

Management Planning

By Olan Hendrix

Planning is the work we do to predetermine a course of action. Or, planning is throwing a net over tomorrow to cause the thing we want to come to pass. The alternative to planning is chance and just letting things happen as they will.

Estimating the future is the work we do to anticipate what tomorrow is going to be like. Many of us say we do not know this because things change so rapidly. This is precisely the reason why we need to engage in the work of estimating. The rapidity with which changes are taking place today summons us to appraise as accurately as possible what tomorrow is going to be like.

The principle resource for doing this difficult work is the study of trends that affect our organizations. Trends are not infallible but they are the best indicator we have.

Establishing objectives is the work we do to determine goals or targets. Any Christian organization that has been in existence for more than twenty years usually has no goals, just activities.

The hardest work we have to do in being the heart of an organization is determining cooperatively meaningful objectives. I seldom meet a pastor who can answer in a few words, "Pastor, what is the objective of your church? Why is your church in existence?" You would be surprised how much confusion there is regarding goals and objectives in Christian work. This, more than anything else, contributes to our ineffectiveness. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit and not have definitive goals in our work.

Developing policies is the work of formulating standing answers to recurring questions. Normally in Christian work we confuse policies and objectives. A potential missionary candidate will often ask, "What are your mission policies?" What he or she usually means is, "What are your mission objectives?"

Programming is the establishing of the priority and sequence of activities for the accomplishment of our goals or objectives. Objectives should always sit in judgement on activities.

Procedures is the standardizing of the methods of work. We in Christian work are easily lax in this area. A young man or woman is thrown into a work and told to do it, but is not allowed to benefit from what has been previously learned by other people who have gone into similar types of work. Everybody should benefit from what others have learned about a particular type of work. I have actually seen this sort of thing happen: A young missionary out of language study is assigned a town and told, "Start a church here." Start a church? What do I do now? Here is a town completely secularized and

materialistic and preoccupied, feeling no need of God or the Gospel, and this young person is supposed to start a church. No one says, "Here is all we have learned from what we have been doing so far. We still do not know everything, but here is what little we do know. We want you to benefit from it so that you can get the job done most economically in time and effort."

Scheduling is the work of putting a time factor on our program and inserting the calendar into the program with dates, hours, and minutes. Attempt to understand the mind of the Lord when he expects a certain thing done and then try to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Budgeting concerns more than just money! A new convert was asked by the treasurer of our mission, "What are your impressions of missionaries?" He had several. This man, an advertising executive, said "The missionaries that I have met put proper evaluation on money, but no evaluation on time." I agree. We are talking about budgeting personnel, time, and equipment, as well as money. Budgeting is the application of all of our resources.