

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

A Basic Guide to the Task of Management
in the Sri Lankan Context

RASIKA ABEYSINGHE

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in the Sri Lankan Context

RASIKA ABEYSINGHE

A Theological College of Lanka
Pilimalalawa Publication (Faculty Research)

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Dedication

To all students past, present and future
of the Theological College of Lanka, Pilimatalawa

“We should never believe or act as if being Christian is an excuse to be amateurish in our work. There should be no dichotomy between being Christian and being professional.
(Myers, Bryant L 2011: 224)

We welcome this work on 'Church Administration' which has been made possible by the Theological College of Lanka Pilimatalawa Publications. We hope that we will see many more books on theology and ministry in the years to come.

The contemporary expressions of the mission (Mission of God) of churches in Sri Lanka is faced with the dilemma of sustaining its praxis, which in turn dilutes the nature of its mission itself and its administrative or management tradition. This dilemma raises many concerns, whether we are to really succeed in our calling to transform the communities we serve, the exact nature of the qualitative and quantitative growth of Churches itself, the management efficiency compared to what is seen in the secular realm, the leadership style and continuity etc. There is, therefore, an urgent need to investigate the nature and impact of the management or the administration of Sri Lankan churches in relation to the sustainability of its mission.

Church Administration is not a new field of study and practice by any means. As long as the Church has been in existence, the administration of same has been present in some form.

However in the modern day with the infusion of modern perspectives, we become open to looking at creative dimensions of the same subject.

In Sri Lanka we also find contextual and even newer dimensions which administrators face day in and day out. These must also be inculcated into our overview of administration. As our congregations become more progressive, with accountability and transparency becoming important each leader, pastor, minister, priest, lay leader etc must be conversant with the basic aspects of managing the 'Ministry of Management'.

We congratulate the writers on this work and we commend it for reading, reflection, debate, critique and creative persuasions as we become effective instruments, of God's mission through Church Administration and related aspects.

Rev N. Arulnathan (PhD Candidate, Faculty of Theology,
Stellenbosch University)
Principal (Designate) – Theological College of Lanka,
Pilimatalawa
1st July 2019

Preface

There are quite a number of books on Church Administration. Many drive on a Biblical or Practical basis. There are also specialized versions on different denominations. This area is a widely expanding field due to the renewed importance that has captured the attention of scholars, leaders and students over the years.

This book attempts to add value to the ongoing discussion on three points. The first is that it is written with the Sri Lankan context in mind and the notes have grown out of past teachers who have taught this course at the Theological College of Lanka.

Secondly it is unique that the focus on administration is made in different perspectives of Management. This seeks to shed new light on the traditional perspectives on this subject.

Thirdly this is written as a basic guide and as a text book with lay leaders and congregations in mind. The book gives many points and these can be reflected in context and with varied experience.

We thank God for the space provided for this work and for the Church education that has enriched many over centuries and also for the many who have passed through the Theological College of Lanka as ministers, administrators and workers of the Good News.

We also say a big thank you to the Theological College of Lanka

for funding and for the acting Principal Rt Revd Keerthisiri Fernando for the initiative in this regard. We hope that this initiative will result in further publications which will highlight the uniqueness of our Church and the resourcefulness of the many ministers who have passed through Theological College of Lanka and are now engaged in fruitful ministry all over the island.

We also remember the many who have helped in the completion of this project and to our printers especially to our printers.

We hope that based on this work even more meaningful discussions will take place and will result in the sharing of ideas.

Rasika Abeysinghe
Theological College of Lanka, Pilimatalwa, Sri Lanka
Feast of St Barnabas 2019

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1. Biblical Perspectives on Church Administration

The Bible, the Church and Administration

There are many administrative and management models in the Bible. These can be from the time of Moses to the Judges. It can also be from the Kings to the Prophets.

The Poetic books also give us some insights into good governance. In the gospels we find Jesus proposing different measures of how ministry must take place.

However we will be limiting ourselves to discussing only some of these perspectives from the New Testament Church. This can be found in many of the epistles written by the apostles Paul, Peter, John and others.

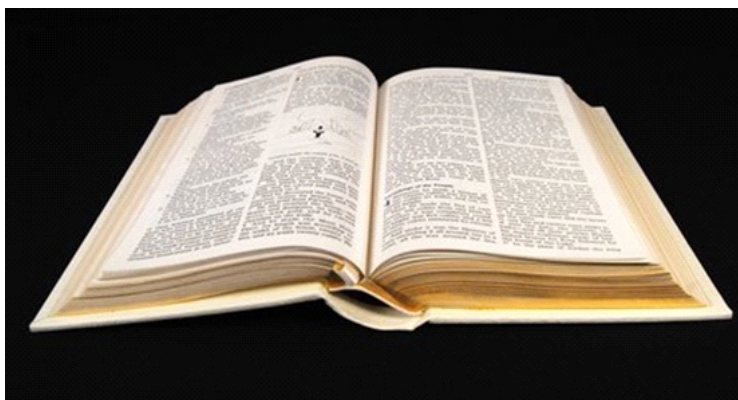
While we may not want to go into a lengthy study of the New Testament concepts in Church administration we will stick to at least one main idea from a few epistles.

Being Set Apart

(Acts 1) “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off”.

The Church or at the local level a parish is an earthly institution in the sense that it operates as any other institution. But the Church is different and it must be different because it calls for

its members and its work to be directed at another world. This may sound quite a play with words but the mission of the Church as someone has said is to 'be there for the people who don't belong to it and for their transformation'. We as the Church must understand that we are in a way special that we along with others are set apart to do God's work on this earth. Our administration must take into consideration both the aspects of being a divine establishment but also an earthly institution.



Led by the Spirit and Governed by an Order

(Romans 16) "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well".

