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ANALYTIC STUDY OF CRITERIA TO MAXIMIZE
THE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY
OF DECISION MAKING

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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Lynchburg, Virginia

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ABSTRACT

ANALYTIC STUDY OF CRITERIA TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND QUALITY OF DECISION MAKING

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002

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A review of current literature indicates that decision making is an evolving area of study and one of considerable importance to managers, pastors and teachers, as well as to professors and students of leadership and management. Regretfully, the subject of decision making is usually seen as merely one of several activities that differentiates managers from other employees in an organization. However, decision making is a complex process that must be understood completely and made easier before it can be practiced effectively. Given its obvious and cogent aura of organizational significance, it is surprising to note that decision making has not been pursued extensively as a subject in its own right. The literature shows that decision making is often slighted or addressed with such complexity that entangle decision making in a maze of matrices diagrams and formulas. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to develop a decision making matrix with Biblical criteria to help make quality and effective decisions in an easy and quick manner. This study indicates that most decision-maker theorists/experts validate mission, quality, acceptance, timeliness, and involving God as reliable criteria for making quality and effective decisions.

In loving memories of my father. And in appreciation of my mother, wife, four children,
and my church family for their prayer, support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis project is to develop a practical tool to maximize quality decision making in a Christian organization. The researcher's interest in decision making and problem solving began when he noticed the positive therapeutic effect it had in teaching his clients problem-solving/decision making skills; it literally revolutionized my private practice. In addition, in the process of completing a research project for the leadership class in the Doctor of Ministry Program, it became apparent that his church and workplace needed a user friendly, standardized Biblical criteria based decision making tool. Since decision making is such a critical area and in the success and quality of ministry and organizations the researcher will provide a tool that will enhance the process.¹

The Judeo-Christian religious tradition traces its roots to one incredibly bad decision made some thousands of years ago. As the Bible describes it, a serpent, with considerable marketing expertise, suggested a single alternative with an array of supposedly attractive benefits. Adam and Eve bought the sales presentation and found themselves expelled from the Garden of Eden. That makes them the first decision makers on record to learn the dangers of failing to consider the adverse consequence associated

¹David V. Lindley, *Making Decisions* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1971), 57-69.

with an alternative. Since this inauspicious beginning, the human race has continued to be involved in the business of making billions of decisions: simple, complex, important and unimportant. The good ones have been justly celebrated while the bad ones have been vilified.

All of this raises an intriguing question: Are we any better at decision making today after many centuries of practice? Spitzer and Evans find that although we have gained considerable decision making expertise individually from a number of decision making tools, the quality of decision making in an organizational context may not have improved. The increasingly complex environment in which we live and minister has such a profound influence on the way we make decisions. Therefore, it is imperative that we have some type of Biblical criteria-based decision making tool, such as the one suggested by the researcher to produce desirable outcomes.²

The researcher agrees with Molitor that in the mid-1980s many organizations invested countless dollars and time in training their employees in what was, at that time, called statistical process control (SPC). The results of this were far less than desirable. We end up with many complicated tools that caused many of the employees to shift their focus from producing/providing quality parts and service to developing quality charts and colorful graphs. Since then, we have looked for a simpler, user friendly decision making tool. The decision making tool offered in this thesis project helps the user make better

² Quinn Spitzer and Ron Evans, *Heads, You Win!* (New York: Kepner-Tregoe, Inc., 1991), 436-441.

³ Brian D. Molitor, *The Power of Agreement* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 229-239.

decisions in a quick and easy manner, while enhancing the quality of services or products.³

Basic Concepts of Decision Making

It has often been said that a common characteristic of effective leaders and effective work groups is their ability to make decisions that are appropriate, timely, and acceptable. If organizational effectiveness is defined as the ability to secure and utilize resources and gifts/talents in the pursuit of organizational missions, then the decision making process which determines how these resources, gifts, or talents are acquired and used, emerges as a central topic in organizational analysis. For the purpose of this project, the writer defines decision making as a process of specifying the nature of a particular problem and selecting among available alternatives in order to solve it. We will look at how individuals and groups attempt to identify problem areas and analyze and evaluate potential solutions to problems. We will also develop some criteria to select the most suitable solution in light of a particular situation.⁴

Statement of the Problem

The majority of failures by leaders, managers, and pastors happen because those involved did not employ effective thinking processes in tracking the problems and decisions that they faced. Not a week goes by without a major business/ministry media story about an organization that is in trouble or the leader who has resigned for personal Reasons—usually a euphemism for having done less than an acceptable job of problem

⁴ Ibid., 249.

solving, making decisions and planning.⁵

This study offers a systematic strategy that can help leaders quickly and easily select the most effective way to handle a difficult decision. When leaders use a non-systematic approach to making decisions the following areas may severely suffer:

- * Creativity and effectiveness.
- * Numerical/spiritual growth of ministries.
- * The quantity/quality of services significantly diminish.
- * The physiological/psychological well being of those involved in the decision making process can be adversely impacted.
- * Conflicts are created when values, beliefs, and personalities are exposed.⁶

Research Questions

This study will examine the following research questions:

1. *What role does strategic planning play in the decision making process?*
2. *How can you help your organization bring diverse groups of individuals together to make critical decisions in just days/hours regarding problems/situations that have been plaguing them for months and even years?*
3. *What are the major elements, variables, and criteria in deciding what solutions/alternatives to select?*

⁵ Altier, William J., *The Thinking Manager's Tool Box: Effective Processes for Problem and Decision Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 130-142.

⁶ Mileva Soula, "Quality Problem Solving, Decision making, Type and Case Manager," *Nursing Case Management Journal* 1, no. 5 (1996) : 201-208.

4. *How can you develop a model that facilitates effective and qualitative decisions and that demonstrates good stewardship of resources in a timely and easy manner?*
5. *What are some indications that our decisions are consistent with the will of God?*

This study will analyze the above questions, while offering a practical guide in maximizing quality decision making in churches or organizations.

Definition of Terms

Decision making: A moment of choice in an ongoing process of evaluating alternatives with a view to selecting one or some combination of them to attain a desired outcome.

Problem solving: A process of thoughtfully and deliberatively striving to overcome barriers/obstacles in the path toward a goal.

Matrix: It is nothing more than a grid with as many cells as needed for whatever problem is being analyzed.⁷

Decision success: A measure signifying attainment of the objective that gave rise to the decision making process.

Strategic decision matrix: A conceptual framework used to classify strategic choices/alternatives based on a set of processes and the decision itself.

Criteria: A standard, rule, or test upon which a decision can be based or judged.

⁷Frank Harrison, *The Managerial Decision making Process* 5th ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999), 1-51.

Values: The normative standards by which human beings and organizations are influenced in their choices.

Creativity: The ability to imagine or develop original ideas or things.

Planning: A managerial activity which involves analyzing the environment, setting objectives, deciding on specific actions needed to reach the objective, and providing feedback on results.

Strategic planning (means generalship): The art of the general or more broad leadership—the achievement of ministry goals—the winning of the lost and the equipping of the saints. It is basically a matching process involving ministry resources and opportunities. It includes mission/visions and core value statements.⁸

The Significance of the Study

Decisions are the core transactions of organizations. Successful organizations out decide their competitors in at least three ways: They make decisions better and faster and they implement more decisions. Without a doubt, decision making is the most significant activity engaged in by managers in all types of organizations and at all levels. Decision making is at the heart of what leaders and managers do. Although it only takes a fraction of the time, decision making is the most important task of an executive or pastor.

Managerial decision making constitutes a school of thought that believes that the central focus of management is based on decision making. Managerial values and

⁸ Henry R. Migliore, Robert E. Stevens, and David L. Loudon, *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning: From Concept to Success* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1973), 87-94.

behaviors that are oriented towards making decisions about managerial objectives are essential in fulfilling organizational purpose.⁹

Statement of Limitation

This study will not attempt to guarantee you are operating in the will of God (i.e., to substitute for scripture/prayer) but only to ensure His involvement in the decision making process. Nor does the study provide the necessary training needed to use the decision making tool effectively.

Whereas the Decision making Matrix (DMM) presented in this study can be used in many settings, the criteria may have to be modified to enhance validity in some settings. Since this is not a textbook on decision making, this research does not cover all aspects, models, variables, and theories that are involved in the decision making process.

This dissertation will only cover those principles in developing a strategic plan that relate to determining criteria needed for the development of the DMM. In fact, the criteria themselves will be more suitable for Christian organizations.

Theoretical and Biblical Basis

Theoretical Basis

The Decision Making Matrix presented in this study employs analytical techniques of varying degrees of formality. These techniques will be designed to help decision makers choose among a set of alternatives in light of their possible consequences. The Decision making Matrix can be applied to a condition of certainty, risk, or uncertainty.

⁹Peter Drucker, *The Effective Executive* (New York: Harper Business, 1996), 143-153.

The researcher recognizes that the ranking produced by using a criterion, as advocated in this study, has to be consistent with the decision-maker's mission, vision, or core value statement (strategic plan). Given a set of alternatives, a set of consequences, and a matrix to match those sets, the DMM offers conceptually simple procedures for choosing. The DMM will simulate the decision-maker's preference by either a single-attribute or multi-attribute value function that introduces ordering on a set of consequences and thus also ranks the alternatives.¹⁰

Decision making permeates the full range of managers' day-to-day activities. Organizational behavior theorists identify two alternative approaches to decision making: 1) classical theory, which views the manager as acting in a world of complete certainty, and 2) behavioral decision theory which holds that people act only in terms of what they perceive about a given situation. A manager's ability to make an optimal decision in the classical style is hampered by cognitive limitations and depends on perception.

