

Planning visuals [as all visuals!] intrigue me. I did one for my own denomination (#89: "Planning Wheel," central in the booklet for the denominational emphasis '68), and now that denomination's Office for Church Life and Leadership has come out with this: [CHURCH LEADERS BULLETIN for Laity and Clergy, Winter/77]:

STEPS IN THE CYCLE

1. **evaluation.** Initially, planning begins with evaluation. Evaluation is going on all the time in a church, although this often is informal, random, and unorganized. Here evaluation is done through an intentional process involving the members of the congregation in assessing it — its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, potential, dreams, and visions. It means being in touch with one's history, one's community and neighborhood, trends, feelings, perceptions. It means looking at what is currently going on, what it means, what assets and resources are available, what relationships exist. It means, ultimately, discerning what God has done and is doing in this congregation of God's people.

2. **recommendation.** Once a congregation has a realistic perception of itself, where it is coming from (its story, history, identity), and where it would like to go (dreams, hopes, visions), it then develops possible courses of action for itself. The key to developing recommendations is to produce as many alternatives or optional courses of action and methods for engaging in the action as possible.

3. **decision.** Once alternative recommendations have been developed, decisions need to be made from among them about which courses will be followed. One pitfall in organizational life is the temptation to attempt more action than energy, personnel, or resources are available to support. Recommendations which come before the official decision makers, therefore, should carry with them their implications about needed support and resources as well as their relationship to other aspects of the life of the congregation. When decisions are made they should include the delegation of responsibility for implementing the actions they call for and information about the resources available to those who will be responsible for the action.

4. **action.** Action follows decision. Those who are responsible for the action should have a clear understanding of the assignment and its relationship to the overall purpose and goals of the church. Action is facilitated if it is closely monitored through careful attention to schedules and timelines and by regular and visible support of those responsible.



the power cycle