Romans is a lengthy theological essay but at the end we find something that gives us an insight into Church administration. There is some support that must be given by the 'Church' or the community to the leaders who are appointed whether they be Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Lay Workers or Lay Leaders. Therefore we recognize that there is a need for some sort of 'leadership' that takes the mission forward. Most times this leadership can be from clergy but there must be support for them and eventually it must be a team effort.

Conflictful or Conflictless

(1 Cor 3) "And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations?"

Any organization has its own unique sets of problems and hardships. They could be extremely successful yet there are always conflicts. Will the Church be any difficult? Unfortunately the answer maybe a no because it is us humans, who are

actively participating in both these types of organizations. However St Paul had realized this long ago and gives us the wisdom of how to make our gathering in a Church different. If we remain in the flesh then our administrative task also becomes of the flesh and the result is division and conflict. However if we can overcome this we would be different than other institutions and become 'spiritual'. This passage also emphasizes that the need for being 'spiritual' is of great importance for the Church.

The Messenger and the Message

(2 Corinthians 4:5-7) “For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

We are all familiar with the vision and mission of many organizations. We might even have memorized some of them as we see much of it everywhere. According to St Paul the Church must be very clear what our vision and mission must be. If the Church is sure of this, hence the administration cannot be different from it. Our mission is the mission of Jesus Christ; it must be centered and driven on it. Our vision is to bring God's kingdom on earth. If our administration is not centered on these two vitals then our presence as a special body will not be of use either to us or to anyone else

An End result and not Immediate success

(Philippians 1) "I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

The Administration of the Church has a history of almost two thousand years. Surprising the administration of the Church has a longer history than many other established ventures such as banking or even schools. From the time of the New Testament Church which we find in the book of Acts we see various forms of administration been given. When the emperor Constantine took over the matters of the Church the Church became even more established and it lost its simplicity and humility. We must note that what we see and experience today is a structure and system which has come down to us through centuries of debate and arguments. Still we don't have the 'best' method in everything. So we still need to evolve. Our task must be with the gospel and the end which is not in our control will be completed by Jesus Christ.



A Ministry of Joy

(1 Thessalonians 5) “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

There could be quite a number of persons who may disagree with the idea of enjoying ministry. The bright faces become quite dull after being in administration because of the several rules that have to be enforced and the unpleasant conflicts that may arise. However this administration is not purely done based on our intellect. It is done with prayer. Prayer may not find any place in a secular organization. Then again as we have established the Church is not a secular organization. We begin and end meetings with prayer not because it is a tradition but because we need God's guidance to lead and to be led. Church administration therefore must be a prayer led ministry. If prayer covers us then even the weakest administrator might find wisdom on the path that must be tread.

A Ministry of Unity

(1 Timothy 4) “These are the things you must insist on and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.”

Who is the Church? We, each and every person who is a member is the Church. Our work in administration must then

be with everyone in the Church and it must be for everyone within the Church and for those who we have never heard or met. It is for this purpose that we are given a 'gift' that has been passed over the centuries to make sure that each administrator becomes conversant with his or her role. It is a position of power in secular terms but not a position of power in God's eyes. As Jesus said to his disciples 'we are doing what is our duty' and hence there is nothing praiseworthy for us as individuals.

Ministry among and Ministry with

(Titus 3) “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, avoid quarreling....”)

With Church Administration falling into another sort of 'administration' we have to deal with many other aspects. For an example Church Administration cannot be done without accounting. Even though we might go on that financial matters can be done with a spiritual motive, we become accountable, to many parties within and outside the Church. We need knowledge and skill of this trade to be effective in this ministry. We also need to have deadlines, strict discipline and above all regulations to abide. This will also enhance our understanding as the Church being an earthly structure and which must give to 'Caesar what belongs'.

We cannot stop there as well. Since we need to have partnerships with many other institutions on which our own goodwill may rely upon. These can be authorities, religious

bodies and even secular agencies. Church Administration will have to take into consideration our relationships with all these parties.

Mission Oriented Work

(James 2) “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?”

With many administrations of other organizations we find a hierarchy of persons with much bureaucracy. Most of the time, persons end up having meetings over and over again with less practice. Sometimes the 'practice' happens totally away from the persons who make decisions. On top of that there are loads and loads of paperwork which give administration a rap as a 'desk job'. However leaving this status issue out of Church Administration we are called to think of practice as equally important. This is a field that cannot be done alienated away from the people, the parish or with mission.

Church Administration has become in a way tied up with following rules and meetings. These as we have discussed above is the past that goes with the accountability that is required from the worldly authorities. This must be handled well. Yet in the center of the administration we must be thoughtful of the mission and the actual work that must be done or made possible.

When any organization becomes heavy with paperwork and theory it becomes unable to cater to the population which needs its services. Secular organizations may still deliver these based on profits, bonuses, income margins and basically successes. The Church remains a not for profit. It goes even beyond by being 'poor', poor in the sense of the vacuum that we leave for God's grace to pour in. Therefore our results are not monetary it must be spiritual and it must be calculated on transformation.

2. OFFICE AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Need of an Office

Most churches are equipped with an office. The 'Office' can be a specific room with desks and cupboards maintained separately at a parish location. However, most small and middle sized churches might maintain an Office in the vicarage or in a corner of the church vestry perhaps. In Sri Lanka having an "Office" would almost be unheard of in a rural parish.

The important matter is to separate the function of the Office from other aspects of ministry. Therefore even the maintenance of an 'Office' on one desk will also suffice to give importance to the function. What are the functions that take place in an Office in Church administration? This would seem rather a lot when we think of each and every aspect that needs to be attended to in a Church.

The minister is responsible for the affairs of the Church and the Office becomes responsible for the administration of the Church. At most times this twofold responsibility falls entirely on the minister.

An Office is maintained so that the minister will be firstly, able to monitor the main aspects of administration to ensure the smooth running of ministry. Secondly the Office will deal with the accountability of the Church towards its members, its main Church body as well as for other authorities who seek to maintain relationships with it. Thirdly the Office becomes of historical importance as it manages the records whether it be

of personnel working in the Church or financial matters or other links.