An effective manager is one that is able to answer the following questions: (1) is a decision required? (2) How should the decision be made? (3) Who should be involved in the decision? But how does the manager choose a decision making method or technique? The DMM is one answer to the third question.

Vroom and Yetton developed the framework, which is the normative model to help managers address the aforementioned questions. The central proposition in this model is that the decision making method should be appropriate to the problem to be solved. An analysis of their approach indicates that it is most useful when there are only two criteria under consideration. The model becomes very complex and tedious to use

¹⁰George Huber, *Managing Decision making* (Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1980), 33.

when there are several criteria. Clearly, we need a more practical and user friendly approach such as the DMM. Therefore, the researcher intends to evaluate the principles that exist in the normative model developed by Vroom and Yetton to guide in developing a more practical, versatile, and less tedious approach (i.e., the DMM).¹¹

Biblical Basis

In earlier times, the questions of dispute between individuals was decided by the patriarch who was the head of the family. When Israel became a nation, men were appointed to decide the difficulties between the people. At first, this was one of the most important duties of Moses, but when the task became too great, he appointed judges to assist him (Ex. 18: 13-26). This is the principle also applied to the normative model developed by Vroom and Yetton, which we will discuss in detail in chapter four.

One important function of those who are called judges was to decide the difficulties among the people (Jg. 4:4-5). The kings also decided questions of dispute among individuals (II Sam. 15:1-4; I Kg. 3:16-28). As the people developed national ideals, judicial national councils were appointed to render decisions.

Perplexing questions were decided many times by casting lots. The people believed that God would, in this way, direct them to the right decision (Prov. 16:33; Josh. 7:10-21; 14:2; I Sam. 10:20). Casting lots must have been a common method of deciding perplexing questions (I Sam. 14:41-42; Josh. 1:7). It used the apostles to decide which of the two men they had selected should replace Judas (Acts 1:21-26). The custom gradually lost favor in decision making where even perplexing questions were formed by taking of the facts into consideration.

¹¹Victor H. Vroom and Arthur G. Jago, *The New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organizations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1988), 15-28.

The writer believes that those who cast lots were trying to ensure that God was involved in the decision making process. Therefore, one of the main criteria that will be used in the DMM will be to ascertain God's involvement by scripture and prayer in the decision making process.¹²

Methodology

The purpose of this thesis study is to develop a Decision Making Matrix (DMM) with Biblical criteria that will guide Christian organizations in maximizing the quality of their decisions. This DMM would help eliminate the complexity and longevity involved in making difficult decisions that have a significant impact on the quantitative/qualitative success of the organization.¹³

Study Population Sample

The study sample population consists of 24 church members who are enrolled in our Bible College Institute/Sunday School (40% male and 60% female) at New Morning Star B.C. in Alexandria, Louisiana. These participants were selected because of their previous theological training and were representatives of our congregation. This is a very diversified group, which serves as the team manager of our small group ministry. Three generations are almost equally represented in this sample population (buster, boomers, and builders, respectively). Participant ages range from: 21 to 35, 36 to 51 and 54 to 63. The education level ranges from high school to doctoral level (20% high school, 40%

¹² Calvin Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 75-86.

¹³ Gary Zustiak, *The Next Generation: Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Generation X and the Millennial Generation* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 1984), 13-26.

undergraduates, and 40% graduate level).¹⁴

Instruments

The Core Value Assessment (CVA) is a 50-item survey developed from Dr. Aubrey Malphurs' Core Value Audit at Dallas Theological Seminary. Each item is Biblically validated and are ministry related (see Appendix A on page 140).

A Decision making Matrix (DMM) will be developed with Biblical-based criteria. This Matrix will be used to make quality decisions in a more effective and efficient manner. The respondents will be required to rate each potential alternative derived from the problem solving process. They will rate the alternatives by using a number 1 to equal least important to a number 10 to equal most important on a scale. Then the total number will be added up and written in the column provided. The decision maker computes the total mean score of each alternative to determine the most desirable/important one.¹⁵

Procedure

The researcher will lead the 24 participants in this study to develop a strategic ministry plan. The following steps will be taken to develop mission, vision, and core value statements:

- * The 24 participants will receive training, explaining the definitions of benefits and of strategic planning.

¹⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1984), 143-148.

¹⁵ Meredith Bradsky, *Continuous Quality Improvement Handbook* (Salem, OR: Paradigm System, Inc., 1992), 22-28.

- * The 24 participants in this study will complete the CVA self-administered survey. According to Malphurs, the CVA/is a self-administering strategy; instructions appear on the first page of the audit/survey. No time limit will be placed on the completion of the CVA. But the respondents will be encouraged to rate the values as rapidly as possible.
- * Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the data generated from the completed assessment (i.e., raw scores, mean scores, and standard deviations). The standard deviation will be used to analyze the top 12 values.
- * The participants will use these values to formulate mission, vision, and value statements. These components will be essential variables/factors for developing decision making criteria in this study.
- * A systematic search of the literature will be conducted to identify, analyze, and evaluate criteria for the DMM. Vroom's and Yetton's normative model will be used as a basis for validating the criteria.¹⁶
- * A Decision making Matrix will be designed with Biblical-based criteria.

The following is a summary of each chapter included in this thesis project:

Chapter One. This proposal will become a major portion of chapter one of this dissertation work. It presents an overview which outlines this study. This proposal consists of ten main ingredients: The introduction, the statement of the problem, the limitations, the theoretical, theological basis for the study, methodological approach, a review of the literature, a bibliography, a Core Value Assessment and Decision Making Matrix.

¹⁶Ibid., 61-66.

Chapter Two. This chapter is entitled “Ministry Strategic Planning.” The researcher will include the advantages of planning in the church and the ministry. Then, he will give an overview of strategic planning and its components. Next, a brief description outlining how to develop a strategic plan will be discussed by using his ministry as an example. Finally, the researcher will present an analysis to synthesize the strategic plan components (mission, vision, and value statements) into some of the criteria of the DMM.

Chapter Three. The title of chapter three will be “The Synthesis of Problem Solving and Decision Making Approaches.” First, these approaches will be defined. Then, the researcher will provide an analysis of each process and how they can be integrated.

Chapter Four. Chapter four will be entitled “Models of Decision Making.” The researcher will describe the classical, bounded rationality, and retrospective decision model. However, the normative model components will be discussed and evaluated for relevant foundational principles and concepts that can be used to develop the DMM. This chapter will also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of individuals versus group decision making.

Chapter Five. “The Psychology of Decision making” will be the title of chapter five. The writer will be examining various psychological forces that govern the behavior of decision makers as they proceed toward rational decisions. He will also show how personality affects the decision making process. In addition, the willingness of a leader to accept risks as a decision maker will be investigated.

Chapter Six. The title of chapter six will be “Involving God in the Decision Making Process.” This is the place where the researcher will explore sovereign will and decision making. God’s morality and individuality will also be investigated in this chapter.

Chapter Seven. The various existing decision making tools/techniques will be evaluated in chapter seven. It is important for a team to approach its task in a logical, organized, and systematic manner; such as, the step method of problem solving/decision making or the DMM presented in this study. There are a wide variety of tools and techniques required to collect and analyze information. Therefore, this chapter will consist of practical descriptions, instructions, and examples of the following techniques/tools:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Brainstorm | 4. Flow Chart | 7. Pareto Chart |
| 2. Consensus | 5. Nominal Group Technique | 8. Matrix |
| 3. Check Sheet | 6. Force Field Analysis | |

Chapter Eight. Chapter eight will be an analytical presentation and validation of the criteria used to develop the DMM. Each criterion will be evaluated and compared with those most advocated by other decision making theorists. A decision analysis will be presented for weighing the criteria and ranking the proposed alternatives to a given problem.

Chapter Nine. This chapter will summarize and synthesize chapters one through eight. It will consist of an introduction, summary, interpretation, and conclusions drawn from the findings in the order of the research questions presented in chapter one. Next, conclusions that have not been hypothesized and that are not directly related to the research questions or hypothesis will be discussed. Lastly, any comparisons or contrasts between other quantitative/qualitative conclusions will be presented.

Literature Review

The literature review for this thesis project will cover four major areas. These four areas will be strategic planning, problem solving, decision making and decision making tools.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning forecasts the future success of an organization by matching and aligning all its capabilities with its external opportunities. It is through strategic planning that managers define the organization's basic mission and decide which resources are needed.¹⁷ The organization's detailed operation can be directed or decided only after its basic value, mission, or vision are determined. The shared values are the driving force of the mission and vision.¹⁸

¹⁷Mercedes Martin, "Achieving the Right Balance With Strategic Planning," *Nursing Journal* 45, no. 1 (1991).

¹⁸Harry Waterman, "The Seven Elements of Strategic Fix," *The Journal of Business Strategies* 2, no. 3 (1982): 69-73.

A review of the literature indicates that there are a few Christian writers filling the gap of knowledge for developing strategic planning in a Christian organization/ministry. The following is a brief review of some major authors that will be used in this research paper.

Aubrey Malphurs presents a careful analysis of the primary areas of struggle for pastors. He posits that pastoral training programs have neglected three foundational ministry concepts—values, missions, or vision statements. A church without either core values or mission will lack both vision and a strategy to minister to the surrounding by-culture. His book entitled, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, provides the pastor/leader with a step-step guide to developing a strategic plan for the twenty-first century.¹⁹

Migliore, Stevens, and London authored *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning*. The book explains and illustrates the strategic planning process (defining the purpose, analyzing and clarifying assumptions, establishing objectives, formulating strategy, appraising, and controlling) in concise, clear, and convincing language. This book is indicative of the authors' expertise and desire to provide churches and ministries with helpful decision making tools. The distinctions they make between strategic decisions and tactical decisions are very insightful and beneficial to this study.²⁰

¹⁹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 3-19.

