discussion of other aspects of the matter may be resumed. If the latest amendment is accepted by vote, then the next prior amendment is considered and that amendment will now include the content of the amendment that was just voted. When the amendments are acted upon, the discussion on the original main motion is resumed with the added items of any amendments that were passed.

   6) Other motions such as ‘to table,’ or ‘to close debate’ may be dealt with according to the rules for each type of motion. Remember, that simply calling question does not force closure of debate. Debate may be closed by consensus, but it cannot be mandated unless it is a motion and voted according to the rules (2/3rds majority).
   7) When the body is ready to make a decision it may happen either by consensus, or vote or both. Readiness is determined by the chair, or by formal closure of debate. Consensus should be followed by a formal vote for the legal record. Or a vote may need to be taken without total consensus using an appropriate method of voting. The results are then declared publicly.

c. Then another item on the agenda is introduced, and a similar procedure is followed.

d. At some point, either when the agenda is finished or when the body feels it is time to close, a motion to adjourn is made and voted upon.

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**Exercise #3: How Do You Vote?**

**Instruction:** Study the following case and discuss the questions at the end.

"I don't know what we should do next, but we can't live with that vote," declared the chairman of the music committee at North Street Church. "Why in the world do we let half of the members defeat the purchase of a new organ when the other half want it and are willing to pay for it? What kind of a church is this when one of the strongest proponents of a new organ ends..."
up voting against it in the interests of peace and harmony?" He was discussing the fate of the committee’s recommendation that the church should purchase a new organ. After several months of study the nine-member music committee had voted seven to one (with one member abstaining because she expected to move out of the community at the end of the year) to recommend replacing the old organ at a net cost of $38,000. This recommendation was forwarded to the board, which by a twenty nine to seventeen vote, endorsed it and urged its approval at a congregational meeting.

The debate at the specially called congregational meeting was hot, loud, and long. Finally, after three hours, a vote was taken and the recommendation to purchase the new organ was approved 188 to 186. When the vote was announced, Bill Adams, a leading attorney in town and one of the most highly respected members of the congregation, asked for reconsideration, explaining, "While I favor replacing this old clunker we call an organ and I voted to support the recommendation of the music committee, in a voluntary association such as a church, we cannot act favorably on such a costly venture without a much larger majority. Therefore, I am asking for reconsideration in order to cast my vote against the proposal. I am doing this because many people may misconstrue a two-vote majority as a decision. In a voluntary association a two-vote majority on a divisive issue should be interpreted as a decision not to go ahead. Therefore I am asking for reconsideration so that I can vote against it and hopefully we can eliminate any misunderstandings before they develop."

On this second vote Bill Adams was joined by three others who had voted for a new organ earlier and the final vote was 184 in favor of a new organ and 190 against. It was clear to nearly everyone that the proposal to replace the old organ was dead.

**What happened?**

On the surface it appears that the proposal to purchase a new organ at North Street Church died for lack of a substantial majority.

A more careful examination of this event reveals that the decision-making and voting process at North Street Church, and in thousands of other congregations, has been "stacked" to reward negativism, perpetuate the status quo, block change, encourage apathy, stifle initiative, provoke discontent, and cause active leaders to drop into inactivity because of discouragement, frustration, and irritation.

from Creative Church Administration (Abingdon, 1975) Lyle Schaller, Charles Tidwell, pp. 38, 39.

Do you agree with the last paragraph of this case report?

Did Bill Adams do the right thing in changing his vote? Do you agree with his speech?

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**Exercise #4: Decision by Consensus (practicing building consensus)**

1. Divide into groups of six or seven members and use consensus to arrive at a group ranking of the statements listed below on “Parental Control of Older Teenagers”.

2. Do not spend a great deal of time arguing the subtleties of every point, but discuss each alternative until group members clearly understand one another, and arrive at a group ranking.
that all members can live with and support.

3. In ranking the items, place a “1” before the alternative that is deemed best, place a “2” before the alternative that is next best, and so on. Go as far as you can ranking them all.

“Parental Control for Older Teenagers”

____ Parents should not give much direction and guidance. Kids have to learn many things for themselves and should be left free to do so.

____ The best thing a parent can do for his teenager is to give responsibility with freedom as soon as he can handle it.

____ Parents have a right and a duty to keep a firm hand on their children for as long as they are financially supporting them.

___ Parental direction and responsibility are necessary if we are to have a healthy society. Giving teenagers too much freedom is like giving a child matches to play with.

____ Parents should give their children the freedom and encouragement to live their own lives. Giving direction and control will stunt creative self-expression.

III. Being an effective board or committee member.

A. Preparation for board or committee service
   (See Tennyson, chapter 6.)

1. The time commitment.
   a) When a person accepts the responsibility to serve as a member of a committee or board, that individual must commit to the time it will take for the meetings, but also for responsibilities outside of the meeting time.
   b) Committees and boards vary widely in the frequency and length of meetings. They may be held for an hour, often two to three hours, or an entire day. They may meet weekly, monthly, and some meet just once a year. It is important to find out the time commitment expected for meetings when one agrees to serve.
   c) Some boards have rules that penalize absent members; for example, a member will lose his or her position after three unexcused absences.
   d) Besides the actual time in a meeting, a member needs to prepare before the meeting by studying the agenda and any documents provided.
   e) There may have been research assignments or other homework that need to be completed in preparation for the meeting.
f) After the meeting there may be assignments given to various committee members pertaining to the work of the committee. Such things should be expected.