Sections of Office Management

Firstly the correspondence makes a lot of documentation to be managed. This can be from parishioners or even Church authorities such as the Diocese or Circuit. There could be letters that come from external parties such as government authorities. There must be a proper methodology of having an 'in' folder and an 'out' folder. There must also be an effective manner of attending to each aspect even minute matters.

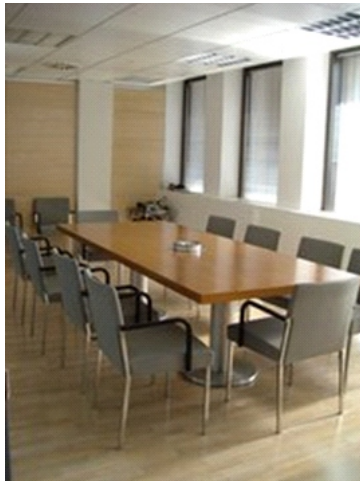
Secondly, Office Management deals with financial aspects. While we will deal with this separately as a specific issue, there are parts of this such as reports, analysis, documentation, accounts which must also come under Office administration. Most churches have their own accountant or treasurer who will at the first instance be responsible for this responsibility. If that were so then the minister will have an overlooking obligation of the function.

Thirdly, Human Resources management also comes under this category. Here we do not think of the 'human resource' as the parishioners or members of the parish but rather we look at the persons who form part of the upkeep of the Church. Here we will look at caretakers, support staff, office staff, visitors and suppliers. At times they may not belong to the Christian faith but would be of good standing within the local area.

We can also highlight the use of Information Technology as a

fourth aspect of Office administration. This will include record keeping, archiving, email correspondence etc. Churches in the modern day base much of its communication through newer social media platforms and also circulate newsletters even on a weekly basis. While there may be committees which take on this responsibility the minister will also incorporate it within the task of Office Administration.

Finally this function is responsible for the day to day running of the Church. This would mean giving permissions, handling of special functions, maintenance management, construction issues, handling of internal and external meetings etc.. There will always be a note or record of these in the 'Office' as well as communication on it.



Human Resources Management

As we have differentiated, this function deals not with congregations but sometimes with certain persons who deal with the Church. This could also include parishioners who for an example acts as a maintenance in charge who will be accountable to the Church in return. The administrator will become effective when these persons and their capacity is used and encouraged for the betterment of the mission.

While Human Resources Management has taken the modern academics and professional occupations by storm, the field itself is not new at all. This is because the idea of having 'focused and motivated' employees or workers has been a concept that is centuries old.

In Church circles however the persons who are recruited or assist the Church may not be as expert or professional as we find in a secular organization. We will find at some places retirees who give their time for Church ministry. Other times we find persons who have been underprivileged and who needs a working job, placed in some occupations. The Church may work with a builder who is at times the most pleasant and who will charge lesser and who has maintained relationships with the Church for many years.

All these aspects are challenges. In a way the Christian ethic must be maintained but also the work that must be completed must be of quality. One of the best ways a minister can be a good human resource manager will be to be at every level with every person understanding the basics and specifics of the job.

If there is an electrician who keeps on demanding higher costs, the minister will be able to get a better picture if he or she knows of as to why this happens. The minister can also delegate these duties to others who maybe more expert in these areas. The downfall of this would be that another person may not relate in the same manner as a minister would want to do. The upside of it would be that there will be more of a professional understanding between such a person and the employee.

In Sri Lanka different churches have adopted different orders for office management. They would be governed by a constitution or manuals as well as circulars. In a smaller parish the minister would be the direct employee as well as the employer. Yet if this task can be developed it will also develop ministry. And this will also encourage the Church to develop its functions which will definitely empower the mission of the Church.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Money Matters?

We may honestly wonder why money and transactions take such an important role in matters that relate to the Church. After all it is not something 'on which we are called to hope for, neither to gather'. The verses in which Jesus shows a keen disinterest in money are plentiful in the Gospels. Some verses even go so far as to label money as a 'barrier' to the relationship with God and the mission for God.

If we visit the Catholic Church establishment in the time of the emperors of Europe we would be able to find how money becomes important to the Church. At that time the Church was political and the line between government and rulers was very very thin. Surprisingly a career in the Church was an opportunity to be wealthy with a status to go with the land owning aristocratic class!

However, the blame of finance becoming a key issue cannot be blamed entirely on the Church.

From the times mentioned above to the times where separation of religion and statehood was achieved the mission of the ministry also expanded. This would mean more parishes, more land, missionary journeys, maintenance of ministries etc..The Church had to finance these or come to a system where monies received from the faithful is used for the upkeep of mission. Hence we are accountable as a Church to those who provide us finances for the mission. This is an important step in identifying the purpose of managing finances.

Categories of Finances

In most cases offerings or tithes from the congregations are received which makes up the bulk of the finances in a local church. Trust funds would also be a possibility depending on the historicity of the parish. This will then be divided into separate cost centres which will handle payments to the main Church body, purchase of items for the parish, outreach work, mission etc..It is the practice of acknowledging these gifts and at the end of a financial year to present these in a final account and a balance sheet.

A second financial generation resource will be the property that is in use in parishes. We will discuss this further in the section under property but we realize that most of the churches have ownership of land and other resources. The best utilization of these properties have been debated over and over again. On one hand this makes parishes self sufficient but on the other much income generation is made sometimes without the use for mission. But just based on the last fact the non utilization of property has also had a bad rap since valuable funds could be allocated from these resources. The 'best' utilization of these resource will require expert advise as well as collective judgement and these transactions will yield income as well as it must be noted in the best interest of all parties.