²⁰ Migliore, Stevens and Loudon, *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning: From Concept to Success*, 1-159.

²¹ Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 9-149.

²² Kennon L. Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1983).

In a series of *Ministry Dynamics for a New Century* edited by Warren Wiersbe, he and Malphurs are writing about the relationship of decisions and strategic planning. His focus of his writing of *The Dynamics of Church Leadership* is the principle of enhancing decision making. Malphurs gives concise, readable information to help the leader with providing an efficient, fruitful, and productive decision.²¹

Callahan writes a book that assists churches in their strategic long-range planning, into becoming effective churches in the mission. He proposes 12 keys that will help a congregation to accomplish their long-range planning in an effective manner. Most of all, he shows how important decision making is to the success of churches ministry.²²

Problem Solving

There is a prolific amount of information on problem solving in the literature. Below is a brief summary of those that made a major contribution to this study:

Brian D. Molitor views problems as something we are faced with daily; therefore, it should be made easier. He also demonstrates how leaders are handicapped and organizations severely suffer from lack of a systematic approach to solving critical problems. Furthermore, he gives some advantages of individual versus group problem solving and decision making. Finally, the author walks the reader through the problem-solving process as it relates to decision making.²³

Morgan Jones writes about *The Thinker's Tool Kit* that he developed. He shares 14 powerful techniques for problem solving. This book is an invaluable resource for

²³ Brian Molitor, *The Power of Agreement* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999).

everymanager or professional—a unique collection of proven, practical methods for simplifying any problem in making faster and better decisions every time. It includes problem restatement, causal flow, diagrams, and utility analysis.²⁴

Ron Holman supplements Jones' 14 techniques with a practical teaching of the problem skills that, once mastered, lead to a lifetime of success in the workplace.²⁵

Although she addresses how creativity relates to problem solving, Joyce Wycoff expands on this in her book *Mind Mapping*. She shows how you can use the whole brain and thinking techniques that will lead to creative problem solving and decision making.²⁶

However, John Maxwell helps the researcher to synthesize these problems-solving processes/techniques into a Christian environment and with the ministry vision.²⁷

Decision Making

There will be an extensive review of the literature to study the foundation of managerial and strategic decision making.²⁸ The quality,²⁹ utility theory,³⁰ and the elements/factors of effective decisions will be investigated.³¹

²⁴ Morgan Jones, *The Thinker's Tool Kit: 14 Powerful Techniques for Problem Solving* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998).

²⁵ Ron Holman, *Practical Solutions for Everyday Work Problems* (New York: Learning Expresses, LLC, 2000).

²⁶ Joyce Wycoff, *Mind Mapping* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1991), 7-142.

²⁷ John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1998), 75-139.

²⁸ Harrison, 1-51.

²⁹ Saulo, Mileva, "Quality Problem Solving, Decision making Type Theory and Case Manager," *Nursing Case Management Journal*, (1996) : 5, no. 4, 201.

³⁰ Partricia Garrie, *Multi-Attribute Utility Theory in Decision making* (Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1994).

³¹ Drucker, 1-166.

The researcher will review a systematic strategy that analyzes the characteristics and the process of decision making. Then, he will examine the measurement and weight of the criteria/factors for making decisions.³² In addition, the researcher will evaluate other decision making models³³ and tools/techniques³⁴ as discussed earlier in this paper.

William J. Altier presents a decision/problem analysis for developing and implementing the Decision making Matrix. The purpose of this matrix is to give managers a practical guide to make a better decision more quickly, objectively, and creatively. Altier also provides step-by-step procedures for weighing and ranking matrix criteria.³⁵ Simon Herbert provides very helpful information allocating weights for decision making criteria,³⁶ making models,³⁷ and tools/techniques³⁸ as discussed earlier.

The book entitled *The New Leadership* written by Vroom and Jago is very valuable in evaluating the normative model developed by Vroom and Yetton.³⁹ This evaluation, along with Erickson's and Borgmeyer's case analysis, identifies situational

³² William, 43.

³³ Roger Dawson, *The Confident Decision Maker* (New York: Morrow Publishing, 1993).

³⁴ Ibid., 123-230

³⁵ William, 3-19.

³⁶ Simon Herbert, *Organizational Behavior, Performance and Productivity* (New York: The Free Press, 1976).

³⁷ Vroom and Yetton, 111-121

³⁸ Eva Erickson and Vera Borgmeyer, "Simulated Decision making Experience Via Case Analysis" *Journal of Nursing Administration* (1997) : 49, no. 2.

³⁹ Vroom and Yetton, 143-150

variables in the decision making process which help validate some of the criteria that will be used in the DMM.⁴⁰

Gary Friesen's Biblical synthesis of God's will in decision making offers a scriptural dimension. He applies decision making to an array of areas (i.e., ministry, marriage, mission etc.). This book will assist the researcher in developing a Decision Making Matrix with criteria to ensure that God is involved in the process.⁴¹

The advantages of using ministry teams for strategic planning and the quality control of decision making is well explored by Ken Gangel.⁴² Janis and Mann add to those advantages by explaining the task/maintenance functions in group problem solving and decision making.⁴³

Banks and Powers make a noteworthy distinction between faith and risk taking. They suggest that risk taking involves making decisions in a climate of uncertainty. Whereas risk taking is clearly tied to the leader of faith, it is not to be equal with it. A key area of risk taking for faith-based leaders involves the attempt to align an organization's mission or vision for the future, with leaders' vision of the Kingdom of God.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Erickson and Borgmeyer, 12.

⁴¹ Friesen, 23-421.

⁴² Kenn Gangel, *Coaching Ministry Teams: Leadership and Management in Christian Organizations* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 2000), 77-189.

⁴³ Irving L. Janis and Leon Mann, *Decision making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict Choice and Commitment* (New York: Free Press, 1977).

⁴⁴ Robert Banks and Kimberly Powers, *Faith in Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 3-213.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will include the advantages of planning in the church or the ministry. Then, he will give an overview of strategic planning and its components. Next, a brief description outlining how to develop a strategic plan will be discussed by using his ministry as an example. Finally, the researcher will present an analysis that synthesize the strategic plan components (mission, vision, and value statements) into some of the criteria of the Decision Making Matrix (DMM). The purpose of this chapter is to establish an integrative approach to show how the strategic planning components are integrated into a mission statement, which becomes a criterion for the DMM.

Advantages of Planning

Planning is a continuous process, which involves analyzing the environment, setting objectives, deciding on specific actions needed to reach the objectives, and providing feedback on results. The advantage of planning in a church ministry includes:

1. Assessment of the church's market position. This involves what is termed a SWOT analysis-examining the church's internal Strengths and Weaknesses

and external Opportunities and Threats. Without explicit planning these elements may go unrecognized.

2. Establishment of goals, objectives, priorities, and strategies to be completed within specified time periods. Planning will enable the church to assess accomplishment of the goals that are set and will help motivate staff and members to work together to achieve shared goals.
3. Achieve greater staff and member commitment and teamwork aimed at meeting challenges and solving problems presented by changing conditions.
4. Manage its resources to meet these changes through anticipation and preparation. “Adapt or die” is a very accurate admonition.¹

What is Strategic Planning?

The word “strategic” means pertaining to strategy. Strategy is derived from the Greek word *strategia*, which means generalship, art of the general, or more broadly, leadership. The word strategic, when used in the context of planning, provides a prospective to planning, which is long range in nature and deals with achieving specified results. Just as military strategy has as its objective, the winning of a war, so too strategic planning has as its objective the achievement of ministry goals—the winning of the lost and the equipping of the saints.

The strategic planning process is basically a matching process involving ministry resources and opportunities. The objective of this process is to peer through the “strategic window” (an opportunity that will not always be there) and identify opportunities which

¹ Gary Dessler, *Human Resource Management* 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994), 670-673.

the individual church or ministry is equipped to take advantage of or respond in an appropriate manner. Thus, the strategic management process can be defined as a managerial process which involves matching ministry capabilities to ministry opportunities.

The context in which these strategic decisions are made are: the church or ministry operating environment, the ministry purpose or mission, and the objectives. Strategic planning is the process that ties all these elements together to facilitate strategic choices that are consistent with all three areas. Then these choices should be implemented and evaluated.

It is important to recognize at this point what we call “the two Ps.” The first “P” means Product: get the plan in writing. When it is in writing, you are indicating to yourself and others that you are serious about it. The second “P” represents Process. Every plan must have maximum input from everyone. Those who execute the plan must be involved in construction of the plan.

The Bible tells us to obtain input (Proverbs 18:22; 19:20, 20:18). The DMM developed by the researchers will greatly facilitate this process. Strategic planning involves the following steps:

- * *Defining an organization’s purpose/mission and reason for existing:* By verbalizing and putting in writing the vision God has given you for your church or ministry, you in effect, state the unique reason God has brought your organization into existence. This provides the sense of direction and focus for what you do. In-other-words, the statement of purpose translates

what God has divinely ordained into a mission for your church or ministry to fulfill.