2. The responsibility

Governing boards have legal responsibilities and their members can be subject to legal liabilities if they fail to carry out their duties. These are also good principles to apply to any organizational involvement, including small committees.

a) Board members are in a position of public trust, which at law is called a fiduciary relationship.

b) In general this means that they are to:
   (1) act honestly and in good faith, always acting in the best interests of the organization;
   (2) exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out his/her duties and making decisions;
   (3) not make improper use of information, by divulging confidential information or using it for personal gain;
   (4) avoid any conflict of interest.

c) In legal terminology fiduciary duty to the organization includes the duty of care, the duty of loyalty, and the duty of obedience. (Adapted from an article by Jeffrey S. Tenenbaum, “Legal Duties of Association Board Members,” November 1, 1999, and can be found at: http://www.venable.com/publication.cfm?publication_type_ID=2&publication_ID=466)

   (1) The Duty of Care requires board members to exercise ordinary and reasonable care in the performance of their duties, exhibiting honesty and good faith. They must act in a manner which they believe to be in the best interests of the association, including reasonable inquiry, as an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances. The duty of care also imposes an obligation to protect any confidential information obtained while serving the association.

   (2) The Duty of Loyalty means that officers and directors must give undivided allegiance to the association when making decisions affecting the association. In other words, officers and directors cannot put personal interests above the interests of the association. Personal interests may include outside business, professional or financial interests, interests arising from involvement in other organizations, and the interests of family members, among others. Officers and directors should be careful to disclose even potential conflicts of interest to the board of directors, and should recuse themselves from deliberation and voting on matters in which they have personal interests.

   (3) The Duty of Obedience requires officers and directors to act in accordance with the organization's articles of incorporation, bylaws and other governing documents, as well as all applicable laws and regulations. Every committee
member should have a copy of the governing documents whether it be the constitution and by-laws, the Church Manual, or policy book.

d) Board members cannot remain willfully ignorant of the affairs of the organization and claim freedom from liability. The risk of liability can be reduced by doing the following:
(1) Being thoroughly and completely prepared before making decisions.
(2) Becoming actively involved in deliberations during board meetings, commenting as appropriate, and making inquiries and asking questions where prudent and when such a need is indicated by the circumstances.
(3) Making decisions deliberately and without undue haste or pressure.
(4) Insisting that meeting minutes accurately reflect the vote counts (including dissenting votes and abstentions) on actions taken at meetings.
(5) Requesting that legal consultation be sought on any matter that has unclear legal ramifications.
(6) Requesting that the association’s accountants assess and evaluate any matter that has significant financial ramifications.
(7) Obtaining and carefully reviewing both audited and unaudited periodic financial reports of the association.
(8) Attending the association’s meetings and reading the association’s publications carefully to keep fully apprised of the organization’s policies and activities.
(9) Reviewing from time to time the association’s articles of incorporation, bylaws and other governing documents.
(10) Avoiding completely any conflicts of interest in dealing with the association and fully disclosing any potential conflicts.

3. The Spiritual Preparation

a) One of the unique things about a spiritual organization such as the church as opposed to a public or community organization is its interface with the supernatural. The church operates not just on the basis of human dynamics, psychology, the forces of competition, etc., but it operates with the awareness of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and the headship of Jesus Christ.

b) This means that spiritual tools will also be used in the conduct of its business. Prayer will be seen as a tool of communication between organization and management. The use of Scripture is a tool of communication and guidance. It is part of the authority to which we have the duty of obedience. Confession and forgiveness are important tools for correcting mistakes and building relationships. Worship recognizes authority relationships upon which the organization is built. Spiritual gifts enable the organization to accomplish its goals. Stewardship is the motivation for providing the needed resources.

c) Consequently, whenever we approach the task of meeting to conduct church business, we must prepare ourselves spiritually so that these tools will be ready to be used and God can work through our lives in accomplishing His work.

d) Notice these counsels from Ellen White:
“Let those who attend committee meetings remember that they are meeting with God, who has given them their work. Let them come together with reverence and consecration of heart. They meet to consider important matters connected with the Lord's cause. In every particular their actions are to show that they are desirous of understanding His will in regard to the plans to be laid for the advancement of His work. Let them not waste a moment in unimportant conversation; for the Lord's business should be conducted in a businesslike, perfect way. If some member of a committee is careless and irreverent, let him be reminded that he is in the presence of a Witness by whom all actions are weighed.” EGW, Testimonies for the Church, 7:256.

“Let everyone who sits in council and committee meetings write in his heart the words: I am working for time and for eternity; and I am accountable to God for the motives that prompt me to action. Let this be his motto. Let the prayer of the psalmist be his prayer: ‘Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil thing.’” Psalm 141:3, 4. EGW, Testimonies for the Church, 7:258-9.

“If there were more prayer in the councils of those bearing responsibilities, more humbling of the heart before God, we should see abundant evidence of divine leadership, and our work would make rapid progress.” EGW, Testimonies for the Church, 8:238.

“When God's presence is recognized in committee meetings, it will safeguard against imprudent speeches and domineering attitudes. Let God be recognized as the supreme Ruler of His heritage. Let every man place himself under His control. Let Him be recognized in all our assemblies, in every business meeting, every council, every committee. He sees all that is done, and hears all that is said. "Thou God seest me." Let these words be kept ever in mind. They will be a safeguard against imprudent, passionate speeches, against all desire to domineer. They will repress words that should never be spoken, and resolutions that men have no right to make--resolutions that restrict the liberty of human beings.” EGW, Pastoral Ministry, 252.