Another important aspect of finance will be monies extended to the parish via different parties for special projects. These take the shape of grants or thank offerings or even main Church directed funding opportunities. Projects sometimes

can be, till a specific event has been completed like a building or it could be long term events such as education which may run for many years. Usually they require regular reports and at the end a summary report. While all these, may not fall entirely into administrators' hands knowledge and its use will be beneficial.

Finally there could be fund raisers that are in place in parishes. These, umbrella an array of occasions ranging from a charity fundraiser to a bring and buy sale. These assist with special or general maintenance of mission. Sometimes we may have multiple events being organized by different groups in the parish as well as relating to several different groups externally. It is therefore necessary to have a management system which covers all these aspects which go on in a parish life.



Challenges in Financial Management

For the administrator the foremost challenge will be to be knowledgeable in the varied aspects that we talked about earlier. This is so as there is final accountability that will have to pass through each bill and cheque of the parish by the minister. It also is vital that persons conversant in accounts and finance

are brought into work at different levels in the parish. This is easily said than done. Sometimes most people in the parish may be working and their volunteer services could be limited. If an outsider to the church is hired for this purpose that will also be an expense on the system. It could also mean some sort of discord between the funding of money and the mission work when an outsider may view it. There is also the chance that persons who maybe handling at the first level may consciously or unconsciously make mistakes. This would land into trouble with external parties who verify the final statements.

Out of all these issues one of the most important matters in financial management will be to align yourself with the mission of the church and how finance plays a part of it. A new minister working in a well to do church, financially may face challenges from the congregation who might say no to certain commitments made on a mission based plan due to the source of funds belonging to the congregation. This might sometimes be a constant battle for each rupee. A better way of dealing with this problem will be to discuss at all levels as to how well mission can be achieved provided the finance received.

This decision will have to be taken every year and sometimes maybe even in lesser times when working on the budget. It is necessary to listen to everyone and to cater to many as possible. It is necessary to point out that there could be areas which are unique to some contexts which could be overlooked. The funds for emergency and speculative costs must also be maintained as certain unforeseen matters may arise.

Maintaining closer relationships with banks, depositing and following up on fixed deposits are also of importance to the church. Appointing of internal and external auditors as well with financial tools will also be some other perspectives of this particular management.

4. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

Types of Property

In the New Testament Church a 'church'; would have had no building and almost no ownership of anything that would be called the property of the Church. However as the story goes parishes have come to own and maintain several types of property which much be managed and utilized well.

A type called immovable property will have items that cannot be moved which includes the building of the church, vicarage, parish halls, land, natural resources on the church land etc..The second type will be moveable resources this could range from all the instruments in buildings belonging to the church. To give a few examples will be tables, chairs, books, office equipment, registers, fittings etc..

Property as a Missional tool

Most of the time we might miss the fact that property becomes the basic physical resource that complements the presence of a parish. It gives a sense of identity and it leads for meaningful mission. If a church building or a church hall is in a dilapidated condition it is the equal of the meaning we give to the presence of God. And it is not worthy of the effort made by the congregation to give adoration to God. It is therefore important to keep tabs on all property to maintain and to develop. It is also vital to improve property so that based on it, further work will be done. Inventory taking has been a much needed activity.

Further it makes a difference in stewardship. Stewardship is a recurring theme in theological circles which has got much attention in the past years. The resources that are within the purview of a church must be used for the best intentions and for best effect.

Steps in Property Management

One of the key issues of this topic is to know what you have; this would mean the taking into account of the property that is owned. It could be merely the inventory taking of the hymn books or it could be the search for deed and plans of land which 'it claims to own'. This must also be updated from time to time with the input and the output. For non moving property the church may hold onto the same assets for many years but as we discussed under financial management this could be expanded to purchases as well. This of course must be done in the spirit of mission rather than trade deals. However in Sri Lanka many denominations owned much land at the turn of the last century but due to nationalism and other issues of mismanagement this resource has been diminished. It is necessary therefore to make it correct by properly knowing the terms and conditions of property.

Secondly it is important to update property. This could mean painting a parish hall once in ten years or it could mean purchasing a new organ. As we mentioned above physical property is the background on which we the human resource follows God the divine resource. The 'world' as a general term is extremely valuable to the mission of the Church. It is sometimes in order for committees to be in charge of such

purchasing and this could be a good solution if ratified by the congregation.

Thirdly property management is an attempt to maximize the best utilization. It is a waste to buy hymnbooks which are not used by the parish. On the other hand if new hymnbooks are brought it is necessary for it to be used at least on an experimental basis. When it comes to land resources the same principle may apply. On one hand it is not necessary for leasing to be done just to make sure that some utilization is being made. However if there is land which is available it can be used as an internal resource even if it means having a picnic on it.

Fourthly property management as in any other stewardship activity depends heavily on the communication of the administration with the congregation or external parties. Much of the property the Church inherited in Sri Lanka were made possible by pietistic families as a show of their commitment towards the cause of the Church. It is necessary therefore to invest in communicating the needs of property development and the outlining of a plan so that custodianship of same will be made for the best. Sometimes churches which are of a small nature venture into external funding based on the absence of local donations. If it is done in the correct spirit this will be an exercise of good communication, relationship building and mission activity which must now be compulsorily activated.



Maintenance & Legal framework

When we talk of immovable property building plans and maintenance plans have become key in how we relate to these matters. This will also allow budgetary concessions and also develop attention of the church to these aspects. It will also be necessary to record keep of all these matters pertaining to maintenance as historical records as well as working plans.

Maintenance also covers deeds, archives, leases, inquiries, court case, surveying plans etc. There have been occasions when parishioners themselves have had much of a say in land and property matters and which have been either lost or encroached upon. This is a serious offence. Yet it continues to occur. The land of each parish dwells in the name of the head of the denomination on most occasions. And these lands are sacred maybe with the understanding of our oriental faiths.