- * *Analysis and assumptions:* Many organizations have found it useful to use an analysis framework referred to earlier as a SWOT analysis. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Strengths and weaknesses refer to elements internal to the organization, while opportunities and threats are external to the organization.³
- * *Establishing objectives:* Setting objectives is another major part of the strategic planning process. The necessity for objectives as well as their characteristics laid the groundwork for identifying basic types of objectives, such as attendance, contributions, and constituents. The objectives can be used both as a source of direction and to evaluate the strategies developed in the plan.
- * *Strategic development:* After developing a set of objectives for the time period covered by the strategic plan, a strategy to accomplish those objectives must be formulated. Strategy is the link between objectives and results.
- * *Operational plans:* After all steps have been taken and the strategy has been developed to meet your objectives and goals, it is time to develop an operational or action plan. This is the action/doing stage. Operational plans must be developed for all the areas that are used to support the overall strategy. These include production, communication, finance and staffing.⁴

³ Migliore, Stevens, and Loudon, *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning: From Concept to Success*, 19-88.

⁴ Drucker, *The Effective Executive*, 52-112.

The Definition of Core Values

Core values are the constant passionate, Biblical core beliefs that drive the ministry. Let us take this definition apart and examine the parts to make its meaning clearer.

- * *Constant:* First, values are constant. While things around us are changing your ministry's values should not change appreciably. If they change significantly, the results will be chaos in the church. Luke has recorded the Jerusalem church's core values in Acts 2:42-47. The Jerusalem church's core values are expository teaching, fellowship, prayer, Biblical community, praise, worship and evangelism. These were the church's bottom line, what it stood for. Had they suddenly decided to change one of them, such as evangelism, the results would have left followers confused, bewildered, and angry.
- * *Passionate:* Second, core values are passionate. Passion is a feeling word. It means that you feel strongly about these values. In other words they are the values that stir emotions.
- * *Biblical:* Third, core values are Biblical. That means that they are most likely they are sourced somewhere in the Bible.
- * *Beliefs:* Fourth, core values are core beliefs. If you were to list all of the church's values, there would be many. Some, however, influence your people more than others. They are your core values. They are also your beliefs—your ministry's fundamental convictions or intrinsic precepts that define it—just as the Jerusalem church's values in Acts 2 tell what defined it.

- * *Drive the Ministry:* Finally, core values drive the ministry. They sit in the driver's seat of the ministry vehicle. They quietly, often imperceptibly, move the ministry in a particular direction or better, strongly influence that direction.⁸ Among other things this includes such vital areas as the decision made, risk taken, problem solved, priorities determined, and goals set. Since these factors will be discussed in greater detail later in this research paper, it is sufficient to show how they relate to core values in this chapter.

Decisions Made

A ministry makes hundreds of decisions at various levels of the organization every day. They have to say yes to some and no to others. In a time of accelerating transition, it is difficult to say wait. To put off a decision only adds to change and chaos, and could mean ministry disaster. In order to prevent this the researcher has developed a criterion that asks "What will be significant if the problem is ignored?" How can the ministry know what is the correct or incorrect decision?

While some decisions are clear the majority are not, which makes it very difficult for leaders who have to make them. Leaders will find the answer to this dilemma in the DMM with core values synthesized into the matrix's criteria. Virtually all decisions will be rooted in the core values. The ministry that develops a clear set of values, shared by the ministry team, will make better decisions than those that have not developed their value set. They will clearly understand and share why they have done what they have done.

⁸ Aubrey Malphrus, *Values-Driving Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books Inc., 1996), 13-31.

In Acts 6:1-4, the apostles were confronted with a problem of distributing food to widows. This reflected on their shared values; prayer and the ministry of the word were high-priority precepts. Thus, they decided not to spend their time waiting on tables, but found qualified men to meet the need.

This lessens the risk of making decisions which the rest of the team may not agree. Decisions based on unshared values may be good decisions, but those responsible for carrying out those decisions may respond with bad attitudes and poor execution.⁹

Risk Taken

Every Christian organization, regardless of its particular ministry, has to take risks to make decisions. Barnabas and Paul understood this for they were men who risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26). Organizations are found somewhere on the risk-taking continuum, between risk resistant on one extreme, and risk seeking, on the other. Most Christian organizations, especially churches are located on the risk-resistant side. The more successful ministries in terms of vision accomplishment in the late 1990s tend to be located more on the risk-seeking side.

The difference is an organization's essential values. Ministries that assign a high priority to the values of creativity and innovation are risk--seeking. Those who assign them low priority or do not value them at all are at the risk-resistant extreme.¹⁰

⁹ James M. Kourses and Barry Z. Dsner, *Credibility* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1993), 64-84.

¹⁰ James C. Collins & William Clazier. *Beyond Entrepreneurship: Turning Your Business in to an Enduring Great Company* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Princeton Hall, 1992), 50-66.

Problem Solved

A major factor in finding the correct solution is in the organization's values. The team should ask several valued questions: (1) How do our core values address this problem? (2) What solutions do our priority values dictate or suggest, if any? (3) Does the proposed solution contradict any of our vital values?

Problems were not strangers in the early church. Immediately the church faced the problem of selecting someone to replace Judas as a witness to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:21-23). Another problem was the care of the believers who had physical needs (Acts 2:45). A third was the oversight of the Grecian Jew's widows in the daily distribution of food (Acts 6:1). Regardless of the nature of the problem, the church pursued the solution based on its key values.¹¹

Priorities Determined

Every ministry has its priorities. The priorities are important because they signal not just what is important, but what is most important to an organization. In weak agencies the priorities are unclear. This may result in a conflict in priorities or it could signal a tired, dying organization.

Good organizations can identify their priorities because they understand their values. Their values directly affect their priorities. However, even the ministry with a clearly articulated set of limited core values will hold some as more important than others. An understanding of the priority values is important because these values signal

¹¹ Schuller, *Getting Things Done*, 150-153.

to the organization's followers or workers what is most important and enables them to focus their energy accordingly.¹²

Goal Set

Every Christian ministry should have a single clear vision statement that focuses its direction. The vision statement creates a picture in the minds of the participants of what the ministry will look like as it accomplishes its vision. The ministry should also have a mission statement. It is essentially the same as the vision statement, but it is a planning tool, not a vision tool.

A vital part of every planning document is a set of organizational goals. The document begins with the mission statement followed by a set of goals and objectives that will accomplish those goals. The key element in determining the goals is allowing the core values to dictate what is important to the plan. The core values function as sign posts to guide the organization to the realization of its goals.¹³ Since the core values, mission and vision statements are key elements in the decision making process, the writer will continue by establishing some guidelines to the development of a mission and vision statement.

Mission Statement

The Importance of the Mission: Mission is important for several reasons. First, it is directional. It provides the church organization with a compelling sense of direction so everyone knows where the church is going. Second, a mission is functional. It answers

¹² George Barna, *Turning Vision in to Action* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publications, 1992), 78-111.

¹³ Stephen F. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simmon and Schuster, 1989), 174-182.

the important question: What has God called us to do?¹⁴ Third, it presents the church's preferred future, so no one has to guess at its future. Within God's sovereignty, you can have a part in creating your ministry's future by determining its mission. Fourth, mission shapes the organization's strategy. The mission answers the **What** question—What are we suppose to be doing? The strategy answers the **How** question—How will we accomplish the mission? Fifth, a mission statement facilitates evaluation.

If you want to know how your organization is doing, then evaluate whether or not it's accomplishing its mission.¹⁵ Since the mission is so crucial to growth, success, and the quality of an organization's service, it is essential that it be a factor in the criteria for the DMM.

What Is Mission?

A mission statement is a broad, brief, Biblical statement of what the ministry is supposed to be doing.¹⁶ Now, as we have done earlier with core values, let us examine the main elements of this definition.

A Mission Is Broad

The first element is breadth. It is essential that a ministry's mission be broad or all embracing. The organization's master goal takes precedence over all its other goals. Mission is the umbrella over all the institution's ministry activities. This means that all goals and activities should fit comfortably under the over arching ministry mission.

¹⁴ Bruce W. Jones, *Ministerial Leadership in a Managerial World* (Wheaton: Tydale, 1998), 65-79.

¹⁵ Robert L. Satucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 116-155.

¹⁶ Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 68.

A Mission Is Brief

The second defining element of a mission statement is brevity. Brevity determines the size or length of a mission. According to Malphurs, “No standard or fixed regulation for a mission statement exists and cursory examination of corporate mission statements reveals a variety of sizes or lengths. I argue that the mission statement should be short...I believe that a good mission statement can and should be no more than a single sentence” (p. 64).¹⁷ Peter Ducker says, that it should be short enough to fit on a t-shirt.¹⁸

A Mission Is Biblical

If a mission is Biblical, it has to be found in the Bible. This means that every Christian organization and church ministry must find their mission somewhere within the sacred writings of the Bible. Therefore, the Biblical mission is from God. He is the source of all missions.¹⁹

A Mission Is a Statement

A fourth defining element is that the mission is a statement. Every ministry should have a written mission that communicates to its people in order that they can understand/support the overall goal. Writing out the mission statement puts it in a form that you can communicate in a variety of ways (i.e., church’s bulletin, brochure, newsletter, Internet, etc.).²⁰

¹⁷ Malphurs, *Nuts and Bolts*, 64.

¹⁸ Drucker, *The Effective Execustive*, 46-59.

¹⁹ Henry R. Henry, *The Use of Strategic Planning for Churches and Ministries* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House), 34.

²⁰ George Barna, *The Man Who Brought Marketing to Church: Leadership 16* (1995), 125.

A defining element of a mission statement is what your ministry's primary goal or task is. It defines the business you are in. It is not only what you want to do, but what God wants you to do.²⁰

Mission Development Process

The researcher suggests a three "P" approach to developing a mission: (1) Personnel--this step involves selecting a team and providing them with adequate training, (2) Preparation--this step involves ascertaining the need/readiness of a mission as well as the time and location needed; (3) Process—this is the development of a mission by using each of the key elements in the definition of mission (broad, brief, Biblical and written). The writer will investigate/illustrate this in detail in chapter eight.²¹

The Definition of a Vision

An organizational vision is a clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry as it can and must be.²² Let us examine the critical elements of this definition.