“Satan attends every board meeting, every business meeting, every committee meeting, and if he can impress anyone's mind to make objections or to throw in suggestions that will delay the work hours and weary out those who are called upon to attend these meetings, he is wonderfully pleased. He has had his way in the matter. And the business which should be pushed through with dispatch, yet in an intelligent manner, is made tedious and to drag along because of the human, unsanctified elements in the character of some who are placed in responsible positions, who do not have knowledge when to speak and when to keep silent.” EGW, Pastoral Ministry, 252.

“If your committee meetings and council meetings are not under the direct supervision of the Spirit of God, your conclusions will be earth-born, and worthy of no more consideration than are any man's expressions. Christ says, "Without me ye can do nothing." If he is not honored in your assemblies as chief Counselor, your planning comes from no higher source than the human mind.” EGW, PH080 - Special Instruction Relating to the Review and Herald Office, and The Work in Battle Creek (1896), 15-16.

**Exercise #5:** Write a one paragraph summary of these counsels from Ellen White.
B. Participation in the work of the board or committee

1. The Task

Boards should not micromanage an organization. That is the responsibility of the officers. While there may be some variation in different organizations, there are certain basic duties that boards should fulfill.

a) Determining the mission and purposes of the organization.
b) Appointing the leader (president, and possibly other officers).
c) Supporting the leadership and monitoring their performance.
d) Establishing governance policies for the leadership and organization.
e) Assessing board performance.
f) Insisting on strategic planning.
g) Reviewing the basic outcomes, services, or products of the organization.
h) Ensuring adequate resources (which includes personal giving by the board member and finding other funding).
i) Ensuring good management.
j) Preserving institutional identity and independence.
k) Representing the organization to the community and the public. However, only the board chair or chief officer should speak for the board on specific decisions.
l) Serving occasionally as a court of appeal.


2. Check the Terms of Reference for your own committee to keep yourself focused on the task.

3. Make sure you do your pre- and post-committee assignments.

4. In the committee, find the appropriate level of interaction – not talking too much nor too little.

C. Communication skills.

One of the most important set of skills to develop that will help committees move forward with clarity, effectiveness, and good relationships is communication skills. Here we will touch on just a few basic skills that will go a long way to make the committee discussions productive. These skills can be summarized by the phrase, “active listening.”

“ACTIVE LISTENING is a way of responding to the speaker which implies that the listener is trying to understand what the speaker is saying, feeling, and doing.”

1. **Objective**: To bridge the interpersonal gap between you and another person as you increase the understanding you both share. A **shared understanding** means that
each of you has **accurate** information about the **other's ideas, suggestions, and feelings** -- his intentions, emotional responses, assumptions.

2. **Reception Skills:** (acknowledging by checking) These responses: (a) let the speaker know you have heard him (acknowledging) and; (b) that you wish to compare your understanding against his for accuracy (checking).

   a. **Paraphrase:** (concern with ideas and suggestions) Letting the other know what meaning his statements evoke in you.

      "Do you mean . . . (statement) . . . ?"
      "Is this . . . (statement) . . . an accurate understanding of your idea?"
      "Would this be an example or what you mean? (Giving a specific example)"

   b. **Perception Check:** (concern with the person, his feelings) Describing what you perceive the other feels tentatively and without evaluating him.

      "I get the impression you'd rather not talk about this. Is that so?"
      "You were disappointed that they did not ask you?"
      "You look like you felt hurt by my comment. Did you?"

3. **Transmission Skills:** These responses aim at transmitting information free of attack, accusation, depreciation and other relation-straining attributes.

   a. **Behavior Description:** Describing specific, observable actions of others rather than stating inferences, accusations or generalizations about their motives, attitudes or personality traits.

      "You bumped my cup," rather then "You never watch where you're going."
      "Jim and Bill have done most or the talking and the rest or us have said very little," rather than "Jim and Bill just have to hog the spotlight."

   b. **Description of Feelings:** Identifying your feelings by (1) name, (2) simile, (3) action verb and conveying it as information about your inner state and not as an accusation or coercive demand against the other.

      "I felt hurt; when you ignored my comment," rather than "You're rude."
      "I feel hurt and embarrassed," rather than "You just put me down."
      "I'm disappointed that you forgot," rather than "You don't care about me!"
      "I'm too angry to listen to any more now," rather than "Get out of here!"

   John L. Wallen 1968 r 1971

4. **Interactive Skills:**
a. **FOGGING** -- agreeing with the truth in the speaker's critical or controversial statement.

b. **NEGATIVE INQUIRY** -- coaching another person to constructively criticize you in specific areas by asking questions.