Therefore preservation of these resources are a must from a church administration point of view. The legal framework especially when dealing with land and several properties must be the work of professional legal persons. When there are court cases each denomination will have legal experts, property committees, building and architectural committees who would share in the workload. Sometimes, deals without the relevant permissions have gone unattended for many years and has ended with the Church losing its resources. Therefore this ministry becomes of utmost value and each administrator would do him or herself well by updating on the common law relating to such matters.

5. PARISH INSTITUTIONS MANAGEMENT

Definitions and Scope

What do we mean by the institutions of the parish? Even a small scale church must have some important groups which contribute to the overall mission of the parish. In the course of this essay we might also refer to them as interest groups of the church. To give a few examples would be the Sunday school, choir, youth fellowship, women's fellowship, men's fellowship, outreach committees, worship committee, environmental committee, altar servers and side persons etc.

Some parishes may have a few of the above but always some of it. Some parishes of course have newer groups such as relief committees, building committees, social work and evangelism committees, funeral and cemetery committees, committees in charge of property etc.. Inevitably the latter large number of committees constitutes churches which are also large in terms of wealth and reach.

Importance of Interest groups

The most important aspect of parish groups or institutions is that each of these represents an aspect of the responsibility the minister must perform. For an example the women's fellowship works on behalf of the church and for the ministry of women in the parish. The minister is in charge of the ministry of women in the parish. It is on his or her behalf that the women's fellowship functions with its own setup. In another way it is a delegated duty of the main mission of the Church.

Secondly these interest groups perform varied ministries which are also of importance to the relationships the church maintain with the outer main Church. For example a Sunday school does not stand alone. Its syllabuses, methods, exams, competitions are all done in collaboration with others. It can also be done for others. In that regard these groups link the church with the main Church.

Thirdly interest groups contribute to the life of the church. It is not surprising to see a church which has a vibrant choir give some of that enthusiasm to the spirit of the church. In the opposite a choir which is nonexistent may not be able to sing a service or bring some vibrancy into the mission of the church.



Managing the Resource

The minister might inherit these institutions in the manner they have been left present. This would mean that there is a culture which is attached to these institutions which is unique to them. Knowledge of these would be of immense importance to the minister as he or she prepares to work with them. However there could be instances where he or she could

also improve the effectiveness of these groups. It can also mean that there could be a cultural change that would need to happen. Making a change is a big step in institutions which have gone unchanged for years. In the Sri Lankan and Asian contexts this would be very much present. Therefore it must be a gradual and mutual change.

There is also the instance where institutions are performing to the maximum. In these cases it is obvious that the minister must take a back step and leave the matters of the group in their own hands. Knowing the difference between these two are matters of prayer and experience.

The minister would of course still be engaging in these groups over and over again. It is customary that the minister would visit the youth group at meetings and also at their work. The time spent on both occasions are of extreme importance as it gives an alienated time for both parties to work on the best path forward. There may be conflicts between groups as well. This could be a good opportunity to work and iron out these creases.

Another important resource management technique is the participation of groups in meetings. This also allows others to contribute constructively to the group's ministry. It also provides a space for persons to air their views. Most times non representation at the trustee or warden meetings means that there is not much space for sharing. Now parochial councils and circuit meetings may provide an ideal space so that this deficiency can be corrected.

The programme schedule of the institution will next be of

importance. For a group like Sunday school teachers and students the ministry can be worship of Sundays with classes and exams. But for committees like the men's guild the orientation can be different. It could mean newer and pioneering work. The church administrator must be of constant support as they continue their ministry. Encouragement will be the presence and words of assistance a minister will share with them. But also empowerment would mean the support extended to them by delegation of authority, finances, link and promotion. Most churches have vibrant groups solely on the fact they are empowered by the leadership to perform.

Finally parish institutions must also be called to evaluate their mission and work. This is both beneficial to the church and the leadership but also to them. In cases where one or two make the crux or backbone of the group for many years this evaluation might be a hard one to pass by. Yet it is important to retain the good but also to develop leadership.

The delegation of ministry will remain completely on the processes that are in place so that even in the absence of key personnel the ministry continues. It must be a continuance based on morality and commitment rather than a secular construct of 'taking over'. Evaluation will also direct to take actions which could be sometime transformative but sometimes which would be culturally challenging. It is necessary to change, by the ethic of prolonged education and self assessment. When change is transpired from groups it is of more value than what is formulated by a minister by his or her self alone.

Parish institutions continue to promote the different ministries of the church and this must be appreciated. The belongingness of these would sometimes mean total loyalty to the parish and even coming into ordained ministry. Yet sometimes this could also mean the breaking of communion. The minister must be mindful that the work of these must be continued and hence it must be guided not upset.

6. RELATIONSHIP BUILDING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

Internal Relations

Internal relations would mean the relationships an administrator fosters with the persons who belong to that church. These are members and their families. It would also extend to others in some cases who are well wishers but not of the internal crowd. While administration means rules and law the relationship principle also rests firmly on being Christian. This could mean being Jesus centered or the Holy Trinity Centered.

Unlike on some occasions at a secular organization neglect, punishment, distancing, breaking relationships, revenge, prejudice or discrimination are not options. A spirituality which is fitting of Christian leaders would be the order of the day. This would mean seeing the best in people, forgiving, reconciling, caring, breaking comfort zones, tolerating and the most important being able to love others as one's self. We will leave this discussion here as there is no point in describing this further as this is what Christians and especially leader should be to those around them. The administrator who inculcates all these into the church plan would see that the parish would be better developed in all aspects.



External relations

We will first deal with the religious atmosphere which surrounds a church. In Sri Lanka religiosity is a fact which is present and realistic. In every region of the country we find several denominations of Christian churches as well as non Christian institutions which usually form the majority of each region.

While some of our relationships between the former sections of Christian churches are governed by our traditions, National Christian Council or the thinking by the main Church external relationships between churches can have informal connections as well. In another way it is difficult to exist without the knowledge of the 'other'. Therefore maintaining of these relationships either through visits or further programmes are beneficial to the administration. In certain cases these relationships could be hindered by historical issues or even current issues. An administrator as a face of the presence of one's church is called to build these not necessarily for one's benefit but as it is the witness of togetherness to the society outside.