A Vision Is Clear

The first element is clarity. It is difficult to accomplish what you do not see and define. A leader without a clear vision has much in common with a person trying to drive blindfolded.

²⁰ Randy Frazee and Lyle Schuller, *The Come Back Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1995), 11.

²¹ Malphurs, *Nuts and Bolts*, 78-86.

²² Hoddon Robinson, *Developing a Vision For Ministry in the Twenty-First Century* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 43.

A Vision Is Challenging

The second element of a vision is that it challenges people. It enables the leader to challenge his/her people to accomplish great things for the Savior.

A Vision Is a Picture

The third element is that a vision is a mental picture. As passion is a “feeling” word, so vision is a “seeing” word. Visionary leaders have a mental picture of what the transcendent, contemporary God has in mind for His people today.

A Vision Is Future

The fourth element of vision is that it concerns the future. It is a clear description of your ministry’s preferred future. It is a mental picture of what tomorrow will look like. It depicts the kind of ministry that you desire yours to become. It is an expression of all your hopes and dreams for your church ministry.

The Vision Development Process

Now that we know our core values and our mission, the next question is how does this help us develop the vision?²³ This consists of the following two steps:

Expand the Mission Statement: The best way to develop a powerful, challenging vision is to expand the mission statement. This assumes that you have followed the order in this paper (values, mission, vision, and strategy) and have developed the mission

²³ Barna, *The Power of Vision: How You Capture and Apply God’s Vision for Your Ministry*, 83-99.

statement first. This procedure also ensures the integration/synthesization of this critically important component into the criteria of the DMM.²⁴

Describe What You See: The next step is to verbalize or write down what you see or what comes to mind as you expand and stretch the mission statement. This can be accomplished by recording several prayerful brainstorming sessions.

Definition of the Strategy

A strategy is the process that determines how your organization/church will accomplish its mission. Three terms are important in this definition: mission, process, and the **How** question.

Mission

Every good strategy begins with a mission statement—the overall goal of what the ministry is supposed to be doing. Every church needs to periodically define its mission and ask what the strategy is supposed to accomplish.²⁵

Process

Let's go to process. Disciple making is a process—it is taking people from where they are—lost or saved—and moves them to where God wants them to be—saved and mature. The process is like moving people from pre-birth to maturity. It is the ministry's means to accomplish the ministry's ends.

²⁴ Mercedes Martin, "Achieving the Right Balance: With Strategic Planning," *Training and Development Planning and Strategic Journal* 45, no. 4 (1990) : 139-143.

²⁵ Waterman, "The Seven Elements of Strategic Fix," 69-73.

The How Question

As we discussed earlier, the mission asks the What question; the strategy asks the How question: How to move people from pre-birth to maturity? Therefore, you want to develop a program that provides a means for everyone to become disciples.²⁶

The Development of the Strategy

From Mission to Strategy

The mission of the writer's church is to help people become fully functioning followers of Christ. The characteristics of such a person are three C's: Conversion, Commitment, and Contribution. These three C's help us make the transition from our mission to our strategy. We have built our program around them.²⁷

Charting Your Strategy

We have a master chart star strategy (see www.newmorningstarbc.org) to help us keep the big picture before us. However, we recognize that every ministry has a "shelf life." Therefore, we review various programs on the chart on a quarterly basis to see what does not contribute to making disciples. We also use it for balance.²⁸

This audit was developed by Malphurs, President of Vision Ministries International and Chairman of the Field of Education Department at Dallas Seminary. The Biblical foundation for this value was articulated by Luke in Acts 2:42-47.²⁹ This is

²⁶ Ibid, 70-75.

²⁷ Bill Hull, *Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House Co., 1990).

²⁸ Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 133.

²⁹ Ibid., 133-135.

consistent with Dale Galloway's belief that a sound Biblical framework must shape the decision making process.

Core Value Assessment Study

In this study the researcher slightly modified a core value audit (CVA) developed by Malphurs³⁰ and validated by other researchers such as George Barna.³¹ The CVA is a 50-item survey that is Biblically based and ministry relevant (Acts 2:42-47). The CVA was administered to 24 participants who were representative of the various generations of the congregation as suggested by Barna.³²

In accordance with Zustiak, special care was taken to ensure the inclusion of the millennium and generation X.³³ Below is the mission and vision statements for New Morning Star Baptist Church. These statements are the direct result of the top 12 core values with the highest mean score. These 12 values were then converted into verbiage for the composition of the mission and vision statements. The statistical results are presented in Table 1 on page 38 and Figure 1 on page 39.

Mission Statement

The mission of New Morning Star Baptist Church is to equip its members to become disciple makers of Christ, so they may be empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

³⁰ Malphurs, *Nuts and Bolts*, 199-209.

³¹ George Barna, *Generation Next: What You Need to Know About Today's Youth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publications, 1995).

³² *Ibid.*, 188-201.

³³ Zustiak, *The Next Generation: Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Generation X and the Millennial Generation*, 15-22.

TABLE 1

Mean Scores for Top Twelve Core Values of the Twenty-Four Participants

CORE VALUES	MS
The Great Commission	5.000
Prayer	4.875
Evangelism	4.750
Bible Centered Preaching and Teaching	4.667
The Lordship of Christ	4.667
Godly Leadership	4.542
Gods Grace	4.500
Commitment	4.333
Discipline	4.333
People	4.292
Fellowship and Community	4.292
Growth	4.250

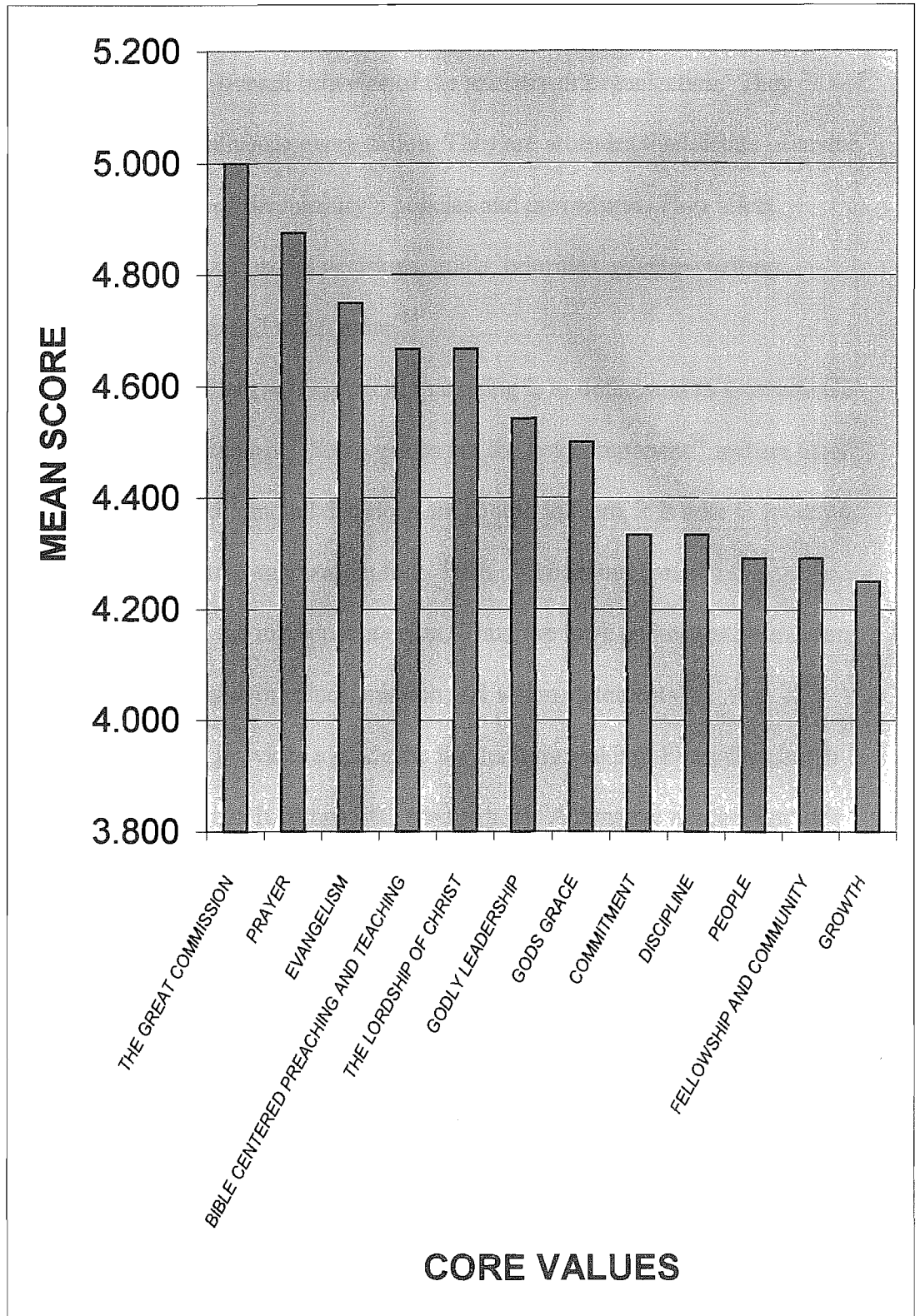


Figure 1. Ranking Mean Scores of Twenty-Four Participants Top Twelve Core Values

Synthesis

Values influence the overall behavior of the ministry or organization. They dictate every decision and influence every action. They are attitudes that dictate behavior. They make up the premises of the ministry's policies and procedures. They affect everything about the organization: Its decisions, goals, priorities, problem solving, conflict resolution, spending, and much more.³⁴

The first step in problem solving/decision making is to define and to ascertain the values/mission of the organization.³⁵ Since values are the key component³⁶ and are used to evaluate the strategic plan³⁷ and all decisions are rooted in them, it is wise to ascertain the core values of the ministry/organization first. Then, these values can be incorporated/translated into the mission statement. Thus, we have an integrative mission criterion of the organizations core values, mission and vision statements.³⁸

A mission statement provides a guideline for decision making. Everyday church leaders have to make decisions. It comes with the territory. A dynamic mission not only forces the church/organizational future, but it sets important boundaries. It provides direction for when to say yes and when to say no. A mission statement is to the ministry what a rudder is to a ship, a compass to a navigator, or a template to a machinist. It

³⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 33-37.