### 5. INTEGRATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS -- POSITIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVE SKILLS</th>
<th>SAMPLE STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior and Feeling Description</strong></td>
<td>A: (Silent, sober, tapping pencil on table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception Check</strong></td>
<td>“Brother A, I sense that you feel troubled about something here. Is that true?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paraphrasing</strong></td>
<td>B: “I believe I hear you saying that, as chairman, I am not directing our work efficiently enough? Is that what you mean”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fogging</strong></td>
<td>B: “I acknowledge that I have been allowing an open discussion. I like everyone to feel the freedom to speak. But tell me, what is it that you think I should do differently”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>A: “Keep us on the subject so we can finish up and go home”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paraphrase</strong></td>
<td>B: “In other words, you want me to cut off the tangents that are started in our discussion”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Discussion</strong></td>
<td>B: “I feel that there are some things that we must discuss before we can intelligently make a decision, although I can understand your desire to push along”. How do the rest of you see it”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>“Is there anything else you would like to mention”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feeling Description</strong></td>
<td>B: “I feel relieved that we could talk about this and improve our committee work”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perception Check</strong></td>
<td>“Has this been a help to the rest of you also?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. INTEGRATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS -- NEGATIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEGATIVE REACTIONS</th>
<th>SAMPLE STATEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ NAME CALLING</td>
<td>A: (Silent, sober, tapping pencil on table)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ &quot;YOU&quot; STATEMENT</td>
<td>B: “Brother A, you're being rather inconsiderate”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ INFERENCE</td>
<td>A: “You haven't participated at all and your pencil tapping is irritating us”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ REACTIONS</td>
<td>B: “You must not be very interested in the work of this committee”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ ACCUSATIONS</td>
<td>A: “You certainly shouldn't be the one to talk. Your way of chairing this committee is the real cause for the problems. We can't get anything done. We might as well not be here”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ RISING EMOTIONS</td>
<td>B: “Come on, now. I have chaired committees for 18 years. I don't know what you are talking about. I've been doing the best I can”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ NO PERCEPTION CHECK, PARAPHRASE, OR FOGGING</td>
<td>A: “Well, what you are doing isn’t what should be done”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ DEFENSIVE</td>
<td>B: &quot;If you feel that way, I'll just resign&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ &quot;YOU&quot; STATEMENT</td>
<td>OTHERS: “Oh no! Don't do that. We feel you are doing a good job”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ POWER PLAY / THREAT</td>
<td>OTHERS: “No, no! We need you both. Just put away these differences and try to get along better. Let’s work like Christians”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(☐ Committee continues with a sullen atmosphere. The committee members NEVER DO GET AT THE REAL ISSUES.)

7. Exercise #6: In groups of three, practice communication skills.
   a. Speaker, listener/responder, observer.
   b. The speaker shares a one sentence statement on one of the following topics; then the responder paraphrases what was said.
   c. The observer analyzes how it was done and shares any observations about the exchange.

☐ How to ride a bicycle.
☐ How a person can float in a body of water.
☐ Your opinion about the type of music that should be used in church worship.
☐ Your understanding of why the 2,300 day prophecy is important.
D. Group roles.

Along with the communication skills there are important roles in a committee that need to be used in order to keep the committee healthy. These roles can be used by any committee member, and can also be used by the chairperson. Being aware of these roles will help a member recognize when one needs to be used.

1. Task Roles

Task roles keep the business of the committee moving. Rather than becoming stalled, these roles help to get things going, or clarify things, etc.

a. Initiator -- new ideas or suggestions
   (1) “There is another angle to this problem we need to explore...”
   (2) “It seems to me we have gone as far as we can on this problem tonight... let’s move on to the next item on the agenda.”
   (3) “I move that . . .

b. Information seeker or giver -- asks for or makes available expert information.
   (1) “How much will a sign like that cost?”
   (2) “I called two sign painters yesterday... said could make a sign like that for $50.00.”

c. Opinion seeker or giver -- encourages expression of opinions.
   (1) “Harry, would you be in favor of this if we could get the money?”
   (2) “I know it would cost less to use volunteer help on this job, but for a room of this kind, we need a professional job.”

d. Elaborator -- a participant adds to an idea or suggestion.
   (1) “I like what Bill suggests. I know a church where this was done and it worked very well.”
   (2) “I second that motion. It seems to get at the heart of the problem.”

e. Clarifier -- senses ambiguity or lack of clarity or communication.
   (1) “Don, when you used the word year you meant calendar year, but John has been using year to mean fiscal year and our fiscal year begins July 1.”

f. Challenger -- questioning an idea; the loyal opposition. Too much of this can be harmful to group process.
   (1) “You have apparently thought this through, but I question this aspect...”
   (2) “I don’t think we should decide on this change until we find out how the women who do most of the work in the kitchen feel about it.”

g. Coordinator -- brings ideas together so that the good in each can be preserved; proposes compromises or alternatives.

h. Organizer -- identifies and assigns tasks and activities
2. Morale Roles

Morale roles deal more with the relationships among the committee members. If attention is not paid to these roles, the climate in the group will become negative.

a. **Facilitator** -- sets group structure; reminds group of the rules; keeps the communication fair and balanced.
   (1) “I thought we had agreed to analyze the problem before we started to consider solutions...”

b. **Relationship builder** -- helps people get acquainted and affirms others; expresses appreciation.
   (1) “Bill, I'm glad you are on this committee. You have a lot of good ideas.”

c. **Encourager** -- helps the quiet ones to participate and speak.
   (1) “Mary has been trying to say something for five minutes. Let's let her speak. Maybe she can help us through this impasse.”

d. **Restrainer** -- diplomatically deals with the over talkative person or with tangents.
   (1) “Tom, we appreciate knowing what you think about this, but it is important for us to find out how others feel as well...”

e. **Harmonizer** -- helps reduce tension between two individuals.
   (1) “It's alright for us to see things differently. We can love each other just the same...”

f. **Expresser of Group Feelings** – senses the groups feelings and brings them out into the open.
   (1) “I sense that the group is getting tired because of the long meeting. Perhaps we need to take a break or plan another meeting.”