Next we must also look at the village or town setting and its institutions. The members of any parish unless in extraordinary circumstances are all drawn from that area. Furthermore each member itself have their relationships and connections within that area. These may include other religious institutions, village level organizations and neighbors whose livelihoods are closely related to the setting. It is no secret that any Christian church that relates heavily to the local

setting with its majority populations thrives tremendously well than with those who don't do the same.

An administrator must be a familiar face and a presence in a locality for the betterment of mission. While there is no set form of how this can be done the occasional visits, presence at village functions, if in the arc interfaith forums, social work and festivals are some of these occasions on which a united and helpful presence can be made possible.

A third level of relationship building is the presence of the state. Being a socialist country Sri Lanka represents a major portion of its governance through state organs. These could stretch from Grama Niladharis to District Secretariats to Police to Probation departments. Based on the region there maybe unique governmental departments such as the army but generally under the state system the necessary institutions for the upkeep of government functions will always be present.

The links with these organizations have been historically worked out based on the reverence that is afforded to clergy in these parts of the world. For an example in a hospital or a police station the presence of a Church administrator will draw some respect. There is also the respect they should pay for these institutions as they assist him or her in the work of societal justice and development. In most occasions these links must be strengthened not merely because of the factor of respect but to develop that link between religion and state which must be continued for years to come.

While not necessarily an element that can be taken apart from

the above, the relationships between educational institutes such as Schools are also of great value. This is because schools have been important mission centres in the Church's view for many years. School chaplaincies were the order of the day in the colonial times and many of these schools still remain but with takeovers from the government. Schools other than providing the educational opportunity for students in the region are also places of learning in the sense of social development. In Sri Lanka with a strong sense of religiosity present in education these relationships must be maintained. Some relatedness of these educational issues have been highlighted in the atrocity that hit Sri Lanka a few months back.

Apart from these organizations there are also commercial ventures which are present in any region. These may not affect the cause of religiosity in a region but having closer affiliations will increase the administrative range. For an example developing relationships with banks will increase the credibility of the finances of a church since most of these have been maintained from years before. There may also be persons or businesses who may engage in the Church for use of facilities such as parking or special occasions. There may also be lessees who are running their businesses on parish land. In a way they become well wishers for the Church but also they are actors in the secular world. There really is no format of how to develop these relationships but as anyone who has this experience will conclude that maintaining links are of great value.

In the same manner parishes are often the spotlight on litigation and court activity whether we like it or not.

Sometimes persons from the same parish would be the offender. Working out and settling matters with these parties also become necessary for Church image as well as for future relations.

7. MISSION MANAGEMENT

What is mission?

One might think of this as a surprising topic to deal with in a book such as this. But the reality is that administration does go side by side with the mission of the Church for reasons of meaning, focus and existence. On the other corner mission relies heavily on church administration for accountability, visibility and viability. Mission in a simple way is all that we do when concerning the Church.

Interpretations would state that mission is evangelism. Some other statements will give 'what is attempted' for others. Also some others define it as 'journey of the church'. Maybe all these statements could be correct when we give emphasis to a certain aspect of the mission. But holistically mission is everything we attempt in the church within our spirituality for the betterment of society. Because we link the term church or a local parish to the definition the administration of mission becomes important.



Some areas of Mission

These may not be in the order of priority but we will try to list

some of the mission work a church may attempt. Foremost there is the aspect of worship and liturgy. This will allow for the scope of traditional and newer trends of worship, singing, cultural practices, instruments, assigning worship to different sections of the parish, ordering of prayer services and Sunday services as well as the spiritual upliftment activities which also include praise and worship sessions, fasting and prayer, conventions and in general all the liturgical aspects concerned with the life of a church. Needless to say this is what a church becomes recognized mainly to a third party viewer. This will also include services for baptism, marriage, funeral and special gatherings which presents the meaning and spiritual background of being Christian.

Next we come to the work of teaching, confirmation, continuing education, Bible studies, discussion on faith matters etc which has been the historical wing of the faith which has brought down the culture to us to this day. This will enable a large scope of the Sunday school, youth education, adult education and even meetings that are conducted in which much of the matters pertaining to our faith is discussed. The link of this towards the main Church is also part of this as we as denominations will be always involved in the task of education whether it be for doctrine, discipline, finances, worship or the like.

Third in this line will be the outreach of the parish. This is specially designed to promote the virtuous behaviour which must be borne from our faith and which must be a regular aspect of church life. This however takes different forms. It can

be for persons in the congregations or for others for a varied number of reasons. Some are for persons and some for institutions. Some are on a need basis and some are a regular feature of the current budget. Some become long term like a funding for meals of a rural school or short term like gifting a cross for a specific purpose. Some larger parishes may have committees especially for this while smaller churches may do this once a year or at a special time like Christmas.

The third area will be for evangelism and the original understanding of the term. There is a criticism that most of the main line churches do not do enough of this ministry. Yet this could be down to an interpretational issue. And also we might see that churches who may end up excessively concentrating on this aspect may lose out on the many other aspects that we have been talking about. Yet the faith has indeed come down through this coupled with the ministry of education. In most churches we find groups who are very much interested in this aspect as we would find other groups for other aspects. This will be a vital ministry for many places. It also keeps the congregation in check and it calls for creative means of the propagation of the gospel.

Another area in which mission is directed heavily in modern times is advocacy. This may of course depend from church to church but there are always issues that are worth fighting for in justice. It is a mark of ministry in many of our denominations and it is essential in the time we live that we also voice up for the integrity of all creation. These may range for alleviation of poverty, to voicing against unjust structures and even to

national issues of peace and justice. This is usually the other end of the evangelism spectrum and most would debate on what is the most crucial to faith; this or the other. As an administrator it is vital to balance these issues not merely as a balancing act but rather as both are equally important as in the faith vs work debate we find in some epistles.