³⁵ Ibid., 81.

³⁶ Erickson and Borgmeyer, "Simulated Decision Making Experience Via Case Analysis," 12-13.

³⁷ Herbert Kindler, "Decisions, Decisions, which approach to take?" *Personnel Journal* 62, no. 4 (1985) : 47-51.

³⁸ Martin, "Achieving Right Balance With Strategic Planning," 30-32.

provides a framework for critical thinking, a standard or criterion for all decision making.³⁹

In developing a strategic plan for a church or an organization, the leader should start with the core values. These core values should be used to develop the mission statement, vision statement and the strategy, respectively. As shown in Figure 1 on page 39 and Table 1 on page 38, in the survey used for New Morning Star Baptist Church the top 12 core values were given importance in rank order. These items were then used to develop the mission statement, vision statement, and strategy for New Morning Star Baptist Church. The mission statement is a synthesis and integration of the values, vision, and strategy of an organization, therefore, the mission statement should be used as one of the major criteria for evaluating the alternatives in the decision making process.⁴⁰ In other words, leaders should encourage team members to use the mission statement as a criterion to rank or weigh an alternative in the decision making process of the DMM.

³⁹ Smith, "One More Time: What Do We Mean by Strategic Management?" 219-233.

⁴⁰ Meredith Bradsky, *Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement* (Salem, OR: Paradigm Systems, Inc., 1992).

CHAPTER III

DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

This chapter will discuss the relationship between decision making and problem solving. First, the researcher will discuss the distinction between problem solving and decision making. Next, he will discuss what a problem is in relation to condition, opportunity, and issues. In addition, the researcher will present the various types of problems and provide an eight-step problem solving process. Then, he gives an overview of decision making, and the functions of decision making and discusses the importance of structured decision making.

Distinction Between Problem Solving and Decision Making

There is a tendency in the literature and in the global setting to use the activity of decision- making and problem solving interchangeably. However, they are not the same. The presumption of the effectiveness in decision making and the concept of a problem...Make the notion of decision making and problem solving close allies. Yet in their fullest meaning the terms are not synonymous.¹ Therefore, we surmise that there is a close relationship between problem solving and decision making. However, there is also a distinct difference between the two. (1) A problem exists whenever there is a difference between what is actually happening and what the individual/group wants to

¹ Richard M. Steers, *Organizational Behavior* 4th ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1988), 421-423.

happen. (2) Decision making is the process of selecting an alternative course of action that will solve a problem. Decisions occur the moment you select an alternative.

Harrison's quote of Braverman helps us understand the close relationship of decision making and problem solving:

Problem solving and decision making are not synonyms. However, decision making [often] involves problem solving and ...problem solving [often] leads to some decision. The process of selecting a particular course of action from a set of alternatives [may constitute] a problem and [possibly] a difficult one . . . decision [maybe] the end result of a problem-solving process . . . Problems [may] result from attempts to achieve [objectives] of the organization . . . But solutions by themselves do not achieve [objectives]. It is the decision resulting from these solutions that achieve [objectives] . . . Without a decision a problem solution [may be] worthless. Consequently, problem solving and decision making go hand in hand (p.5).²

What is a problem?

Simply put, a problem is an undesirable condition. It is usually preceded by several actions or situations that cause the condition. Taking action against the immediate effects may only result in a temporary solution. You may only be treating the symptom and the real problem may not go away. It is important to get at the root cause of the problem or it might not be corrected.

A cause is a condition, it is a situation that leads to the problem. A root cause is something that starts a chain reaction of effects or symptoms. If a root cause is eliminated or corrected, the problem will be reduced or eliminated. For example, if you have a headache. You may jump to taking an aspirin. You should determine the underlining

² Harrison, *The Managerial Decision Making Process*, 5.

cause, is it stress, lack of sleep, or hunger? Discovering the cause helps determine a long-term solution.³

Motivational trainers often suggest we use the words opportunity and problem interchangeably.⁴ In a sense, they are right—problems are opportunities to channel our creative/spiritual energies or gifts, to think of new ideas and to develop effective solutions. But problems and opportunities are not exactly interchangeable. After all, problems are opportunities, but opportunities are not necessarily problems. In other words, a problem is a situation that should not be, or that should be some other way. A problem also involves some degree of difficulty. When you have a problem, how do you change from what reality is to what we think should be the solution? This definition of problem helps us distinguish between things that really are not problems and things that are.

A common pitfall in problem solving is to confuse problems and issues. An issue is a point and question, or an item of controversy. When it comes to issues, we may be seeking answers (whether we should believe something or accept something as right or true) but we are not seeking a solution to get the desired results.⁵

Kinds of Problems

There are many different kinds of problems. Problems can be individually collective. They can involve finances, relationships, education, communication politics,

³ Simon, *Organizational Behavior: Performance and Productivity*, 69-68.

⁴ Spitzer and Evans, *Heads, You Win!*, 37-44.

⁵ L.W. Sargeant, "Strategic Planning in a Subsidiary," *Long Range Planning Journal* no. 2 (1992), 23.

values, and other things. Problems of all types can be found in a work or church environment.

A. Six Step Problem Solving Process

The steps that can be used in the problem solving phase of the decision making process are:

Describe the problem: As stated earlier, a problem is the difference between the actual situation and the desired situation. The first step is to develop a clearly written paragraph stating the issues, implications, and seriousness of the problem. This paragraph should also identify the desired state or situation (i.e., to clearly articulate the problem goal). A clearly articulated goal is to reach an effective solution. Defined goals enable you to focus your problem solving to go—when you want them to get there. A goal should be specific, measurable, and realistic.

To develop the most effective solution to the problem you should see the “big picture.” This means seeing the problem from various points of views before you begin to brainstorm for a solution. This will give you a better understanding of the problem and will enable you to develop a solution that is effective and fair.⁶ The DMM or a matrix is the best way to accomplish this task.⁷

Generate alternative solutions: Brainstorm possible and impossible solutions. The goal of idea generating is to produce as many high quality ideas as possible for solutions to a particular problem. Generating ideas will help group/team members break out of old

⁶ Norman Maier, *Problem Solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups* (Belmont, TX: Brooks/Cole, 1970), 68-91.

⁷ Jones, *The Thinker's Tool Kit: 14 Powerful Techniques for Problem Solving*, 139.

thinking patterns, develop multiple options, look at all possible ways of reaching a solution and draw potential solutions from a variety of sources.

Generate criteria for effective solutions: After generating ideas, establish criteria for an effective solution; pay attention to quality, quantity, urgency (time constraints), cost, and expertise. The benefits of brainstorming are numerous. For one thing, just five minutes of brainstorming can save more than five hours of creativity. Furthermore, brainstorming will give you a pool of ideas to choose from, and the more ideas you have to choose from, the greater the chances that the idea you choose will be highly effective.⁸

Select one alternative: Evaluate your alternatives. Use the criteria to show why one alternative is superior to another. Establish the goal based on your evaluation. Write a clear goal statement. To determine the best solution you need to decide what you mean by “best.” Are you fudging for general effectiveness or their specific criteria, such as values, feasibility, time, exceptions that you need to consider?⁹ Determine those criteria and rank them, then use a table/matrix (i.e., DMM) to see how each solution ranks in each of these categories.¹⁰

Implement the action: To effectively implement your solution, you need to turn your ideas into actions. That means you need to determine what actors are required to implement that solution, who will carry out these actions, how long actions will take, and what you will do if plans do not go as expected.

⁸ Soula, “Quality Problem solving, Decision Making, Type and Case Manager,” 104.

⁹ S. K. Chakraporty, *Managerial Transformation by Values: A Corporate Pilgrimage* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993).

¹⁰ Dawson, *Confident Decision Maker*, 101-112.

Monitor Results/Follow Up: The types of information needed for evaluating results are: Source(s) of this information; Person(s) responsible to gather, analyze, and report; and Target date (When will data be gathered and used?) In-other-words, this final step of the problem solving process teaches the importance of a clear assignment of responsibilities, time lines, documentation, and follow-up to ensure the solution has actually solved the problem.¹¹

Decision Making

An Overview of Decision Making

Ethical decision making is becoming more important as rapid change continues. No one knows how many decisions they will make at any given time, but we should realize that problem solving and decision making skills will affect the outcome. As with all management/leadership skills we can develop problem solving and decision making skills. The term decision is simply a moment in an ongoing process of evaluating alternatives for meeting an objective. Decision making is an intricate part of the management of any organization. It separates an effective leader from an ineffective one. It is the heart of what administrators, leaders, and managers do. Effective leaders use a systematic approach in decision making. They clearly define elements in a distinct sequence of steps.