3. Anti-team Roles

These roles obstruct the work of a committee and should be resisted either by gentle encouragement, private conversation, or by establishing an agreed upon group policy.

a. **Dominator** -- tries to control conversation, ideas, and actions within the team.

b. **Blocker** -- Delays, sidetracks, or stops progress within the group.

c. **Attention-seeker** -- seeks recognition (all need some recognition and the group should give it to one another.)

d. **Avoider** -- uninvolved, refuses to deal with issues and responsibilities.

e. **Expresser of hostility** -- creates a negative atmosphere; intimidates; unkind or angry.
IV. Roles and Skills of the Chairperson.

The principles and processes described previously apply, of course, to the chairperson as well. But in addition, there are particular responsibilities and skills that a chairperson should know.

A. Duties (See Tennyson, chapter 4 and 5.)

Here is a summary of the essential duties that a chairperson needs to fulfill.

1. **Call the meeting** by notifying the membership of the time and place. The group may have a standard meeting time, or there may be a need to survey the membership for a time when they are available. The secretary of the committee may assist the chairperson in this notification process.

2. **Prepare the agenda** or work with the secretary in its preparation.
   a) Encourage members to contribute to the agenda.
   b) It is helpful to distribute the agenda ahead of the meeting, so that the members can think about and prepare themselves for the discussion, problem-solving, and decision-making.
   c) Work with the secretary to make sure resource documents are duplicated and ready.

3. Check to make sure the homework is done – that is, any investigation or information-gathering regarding the agenda items, options, proposals, etc.

4. Make sure the room arrangements are in order and any needed equipment is obtained.

5. As the group gathers, **determine the presence of a quorum.**
   a) A quorum is the minimum number of members that are required to be present to conduct business.
   b) Typically it is 51% of the total members (one more than half). But it can be a smaller number or any number set by the by-laws, nominating committee, business meeting, or the committee itself. In some cases it is simply the members present although it is unwise to do business if few are present.

6. Start the meeting on time by calling it to order.

7. Facilitate some **friendly sharing, a spiritual thought, and prayer.** The chairperson may ask other members to present the spiritual thought and prayer.
   a) Announce the purpose of the meeting and the outcomes sought.
   b) Set the climate for the discussion by:
      1) Emphasizing mutual respect according to Christian values.
(2) Giving people “permission” to see things differently. It’s o.k. to have different ideas, but our attitudes and actions toward each other in our discussion need to be Christ-like.

8. **Introduce the items on the agenda** one at a time. Another member may present the item after being introduced by the chairperson.

9. **Maintain order.** This is, perhaps, the overall most important role of the chairperson. It involves the appropriate application of Parliamentary Procedure and in its most simple form the task is to prevent everyone from talking at once.
   a) An important principle to be kept in mind regarding this role of the chairperson is as follows. A chairperson should be strong and assertive, but diplomatic, in the control of agreed upon procedure, but objective and neutral in regard to the specific issues or agenda items.
   b) Generally speaking, if the chairperson wants to address the issues under discussion with personal comments and opinions, the chairperson should relinquish the role of chairing the meeting to another individual. In the role of chair, a person can lay out the issues, objectively bring options to the attention of the group, and summarize the discussion. In some committees the group may wish to hear the chairperson’s viewpoint, especially if it is the leader of the organization that is chairing the meeting. But care must be taken not to overstep in this matter. The chair is to lead the discussion in an even-handed way. (See Tennyson, pp. 58-59.)

10. Perceive when it is **time to close discussion.**
   a) Members may indicate to the chair when they are ready for closure by making a motion, or indicating that they are ready for a vote by calling question.
   b) In some cases in smaller committees, before closure, the chairperson may want to encourage members who have been silent to speak. It is better to make sure these persons have had a chance to share their thoughts now or you may hear from them later in an unpleasant way.
   c) Sometimes the discussion is prolonged, and the chairperson needs to test the readiness for closure or introduce closure.
      (1) Evidence of when such an initiative should be taken by the chairperson is when the various viewpoints have been adequately presented, the discussion starts to repeat itself, members become restless, they start to change topics, or if there emerges an action that appears to have general support.
      (2) The chairperson may ask the group, “Would someone be willing to test a motion on this subject?” (sometimes called a trial balloon) or if there is a motion on the floor, “Are you ready to vote?”
      (3) If the members are reluctant to vote, the chairperson might say, “Could we test our consensus by an informal straw vote?” The straw vote allows an indication of preference without holding people to that decision. It cannot be used as a basis for decision.
      (4) If a discussion laboriously continues, the chair might even suggest that debate be limited. E.g. “We need to move along. Perhaps someone would like to move to limit debate to 10 more minutes (or to the persons currently waiting to speak).” If someone moves that, it needs to be seconded and requires a 2/3rds majority vote.
      (5) In this way the chairperson can coach the membership in alternatives for their progress and how to use Parliamentary Procedure.
11. Summarize, repeat the motion, call for a vote, and declare the result of the vote.

12. See that assignments are made to follow through on the decision.

13. Coordinate the implementation of the committee’s work.

B. Helpful practices.

Here are a number of hints and suggestions that a chairperson might use.

1. Make sure the agenda is set at the beginning of the meeting. If any member wants to add something to the agenda, it should be made known publicly at the beginning of the meeting and if appropriate, added to the agenda. Then the agenda will be voted and closed. If there is a difference about whether an item should be added to the agenda, allow the group itself to make the decision.