There are also unique issues which makes mission even richer in a context such as Sri Lanka. We are well versed in the plurality of religions in our country and these interfaith forums are a constant in all our regions. This is a platform of witness and a platform of harmony. The times have certainly passed when an extremism can be built on one's own reading of his or her scripture and tradition alone. While this happens in Buddhist, Hindu, Islam and certainly in Christian faith all over the world the importance of faith as a tool of peace and harmony is also been looked upon with extreme seriousness.

Apart from these, mission may also fall into the hands of 'administration' as a mission. Sometimes when administration is apart then the mission of any place is tarnished. Some may take up the role of developing the admin tasks to a standardized level. Therefore the 'mission' is multifaceted. The minister must contribute in all aspects. He or she must develop the strengths and work on the weaknesses. As time goes on newer perspectives of mission must also be found and progressed upon.

8. PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

The Administrator and the Administration

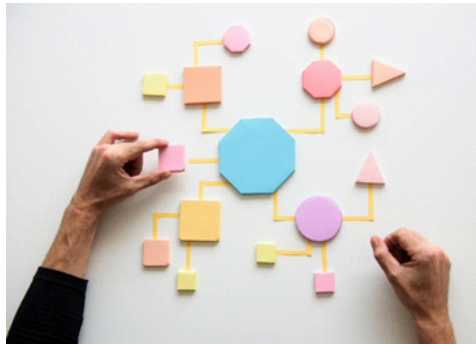
There could be some sort of invisible line which separates both the above in secular organizations. It may not entirely be the same in church organizations. This is said because unlike a 'for profit' organization which relies heavily on delegation and larger networks the Christian ministry relies heavily on the leadership of the parish. The Christian tradition has come down to us with an emphasis on leaders as we find in the New Testament church and even in congregational churches the character and skill of the person is highlighted. Other than the church tradition the system itself relies heavily on the personal behaviour, attitude and capacity of the minister to administer. Therefore let us look at some aspects which closes this gap and makes an administrator better at administration.

Delegation and Networking

If a leader loses out on this vital issue there is possibly a sad story at the end of the current journey. While the tradition leaves much room of authority in the same manner this is given by God and it must be exercised with due reverence to all those who are impacted by it. Also to complement it, the administrator will never have enough time or energy or even expertise to carry on all the duties which are associated with serving a charge or charges. Therefore it is necessary to delegate it to personnel who are trained and responsible in the carrying out of these tasks.

Very closely following this aspect is the task of networking. In

simpler terms the minister not only respects people to share in the mission of the church but also empowers them to achieve it. Networking is done at all levels with accountability and correct processes in place. This enables a smooth functioning of the programmes and its evaluation.



Education and Skills

In Sri Lanka almost all main line churches send their students to the Theological College of Lanka for the completion of theological education and ministerial formation. However even the time spent here would not suffice to equip every person as a skilled administrator.

Therefore the minister must undergo some sort of training whether it be 'on the – occupation' or at a special training programme. This would first of all include the tradition and processes needed by the main Church for accountability purposes. This would also include exposure to accounts and financial management.

Thirdly it must be on office administration, human resources and operations management. While these could be scaled down to fit the situations of a parish alone this education is necessary. However the skill is another matter. This must lie in the person's attitude to attain a certain sense of the work. In another way motivation is needed for someone to attain a certain skill set.

Attitude of an administrator is also a quality that is open to everyone. If an administrator presses for time bound results he or she must also produce similar results. Time management is also a must. With many things going on and many things planned there must be a keen sense of giving attention to the most important things and prioritizing tasks. Humility, honesty and room to grow furthers us in this task

Health Relationships

While not necessarily a direct fact health and upkeep of an administrator will also reflect on his or her interest in the field. Simple matters such as maintaining a pleasant home, balancing responsibilities in the secular and spiritual domains, balancing family and work related matters, healthy diet, regular exercise, a pleasant work space, clean grooming are some of the many aspects that promote an administrators outlook.

While the secular world may falter in terms of the spiritual goals it could teach us something in this matter. We rarely see an office or persons who have lost touch with reality in terms of pleasantness, alertness, grooming or attention. The secular

world could also instruct on timeliness, exactness, meeting deadlines and professionalism. In church settings we seem to have diluted administration as a non function but to an outsider this could be one of the few things that may catch one's eye and deal with first impressions.

Spirituality in Administration

While this is mentioned as the last on this list, it is probably the most important. As we have been mentioning quite a few times in these few paragraphs church administration becomes a secular function but in a spiritual world. Or we can identify it as the meeting point of two realms which is one way worldly but in another divine.

The administrator must realize that in his or her calling to be in charge of this church he or she is also called to share God's goodness, kindness and message in his or her administration as well. This may not mean to overlook rules or to water down on the task of management. This calls rather to know that the minister is not going on a journey alone but he or she is walking with the assistance of God. We must attempt to be God centered in this task as well. It is not to be crowd pleasing but to please God. Therefore in everything the administrator must try to act, think and perform in that spirit.

Spirituality does indeed carry the conversation longer than secularism would take it forward. It is so because we are caretakers of the mission that God has entrusted us to do in that context. The mission belongs to God and we are

instruments. Administration is also an instrument for that mission. It must never precede spirituality in importance but must also be of value to the work we attempt for God. Even if it is not in the best interest of this book, we realize that the minister who may not be well versed in administration will keep congregations interested and mission focused if he or she is truly humble and aligned spiritually. The other way around if a person becomes solely a good administrator will probably not produce this fruit as we alienate administration from the work of God. Therefore may God guide and empower all administrators as they take on this important role and strive for the Kingdom of God.