The Functions of Decision Making

The components of the decision making process are the functions of decision making. This definition is in keeping with the standard definition of a function as one of a

¹¹ Robert A. Baron and Jerald G. Gerg, *Behavior in organizations: Understanding and Managing the Human Side of Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Needham Heights, 1990), 483-490.

group of related actions contributing to a larger action. In a social context, the concept of function involves the notion of a structure consisting of a set of relations among unit entities and the continuity of the structure being maintained by a life process made up of the activities of the constituent units. Function is the contribution in which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which it is a part. The following items are the functions of decision making:

Setting managerial objectives: The decision making process starts with the setting of objectives. A given cycle within the process culminates upon reaching the objectives that gave rise to it. The next complete cycle begins with the setting of new objectives.

Searching for alternatives: In the decision making process, search involves scanning the internal and external environments of the organization for information. Relevant information is formulated into alternatives that seem likely to fulfill the objectives.

Comparing and evaluating alternatives: Alternatives represent various courses of action that singly or in combination may help attain the objectives. By formal and informal means alternatives are compared based on the certainty or uncertainty of cause-and-effect relationships and the preferences of the decision maker for various probabilistic outcomes.

The act of choice: Choice is a moment in the ongoing process of decision making. It is when the decision maker chooses a given course of action from among a set of alternatives that choices are made.

Implementing the decision: Implementation causes the chosen course of action to be carried out within the organization. It is that moment in the total decision making process when the choice is transformed from an abstraction into an operational reality.

Follow-up and control: This function is intended to ensure that the implemented decision results in an outcome that is in keeping with the objectives that gave rise to the total cycle of functions within the decision making process.

Why Structured Decision Making?

Using a structured decision making process will help your team to: make choices from available options, use objective measures in considering the various alternatives, reach a consensus decision within the team, minimize personal whims as the basis for a decision, focus on how an idea might be made to work as well as recognizing what is wrong with the idea, help the team understand the rationale of the decision, and make it easier for the team to communicate its decision.

Using structured decision making will keep your team from: retreating to old ideas because they are comfortable, jumping to a popular decision without considering all options, considering too many ideas to handle, feeling overwhelmed by the details, forcing an inappropriate decision because of time pressures, and having irreconcilable differences regarding alternatives.¹²

Organizational Decision Making

In an organizational context, it is particularly important to differentiate the decisions made by management. Some decisions, for example, are very significant and highly consequential in their outcomes. Ineffective action in making decisions of this

¹² Harrison, *The Managerial Decision Making Process*, 3-67.

type may be costly, but it is seldom threatening to the long-term health of the total organization. Finally, the large number of decisions made by the vast majority of managers and supervisors at the operating level are usually not crucial to any particular aspect of the organization's well being. In essence, management needs to know the kind of decision at hand in order to make and implement it to the best advantage of the total organization.

According to Alexis and Wilson, decision making in organizations displays many of the properties that are functionally similar to individual decision making.¹³ Decision making frameworks of organizations are adaptive, in the sense that search strategies and decision rules are modified constantly as a result of the organization's decision making experiences. Like individuals, organizations give priority to simple search rules in seeking to reduce the strain of having to deal with complex ones.¹⁴

Managerial Aspects of Decision Making

Managers, as individuals enacting special decision making roles in formal organizations, carry with them the characteristics of the individual or the group level.¹⁵ Many writers in management believe that organizational decision making is ill-structured and ambiguous.¹⁶ "Organizational decision making is an important, if not the most

¹³ Marcus Alexis and Charles Wilson, *Basic Frameworks for Decision Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1999), 74-87.

¹⁴ Ibid., 76.

¹⁵ Gordon A. Kingsley and Pamela N. Reed, "Decision Process Models and Organizational Context: Level and Sector Make a Difference," *Public Productivity and Management Review* (1991) : 397-413.

¹⁶ James G. March and Johan Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations* 2nd ed. (Bergen, NW: University Forlage, 1979).

important, aspect of organizational life,” says Bass—“But it is a messy rather than an orderly process particularly if the problems for which decisions are needed are ill-structured rather than well-structured.”¹⁷

Following is a list of some of the basic characteristics of decision making at the level of the organization:

1. Organizations make extensive use of programmed decisions that involve reasonably well-structured patterns of search. Naturally, the more complex and significant the decision, the more extensive the search process will be.
2. Organizations often use rather simple rules of thumb to make decisions, as well as the complex analytical frameworks that are often attributed to organizational decision making.¹⁸
3. Again, the complexity, uniqueness, and significance of the decision are determining factors. Obviously some decisions don’t permit rule-of-thumb treatment.
4. Organizations make decisions that are bound and biased by the local rationality of the decision unit. That is, given the constraints in the situation and the uncertainties of the moment, organizations are likely to make decisions that are optimal in their spheres but sub-optimal when reviewed in the larger totality.¹⁹

¹⁷ John Bass, *Organizational Decision Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 1999), 19.

¹⁸ William J. Bauman and Richard E. Quandt, “Rules of Thumb and Optimally Imperfect Decisions,” *American Economic Review* 54 (1964) : 23-46.

¹⁹ John W. Sutherland, *Administrative Decision making: Extending the Bounds of Rationality* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1977).

5. Organizations engage in a directed search for relevant alternatives. The choice of decision rules and strategies are constrained by the desire to minimize the uncertainties.
6. Organizations learn to the extent that they are part of open systems. There is little doubt that they learn from and adapt to their environment.

The Integrative Perspective

Decision making is a process that pervades all managerial functions. From a formulation of a plan, which provides a framework for making choices to accomplish objectives, to the development and activation of controls, which ensure the relation of actual to intended performance. Managers are constantly selecting from alternatives. Much of the decision making behavior is second nature to professional managers.

The Interdisciplinary Perspective

Decision making draws liberally on the behavioral sciences and the quantitative disciplines. The integration of these sciences and disciplines occurs throughout the several stages in the decision making process. Although, it is difficult to assign a weight to the relative significance of each body of knowledge the behavioral sciences are more widely applicable throughout the decision making process.

Synthesis

In this chapter we surmise that decision making is a more comprehensive process than problem solving. To the extent that it is involved at all, problem solving is only part

of decision making. Particular kinds of problem solving are not sufficient to call them decision making.²⁰

Therefore, we can surmise that problems are undesirable situations that are difficult to change. Problem solving produces plausible alternatives to be analyzed, evaluated, and selected through the decision making process. Decision making, in this study, involves choosing/rating criteria that maximize the quality of the decision and the acceptance by an organization or congregation.

The theories, concepts, and principles presented above are not necessarily innovative in themselves. What is new and different are the integration and synthesis of problem-solving and decision making concepts into a meaningful and useful DMM with Biblical criteria. For example, parts of the decision making process have been discussed, in one fashion or another, in many places in the management literature. But the entire process has not been presented in the context of an integrated and interdisciplinary framework that unites the traditional quantitative principles of problem solving and decision making. However, the DMM offers decision makers/leaders a chance to practice quicker, and easier methods for collecting information to evaluate alternatives/choices.²¹

²⁰ Alexander H. Cornell, *The Decision maker's Handbook* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 29-31.

²¹ Dawson, *Confident Decision Maker*, 118-123.

CHAPTER IV

MODEL OF DECISION MAKING

This chapter will present a brief overview of the conceptualization of three decision making models. These three models are (1) the rational/classic model; (2) the administrative, or bounded rationality, model; and (3) the normative model. While these models have different focuses and make different assumptions about the nature of decision making the reader also should note the differences in focus. Each model is useful for understanding the nature of decision processes in organizations. This chapter only introduces these models. However, chapter eight will employ a more analytical and integrated process of the normative model, which contains valid criteria related to the DMM.

The Rational/Classical Model

The *rational model* (also known as the classical model) represents the earliest attempt to model decision processes. It is viewed by some as the original classical approach to understanding decision processes. Briefly, this model rests on two assumptions (1) it assumes people are economically rational, and (2) people attempt to maximize outcomes in an orderly and sequential process. *Economic rationality*, a basic concept in many early models of decision making, exists when people attempt to objectively maximize measured advantage, such as money or units of goods produced. It is assumed that people will select the decision or course of action that has the greatest

advantage or payoff from among the many alternatives. It is also assumed that they go about this search in a planned, orderly, and logical fashion. This model has also been referred to as the economic man model.

The simplicity of the rational model is disarming. In fact, the model rests on two rather questionable foundations. First, the model portrays individuals or groups capable of gathering all necessary information for a decision. It assumes having complete information, which is rarely achieved. As a result, rationality itself is rarely achieved. As Kepner and Tregoe notes:¹

1. Rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow on each choice. In fact, knowledge of consequences is always fragmentary.
2. Since these consequences lie in the future, imagination must supply the lack of experience in attaching value to them. But values can be only imperfectly anticipated.
3. Rationality requires a choice among all possible alternative behaviors.

In actual behavior, only a very few of all these possible alternatives ever come to mind. In addition, the rational model is based on the assumption that people can process the tremendous amounts of information generated for one decision. It assumes that people can do the following:

- * Mentally store the information in some stable form,
- * Manipulate the information in a series of complex calculations designed to expected values.

¹ Charles Kepner and Benjamin Tregoe, *The Rational Manager* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 67-88.

- * Rank all the consequences in a consistent fashion for purposes of identifying the preferred alternative.