2. Order of agenda items.
   a) Place some easier agenda items first to start a momentum interspersed with some harder items. They may keep a sense of movement.
   b) Order agenda items by importance so that you spend the most quality time on the things of greatest significance.
   c) Plan items in a logical order, such as making sure items that are dependent upon other items are placed after the first decisions are made.
   d) It may be helpful to mark agenda items as: information items, discussion items with no decision called for, or decision items.
   e) It is helpful to budget the meeting time by estimating a time limit for each item on the agenda. It will help the group spend more time on important things and less time on minor matters. Share this with the group so all can help monitor the progress. You might even appoint a timekeeper in the group. (See Tennyson, pp. 48-49.)

3. Watch for hidden agendas.
   a) A hidden agenda is a personal goal that one of the members may have but is not revealed publicly. During the debate of official agenda items this person maneuvers to achieve his or her hidden agenda. It often creates confusion and conflict. Other members cannot understand why the person insists on a particular stand. But it is because of that person’s hidden agenda.
   b) Options for dealing with the hidden agenda.
      (1) Suggest that the item be tabled and then talk with the person personally inquiring if there are other factors involved in that item.
      (2) Talk with the committee as a whole about hidden agendas. This may put members on notice that the others are aware of that potential dynamic.
      (3) During a debate the chairperson may appeal to the group as a whole to examine themselves for hidden agendas and ask them to focus on the merits of the item under consideration.
      (4) Prayer for selfless participation, recognizing the focus on God’s will rather than ours.
4. **Encourage participation. (See Tennyson, pp. 70-75.)** Participation is essential to personal commitment and ownership of an idea. Here are some ways to encourage participation.
   a) Ask for participation from the members and plan for it.
   b) Do not talk too much as the chairperson, and seek to limit over-talkative members.
   c) Ask questions, especially open-ended questions, or questions for clarification.
   d) Build a climate that conveys that members do have an influence on the decision.
   e) Don’t evaluate ideas too quickly, but affirm the people for their participation.
   f) Use smaller subgroups to encourage people to share with each other, and then report to the larger group.
   g) Paraphrase and summarize the participant’s contribution.
   h) Seating arrangement in a circle encourages participation.

5. **Make effective use of the “recess.”**
   a) During a committee it is sometimes healthy to take a break. During that break, besides the fresh air, and personal needs that can be cared for, there may be informal conversations that may do more to break a logjam than an hour of discussion in the committee.
   b) It also breaks the tension and refreshes people to come back and make a new start on the problem.

6. **Keep the atmosphere light-hearted and give people “permission” to see things differently from each other.**
   a) Coach the members from time to time on how they can appropriately react.
   b) Use some humor.
   c) Diffuse tense moments by identifying them. For example, “I sense that we have some strong feelings here. It’s o.k. to see things differently. We will love you just the same. But let’s work hard to speak gently and with respect.” Naming the circumstance often relieves the tension.

7. **Keep most committees to a time limit of 2 hours or less.** People tend to become unproductive after that.

8. **Encourage committee members to maintain confidentiality where it is needed.** This is especially important for nominating committees, boards that deal with personnel issues or personal problems, or other items that are agreed to be confidential.

9. **Group dynamics improve when members sit in a circle or in some way facing each other.** Follow this practice whenever possible.

10. **Keep a balance between task roles and morale roles.** Give attention to the personal needs of the group members aside from the official tasks.
    a) Generally group members will pick up on these needs and use the appropriate roles. But sometimes an important needed role is neglected. It is entirely appropriate for a chairperson to sense that gap and use that missing role.
    b) For example, the chairperson may need to be an initiator to move things along, or a harmonizer when tension develops between individuals.
11. Resist “Group Think.” (See Tennyson, chapter 9.) Group Think is the conscious or unconscious action of a group to make decisions based on popularity and coercion rather than logic, research and consensus. The inability to manage agreement is a major source of organizational dysfunction.

a) Symptoms of Group Think
   (1) There is a sense of overconfidence in the group.
   (2) A person is hesitant to express his or her real feelings.
   (3) There is an illusion of unanimity.
   (4) Groups vote on an issue with little discussion.
   (5) Emphasis is placed on evaluating members’ opinions rather than on evaluating the issue.
   (6) Sub-groups are formed within the committee.

b) The leader or chairperson may unwittingly or purposely encourage Group Think by taking the following positions.
   (1) The leader wants the group to vote his way and they all know it.
   (2) The leader emphasizes team work to the extreme.
   (3) The leader suppresses overt disagreement.
   (4) He or she views opposition as out of place.

c) People who practice Group Think may have a fear of taking risks or of receiving a label of being disloyal. There is a strong drive to be approved by others in the group or the leader. Church members may have a strong tendency for Group Think because of their belief that they must have unity.

d) How to prevent Group Think
   (1) The chairperson should encourage members to discuss matters freely
   (2) A diversity of viewpoints should be solicited. Even have supporters of a position argue against it as a test. Recognize the value of opposition.
   (3) The chairperson will seek to resist early evaluation of solutions.
   (4) The chairperson will explore objectively the merits and demerits of each solution.
   (5) The chairperson should encourage the group to examine its own processes and how it works.
   (6) Loyalty is not to be questioned if objections are raised.