Glossary of Common Administrative and Financial Terms

Adapted and developed from

1. Accounts Payable

This represents your obligations to pay debts owed to lenders, suppliers, and creditors. Sometimes referred to as A/P or AP for short, accounts payable can be short or long term depending upon the type of credit provided to the business by the lender.

2. Accounts Receivable

Also known as A/R (or AR, good guess), accounts receivables means the money owed to you by others for goods or services rendered. These accounts are labeled as assets because they represent a legal obligation for the customer to pay you cash for their short-term debt.

3. Asset

This business finance key term is anything that has value—whether tangible or intangible—and is owned by the business is considered an asset. Typical items listed as business assets are cash on hand, accounts receivable, buildings, equipment, inventory, and anything else that can be turned into cash.

¹ Wood. M (2019, Mar 6). *Financial Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.fundera.com/blog/business-finance-terms-and-definitions>

4. Balance Sheet

Along with three other reports relating to the financial health of your small business, the balance sheet is essential information that gives a “snapshot” of the company's net worth at any given time. The report is a summary of the business assets and liabilities.

5. Bookkeeping

A method of accounting that involves the timely recording of all financial transactions for the business.

6. Capital

Refers to the overall wealth of a business as demonstrated by its cash accounts, assets, and investments. Often called “fixed capital,” it refers to the long-term worth of the business. Capital can be tangible, like durable goods, buildings, and equipment, or intangible such as intellectual property.

7. Cash Flow

Every business needs cash to operate. The business finance term and definition cash flow refers to the amount of operating cash that “flows” through the business and affects the business's liquidity. Cash flow reports reflect activity for a specified period of time, usually one accounting period or one month. Maintaining tight control of cash flow is especially important if your small business is new, since ready cash can be limited until the business begins to grow and produce more working capital.

8. Depreciation

The value of any asset can be said to depreciate when it loses some of that value in increments over time. Depreciation occurs due to wear and tear. Various methods of depreciation are used by businesses to decrease the recorded value of assets.

9. Fixed Asset

A tangible, long-term asset used for the business and not expected to be sold or otherwise converted into cash during the current or upcoming fiscal year is called a fixed asset. Fixed assets are items like furniture, computer equipment, equipment, and real estate.

10. Gross Profit

This business finance term and definition can be calculated as total sales (income) less the costs (expenses) directly related to those sales. Raw materials, manufacturing expenses, labor costs, marketing, and transportation of goods are all included in expenses.

11. Income Statement

Here is one of the four most important reports lenders and investors want to see when evaluating the viability of your small business. It is also called a profit and loss statement, and it addresses the business's bottom line, reporting how much the business has earned and spent over a given period of time. The result will be either a net gain or a net loss.

12. Intangible Asset

A business asset that is non-physical is considered intangible. These assets can be items like patents, goodwill, and intellectual property.

13. Liability

This business finance key term is a legal obligation to repay or otherwise settle a debt. Liabilities are considered either current (payable within one year or less) or long-term (payable after one year) and are listed on a business's balance sheet. A business's accounts payable, wages, taxes, and accrued expenses are all considered liabilities.

14. Liquidity

Liquidity is an indicator of how quickly an asset can be turned into cash for full market value. The more liquid your assets, the more financial flexibility you have.

15. Annual Percentage Rate

The business finance term and definition APR represents the yearly real cost of a loan including all interest and fees. The total amount of interest to be paid is based on the original amount loaned, or the principal, and is represented in percentage form. When shopping for the right loan for your small business, you should know the APR for the loan in question. This figure can be very helpful in comparing one financial tool with another since it represents the actual cost of borrowing.

16. Appraisal

Just like your real estate appraisal when buying a house, an appraisal is a professional opinion of market value. When closing a loan for your small business, you will probably need one or more of the three types of appraisals: real estate, equipment, and business value.

17. Credit Limit

When a lender offers a business line of credit it usually comes with a credit limit, or a maximum amount that you can use at any given time. It is said that you reach your credit limit or “max out” your credit when you borrow up to or exceed that number. A business line of credit can be especially useful if your business is seasonal or if the income is extremely unpredictable. It is one of the fastest ways to access cash for emergencies.

18. Debt Consolidation

If your small business has several loans with various payments, you might want to consider a business debt consolidation loan. It is a process that lets you combine multiple loans into a single loan. The advantages are possibly reducing the interest rates on the borrowed funds as well as lowering the total amount you repay each month. Businesses use this tool to help improve cash flow.

19. Financial Statements

An integral part of the loan application process is furnishing information that shows your business is a good credit risk. The standard financial statement packet includes four main

reports: the income statement, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flow, and the statement of shareholder's equity, if you have shareholders.

Lenders and investors want to see that your business is well-balanced with assets and liabilities, has positive cash flow, and will have capital to make expected repayments.

20. Fixed Interest Rate

The interest rate on a loan that is established in the beginning and does not change for the lifetime of the loan is said to be fixed. Loans with fixed interest rates are appealing to small business owners because the repayment amounts are consistent and easier to budget for in the future.

22. Articles of Incorporation

This is legal documentation of the business's creation, including name, type of business, and type of business structure or incorporation. This paperwork is one of the first tasks you will complete when you officially start your business. Once submitted, your articles of incorporation are kept on file with the appropriate governmental agencies.

From the Preface

“There are quite a number of books on Church Administration. Many drive on a Biblical or Practical basis. There are also specialized versions on different denominations. This area is a widely expanding field due to the renewed importance that has captured the attention of scholars, leaders and students over the years.

This book attempts to add value to the ongoing discussion on three points. The first is that it is written with the Sri Lankan context in mind and the notes have grown out of past teachers who have taught this course at the Theological College of Lanka.

Secondly it is unique that the focus on administration is made in different perspectives of Management. This seeks to shed new light on the traditional perspectives on this subject.

Thirdly this is written as a basic guide and as a text book with lay leaders and congregations in mind. The book gives many points and these can be reflected in context and with varied experience.”

