

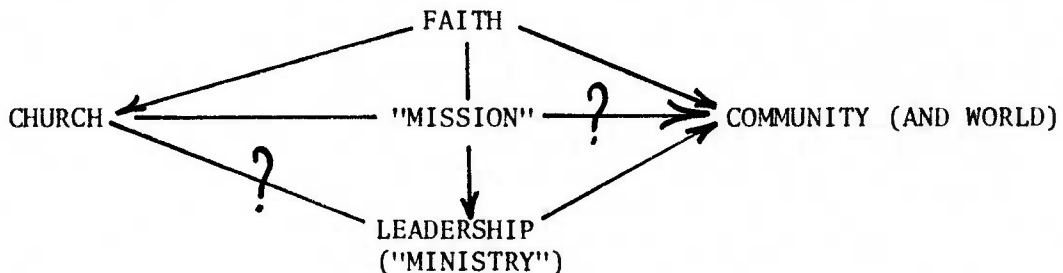
NOTE: This was my rough to the Long-Range-Planning and Search chair of my own local church--which he reworked, adding the details and rewriting, for the annual report (Jan/75). The "Action Bible Study" material is Thinksheet #531. The next stage was experimental knowing/caring groups of eight for a five-week period: a church of 1,600 members is both too big and too small (on which see Gabe Moran's RELIGIOUS BODY, Seabury/74).

For eight Sunday-seminar periods during the autumn--11.30am-12.30pm-- all who wanted to and could participate in a planning process were engaged in wrestling with questions of "ministry" and "mission," the questions whose answers shape us as a church in fellowship and service.

The first Sunday we were nine hours with Tim Savage, president of LEAD Consultants, which specializes in helping congregations surface their actual visions and wants and hopes and then interface these with what it means to be a church of Jesus Christ. This live data, produced by \_\_\_\_\_ of us working in \_\_\_\_\_ groups, was primarily about "What sort of senior minister will we need when our present senior minister retires in a little over a year?" Of the fifteen factors, the three that came highest were \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

The long process on that day came to two conclusions: (1) There's much more agreement among us as to what we need in a "minister" than we had thought, and (2) Only Jesus could qualify. The latter led to speculation as to the form of the ministry: its content being quite clear, would its form necessarily have to be senior minister + ordained and unordained assistants? Might it not be the church-manager system, with a lay man or woman of high managerial skills over several ordained/unordained "ministers"?

The next three Sundays we worked in small groups to surface responses to "What shall we do for God and his world with the resources we have as persons in this Christian body and with the resources of this body?" Careful sifting resulted in almost 30 suggestions for "mission." This diagram for displaying the factors was found helpful:



The Christian faith--trust in God as we understand him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus--should constantly inform and evaluate our lives as Christians and the life of our church in its "ministry" (of all of us in general, and officers, cleric and laic, in particular) and "mission." (Secondarily, the Faith judges community and world in the light of truth,

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