C. Chairing tense meetings.

Sometimes agenda items become quite controversial and tension among the committee members is very evident. Without skillful guidance from the chairperson the meeting can degenerate into unkind and forcefully spoken words, divisive opinions and actions, and serious damage to the organization and unity of the group. Here are some suggestions for chairing tense meetings.

1. Create a climate of openness and friendliness.
   a) Give an opening speech on meeting process to set the climate. The power of suggestion will influence behavior. The speech is like an implied contract with the people. The content of that speech could include the following:
      (1) Name the fact that there are differences.
      (2) Give permission to see things differently.
      (3) Point out the difference between conflict and sinful reactions to conflict.
      (4) Assure them of fairness and giving everyone a chance to speak.
(5) Envision Christian approaches of mutual respect and courtesy. This includes careful listening to one another.

(6) Give people permission to influence one another, but it should be done in open, public ways.

(7) Ask for agreement on some rules of process.
   (a) One person is to speak at a time.
   (b) There will be a time limit for each person speaking.
   (c) No interruptions from others will be allowed during that time. (This is where the chairperson must be firm and assertive regarding the process. Intervene early at the first infraction reminding the members of their agreement.)
   (d) Keep the volume down and speak in calm, gentle tones.
   (e) Ask the group to give the chairperson the right to intervene if the agreement or rules are not kept.

2. Sample speech:

   “Tonight we have some things to discuss in this meeting that involve differences of opinion. It is o.k. to see things differently. The differences are not the problem. Only if we react in unchristian ways does it become a problem. This means we will not want to attribute motives to others, or be critical or sarcastic, or make accusations. We will give everybody a chance to speak. We want to hear what you have to say. We may learn something. Try to convince us. But we will do it in calm, friendly ways, above board. We want to be open about the issues and listen carefully to each other. In order to do this we ought to have some rules to guide our process and discussion. (Repeat rules) Are these guidelines what you would like to follow? Will you give me permission to intervene if we begin to disregard these rules?

3. Follow the consensus decision-making process for a win-win result.
   a) If the issue is important and complex, have one meeting just to discuss the issue where no decision-making will be done. Announce that ahead of time. It will release some of the tension.
   b) Then people may be ready to work on a solution at another meeting.

D. Problem-solving

A majority of matters that come to committees for decisions have to do with solving problems of some kind. Some are simple problems and others are quite complex. The problem-solving process can be quite challenging. Here is a somewhat humorous story recorded in Alvin Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck’s book, Management for your Church. Nashville: Abingdon, 1977.

1. Story and Analysis -- "For many years Christ Church had a low number of young people, ages 14-21, in attendance at Sunday morning worship. This September only two were attending regularly. It was now November, and the church leaders were gathered for a weekend planning retreat. After listing several church problems to be dealt with, they decided to tackle the problem of no youth’s attending morning worship. Following are excerpts of their conversation:
a) "Well, the problem is that young people just aren't interested in church and religion nowadays."
   (1) (Really now, which is the problem: young people's not attending Christ Church in particular, or their not being interested in church in general?)

b) "I think we've got to get to the parents. If the parents don't make them attend church when they are little, they'll never attend after they get into high school."
   (1) (Are the parents the cause of young people's not attending?)

c) "Maybe we need a special service for them. You know, their kind of music and language is different from what we have in church. They like guitars and drums and soul music."
   (1) (Well now, is the music the problem or the solution?)

d) "When I was a kid, I hated to go to church. I still remember locking myself in the attic or hiding in the barn until my daddy would get tired of looking and go off to church without me."
   (1) (How about an evangelistic program? Let's pipe the services into every attic and barn in the whole community!)

e) "I think we just have to expect it to be this way. A lot of people drop out of church until they get married and have a family. Then they come back."
   (1) (There it is! The whole thing isn't a problem after all, it's simply nature taking its course.)

2. **How do you solve** something like this? Where do you start? How do you sort it all out?

a) The first step is to **identify and define the problem**. Usually we move too quickly to the solution step.
   (1) A problem is a difference between an actual state of affairs and a desired state of affairs.

   (2) So make two lists of statements about the problem – one list that describes the actual state of affairs, and the other one that describes the desired state of affairs.

   (3) These statements may frame the problem either too narrowly or too broadly. Any frame will provide only a partial view of the problem. Once a problem frame is accepted, it is very difficult to change. The frame chosen determines where you look for solutions.

   (4) So the problem needs to be reframed early on. If it is too narrow, look at the bigger picture. If it is too broad, ask for specific examples and issues underlying the problem.

   (a) Example of a problem too narrowly defined:
      (i) Problem Presentation: “I need a spreadsheet program installed on my computer.”
      (ii) Question: “Just to be sure we understand, what uses did you have in mind for the spreadsheet program?”

   (b) Example of a problem too broadly defined:
      (i) Problem Presentation: “We have an organization wide communication problem.”
      (ii) Question: “Can you give us a few concrete examples of this problem?”

