

The Need for Delegation

By Olan Hendrix

Why should we consider delegation? Here are some reasons:

1. *You are not doing the big jobs that need to be done.* That is your job as the top executive. Someone says, "Communications have broken down in our church." Someone else says, "I don't know what my job is." That is your job, to help them find out what their job is. Demoralization has set in. your job is to work on that. If you are not doing these big jobs that need to be done, you should consider delegation.

2. *You are missing deadlines.* One day I sat down with Clarence Jones before I made my first trip overseas and I said, "Clarence, you are a veteran, traveling everywhere, teaching people and lecturing on various subjects. Give me some guidelines. Tell me what to do and what not to do as I make this trip." He said, "Well, it is important to work on other people's time clock. Do not take your own American time clock."

I have tried to do this, and I know that deadlines are not as important in some cultures as they are in others. I know, for example, that in Japan the more important a letter is, the more time you give to contemplation before you answer it. An immediate response, instead of being the epitome of efficiency, is the representation of laxity and unconcern. I know that about Japan. However, where deadlines are set, you should meet them. Sometimes you are caught in cross-cultural situations where to miss deadlines is to create demoralization in a staff. If you are missing deadlines, if you are backlogged so that you cannot get things done when they are supposed to be done, you need to consider delegation.

3. *You now spend time on trivial tasks that others could do.* Here, we often face a problem of false modesty when we say, "Well, I'm not too good. I can't do that." We come to our service for Jesus Christ, recognizing that there are some things which we will do that no one else is eager to do. But we must not let trivial tasks force us into a corner, particularly when all they do is feed our own ego and our estimation of how humble we are.

4. *You have people who, if trained, could handle the job better than you.* One of our biggest problems in Christian work is our failure to properly appraise the potentialities of the people with whom we work. Having done so honestly, we serve both the individual and the organization well when we pass on challenging and rewarding tasks to others.

5. *You have an imbalance in the work load of your personnel.* Some individuals are underworked and others are overworked. You must help the overloaded to learn to delegate for themselves. One of the hardest things in the world is to teach people to look always at their work with the view, "Who can I get to do this so that I can give myself to a more important task?" We allow things that we do ourselves to become boss-imposed and system-imposed activities, instead of

pushing them out and seeing that other people get them done. But often it is easier, and more comfortable when we do it ourselves. That is reverting to operating instead of managing.

6. *You have individuals who need new worlds to conquer.* They need new spheres of responsibility. People need to grow. A frequent reason given for leaving an organization is the feeling that there is nowhere left to go.