   (5) Small words in the framing of a problem can change dramatically the view of the problem and the range of solutions.
(a) For example: “I need to buy a new, midsize car,” or “I need to buy a new car,” or “I need to buy a vehicle,” or “I need a vehicle,” or “I need some form of transportation.”
(b) Each of these statements may reflect a different situation and possible solution.

b) The second step is finding the cause of the problem.
   (1) Data must be gathered about what is happening and what is not happening. Where is it happening and where is it not happening, when is it happening and when is it not happening, what is distinctive about the people or places where it is happening or where it is not happening? What changes have taken place in relationship to these distinctions?
   (2) Make a list of the potential causes that could explain much, if not all, of the data. Test each potential cause against the data and narrow the list to the most probable cause.
   (3) Another way of looking at this step is to do a force field analysis. Make a list of the forces that help movement toward the desired state of affairs and a second list of the forces that are working against the desired state of affairs. Rank these forces according to their importance. In between these two lists is the actual state of affairs. The goal is to find ways to reduce the negative forces and strengthen the positive forces toward the desired outcome.

c) The third step is to generate potential solutions.
   (1) Sometimes poor decisions are made because people stop with an inadequate list of options. Use research and brainstorming to make a robust list of possible solutions. At this stage do not critique the possible solutions or it will stifle the creativity.

d) The fourth step is to decide on the best solution.
   (1) From Johnson and Johnson, p. 241: “Systematically evaluating each alternative and analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative before making a final decision are the most important factors in effective decision-making.”
   (2) This is where the critique and evaluation take place. This is where opposing ideas help to improve decision-making. Group Think must be avoided. “. . . Members must be able to prepare a position, advocate it, defend it from criticism, critically evaluate the alternative positions, view the problem from all perspectives, and synthesize and integrate the best parts of all solutions.” Johnson and Johnson, p. 241.
   (3) Then seek consensus decisions as far as possible.

e) The fifth step is to plan the implementation of the change.
   (1) This requires good leadership skills, cultivating ownership of the ideas, education of those involved, application of the principles of change, and careful implementation.

f) The final step is the follow through and evaluation of the implementation of change.

(This problem-solving process has been adapted from: David W. Johnson, and Frank P. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills. 4th Edition. Boston: Allyn and

E. Summary and Evaluation of Committee Work (See Tennyson, pp. 76-77, and pp. 120-121.)

It would be helpful to use evaluation tools occasionally to bring awareness to the members of the committee of how they function with each other.

Committee work can waste much time. It can be awkward and greatly frustrating. Someone has jokingly said that the camel, because of its gangly and diverse features, is an animal that was planned by a committee. Too often committee work does result in an awkward collection of individual demands, or the helpless submission to a dominate few. But it need not be that way.

It can also achieve the greatest degree of unity, motivation, and accomplishment in an organization. It has the potential for widespread participation in decision-making and ownership of the result. It takes carefully developed people skills in order to bring a multitude of diverse opinions into a common direction with enthusiastic support and attractive symmetry. It is also the work of the Holy Spirit that moves people together in this way. In the larger pictures, committee work is essentially the collective effort of discerning the will of God for a particular circumstance and time.

May God bless you as you hone your skills and make yourself available to God’s purpose.

#     #     #
Exercise #7:

**A Problem Diagnosis Program**
(from Johnson and Johnson, *Joining Together*, pp. 247-250.)

This program is designed to help you in diagnosing a problem that involves people working together in a group. In this program eleven separate steps are presented, each of which contains a complete and separate idea, question, or instruction. Be sure that you understand and complete each step before going on to the next one.

1. Identify the problem you wish to work on. Describe the problem as you now see it.
   
   . ______________________________________________________________________
   . ______________________________________________________________________
   . ______________________________________________________________________

2. Most problem statements can be rephrased so that they describe two things:
   a) The situation as it is now.
   b) The situation as you would like it to be (the ideal).

   Restate your problem situation in these terms.

   . ______________________________________________________________________
   . ______________________________________________________________________
   . ______________________________________________________________________
   . ______________________________________________________________________

3. Most problem situations can be understood in terms of the forces that push toward and against change – in other words, helping forces and restraining forces. It is useful to analyze a problem by making lists of the helping and restraining forces affecting a situation. Think about these now, and list them. Be sure to list as many as you can, not worrying at this point about how important each one is. Use additional paper if you need to.

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4. Review the two lists. Underline those forces that seem to be the most important right now, and that you think you might be able to influence constructively. Depending on the problem, there may be one specific force that stands out, or there may be two or three helping forces and two or three restraining forces that are particularly important.

5. Now, for each restraining force you have underlined, list some possible courses of action that you might be able to plan and carry out to reduce the effect of the force or to eliminate it completely. Brainstorm. List as many action steps as possible, without worrying about how effective or practical they would be. You will later have a chance to decide which are the most appropriate.

Restraining force A. Possible action steps to reduce this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________

Restraining force B. Possible action steps to reduce this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________

Restraining force C. Possible action steps to reduce this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________

6. Now do the same with each helping force you underlined. List all the action steps that come to mind that would increase the effect of each helping force.

Helping force A. Possible action steps to increase this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________

Helping force B. Possible action steps to increase this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________

Helping force C. Possible action steps to increase this force:

· _____________________________________________________________________
· _____________________________________________________________________
7. You have now listed action steps to change the key forces affecting your problem situation. Review these possible action steps and underline those that seem promising.

8. List the steps you have underlined. Then for each action step listed the materials, people, and other resources available to you for carrying out the action.

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<th>Resources Available</th>
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9. Review the list of action steps and resources and think about how each might fit into a comprehensive action plan. Take out those items that do not seem to fit into the overall plan, add any new steps and resources that will round out the plan, and think about a possible sequence of action.

   - 
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10. Plan a way of evaluating the effectiveness of your action program as it is implemented. Think about this now, and list the evaluation procedures you will use.

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11. You now have a plan of action to deal with the problem situation. The next step is for you to implement it.