Unfortunately, a large body of research has shown that the human mind is simply incapable of executing such transactions at the level and magnitude that would be required for complex decisions. In fact, we can identify a series of factors that inhibit people's ability to accurately identify and analyze problems. Thus, while the rational, classic model presents useful representation of how decisions should be made, it seems to fall somewhat short concerning how decisions are actually made.²

The Bounded Rationality Model

An alternative model, one not bound by the above assumptions, has been presented by March and Simon. This model is called the bounded rationality model (or the administrative man model). As the name implies, this model does not assume individual rationality in the decision process. Instead, it assumes that people, while they may seek the best solution, usually settle for much less because the decisions they confront typically demand greater information processing capabilities than they possess. They seek a kind of bounded (or limited) rationality in decisions.

The concept of bounded rationality attempts to describe decision processes in terms of three mechanisms. First, using sequential attention to alternative solutions, people examine possible solutions to a problem one at a time. Instead of identifying all possible solutions and selecting the best (as suggested in the rational model), people identify and evaluate various alternatives individually. If the first solution fails to work, it

² Steers, *Introduction to Organizational Behavior*, 427-450.

is discarded and another solution is considered. When an acceptable, though not necessarily the best, solution is found, search behavior is discontinued.

The second mechanism is the use of heuristics. A heuristic is a rule that guides the search for alternatives into areas that have a high probability for yielding satisfactory solutions. For instance, some companies continually hire MBAs from certain schools because in the past such graduates have performed well for the company. According to the bounded rationality model, decision makers use heuristics to reduce large problems to manageable propositions so decisions can be made rapidly. They look for obvious solutions or previous solutions that worked in similar situations.

The third mechanism is the concept of satisficing, this should not to be confused with satisfying. Whereas the rational model focuses on the decision maker as an optimizer his model sees him or her as a satisficer. As explained by March and Simon:³

An alternative is optimal if: there exists a set of criteria that permits all alternatives to be compared, and the alternative in question is preferred, by these criteria, to all other alternatives. An alternative is satisfactory if: there exists a set of criteria that describes minimally satisfactory alternatives, and the alternative in question meets or exceeds all these criteria. Finding that optimal alternative to optimize requires processing several orders of magnitude more complex than those required to satisfice.

On the basis of these three assumptions about decision makers, it is possible to outline the decision process as seen from the standpoint of the bounded rationality model. The model consists of eight steps:

1. Set the goal to be pursued, or define the problem to be solved.

³ James March and Herbert Simon, *Primer on Decision maker* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 113-133.

2. Establish an appropriate level of aspiration, or criterion level (i.e., when do you know that a solution is sufficiently positive to be acceptable, even if it is not perfect?).
3. Employ heuristics to narrow problem space to a single promising alternative.
4. If no feasible alternative is identified, lower the aspiration level, and begin the search for a new alternative solution (repeat steps 2 and 3).
5. After identifying a feasible alternative, evaluate it to determine its acceptability.
6. If the individual alternative is unacceptable, initiate a search for a new alternative solution.
7. If the identified alternative is acceptable, implement the solution.
8. Following implementation, evaluate the ease with which the goal was (or was not) attained, and raise or lower the level of aspiration accordingly on future decisions of this type.

Certainly, this decision process is quite different from the rational model. We do not seek the best solution, but look for a solution that is acceptable. The search behavior is sequential, involving the evaluation of one or two solutions at once. Finally, in contrast to the prescriptive rational model, it is claimed that the bounded rationality model is descriptive; that is, it describes how decision makers actually arrive at the identification of solutions to organizational problems.⁴

⁴ Steers, *Introduction to Organizational Behavior*, 457-461.

The Normative Decision Model

Victor Vroom, Phillip Yetton, and Arthur Jago have developed a model that can provide the answers to these questions. They first suggest that there are five ways in which decisions can be made:

Autocratic Process = Level 1

1. The decision maker consults the problem by himself or herself, using the information available at the time.
2. The decision maker obtains the necessary information from employees and then makes the decision himself or herself. He may or may not tell followers the purpose of his questions or give information about the problem or decision he is working on. The input provided by the employees is clearly in response to the request for specific information. They do not play a role in the definition of the problem or in generating or evaluating alternative solutions.

Consultative Process = Level 2

3. The manager/Pastor consults with subordinates individually, collects their ideas and suggestions, and then makes a decision. (CI style).
4. The manager consults with subordinates as a group, again getting their ideas and suggestions, and then makes a decision. The decision may or may not reflect the followers' influence. (CII Style).

Group Process = Level 3

5. The manager/pastor explains the problem to the employees as a group and the group makes the decision. Together they generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on a solution. The leader's role is much

like that of a chairperson, facilitating the discussion, keeping it focused on the problem, and making sure that the critical issues are processed. He/she can provide the group with information or ideas, but does not try to press them to adopt his/her solution. Moreover, leaders adopting this level of participation are willing to accept and implement any solution that has the support of the entire group (GII style).⁵

The model suggests that there are five key attributes to problem situations: time, information, quality, employee commitment, and employee development. It lists eight problem attributes that allow these factors to be taken into account in decision making:

1. *Quality requirements (QR)*. How important is the technical quality of the decision?
2. *Commitment requirement (CR)*. How important is employee commitment to the decision?
3. *Leader's information (LI)*. Does the leader have sufficient information to make a high-quality decision?
4. *Problem structure (ST)*. Is the problem well-structured?
5. *Commitment probability (CP)*. If the leader makes the decision alone, will subordinates be committed to the decision?
6. *Goal congruence (GC)*. Do employees share the organizational goals to be attained in solving this problem?

⁵ Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Gennett, and Gordon J. Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing Lessons of Experience* (New York: Irwin McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1999), 51-54.

7. *Subordinate conflict (CO)*. Is conflict among employees over preferred solutions likely?
8. *Subordinate information (SI)*. Do employees have enough information to make a high-quality decision?⁶

To decide on a decision making style, the manager follows a decision tree incorporating the eight problem attributes and asks the question in each attribute of the problem at hand as shown in Appendix B on page 141.

Synthesis

Two individual decision making models were identified (1) The rational/classical model, which assumes people are rational and attempt to maximize their potential outcomes from decisions, (2) the bounded rationality model, which assumes that people typically are unable to make perfect decisions and instead attempt acceptable decisions on the basis of imperfect information.⁷ These rational models have their foundations in the quantitative disciplines of economics, statistics, and mathematics. There are normative models that represent the classical approach to decision making. This rational model is based on the assumption that all the significant variables in a given decision making situation can be quantified to some degree. They operate within an artificial closed environment.⁸

⁶ A. B. (Rami) Shani and James B. Lau, *Behavior in organizations: and Experiential Approach* (Boston, MA: Irwin, Inc., 1996), 97-100.

⁷ David Miller and Marrin Starr, *The Structure of Human Decisions* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

⁸ David Jennings and Stuart Wattam, *Decision making: and Integrated Approach* (London, Eng: Pittman, 1994), 133-135.

The normative model of decision making suggests that there is no best decision making style. Instead, a manager/leader must use either participative or non-participative methods depending upon the nature of the specific decision being made. In this endeavor decision effectiveness is evaluated on the basis of three factors/criteria: (1) decision quality, (2) decision acceptance by subordinates, and (3) timeliness of the decision. Since these criteria have been validated and proven reliable in over 4000 studies conducted by Vroom and Jago, they will be used with the DMM of this study.⁹

The developer of DMM focuses mainly on the principles offered in the normative model. Attention is given to the other two rational models discussed above. The DMM is suited ideally for groups/teams. It has both an intuitive component and an element. This method encourages decision makers to identify agreement on alternative options and attributes that best compare the acceptance, quality and value of each option.¹⁰

⁹ Victor H. Vroom and Arthur G. Jago *New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organization* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1988), 164-188.

¹⁰ Alfred Rapport, *Information for Decision Making: Quantitative and Behavioral Dimension* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 46-50.

CHAPTER V

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DECISION MAKING

In this chapter the researcher will be examining psychological dimensions that govern the behavior of decision makers as they proceed towards rational decisions. There is a growing realization, supported by research of the importance of psychological dimensions in the managerial decision making process. These dimensions reflect sensitivity to the values, feelings, and motion of the decision maker and those around him or her.¹ In this chapter the researcher will discuss general personality theories and the affects of personality on the decision making process. This chapter will also show how one's personality affects the decision making process. In addition, the willingness of an individual to accept risks as a decision maker will be investigated. Finally, it will describe various types of decision making styles.

Personality Theories

The basic psychological force affecting a decision maker is his or her personality.² The definition of personality depends upon the theoretical preference of the definer. In some studies, personality consists concretely of a set of scores, or descriptive

¹ Charles R. Holman, "Using Both Head and Heart in Managerial Decision Making," *Industrial Management* no. 1 (1992) : 7-10.

² Charles L. Martin "Feelings Emotional Empathy and Decision Making," *Journal of Management Development* no. 1 (1993) : 5.

terms, which are used to describe the individual being studied. This study is mainly interested in how personality affects criteria and individual behavior in decision making.³

Therefore, the discussion to follow will present three general categories of personality theory with a focus on how it operates within the integrated process of choice (Subconscious Theory, Trait Theory, and Holistic Theory).

Subconscious Theory: Sigmund Freud made a significant contribution to the knowledge of human behavior by developing the concept of the subconscious mind. Freud's theory emphasized the ideas of internal conflict, subconscious motivation, and defense mechanisms. He argued that, human beings are dominated by subconscious motive, emotions, and the early stages of childhood form the most important basis for adult personality.

Freud also believed that people are governed by two basic drives (1) **Life instincts** which include all activities that are positive and constructive, and (2) **Death or hate instincts** which are destructive. For example, hunger and thirst and the energy involved in their activity is the libido.

According to Freud, the human personality is made up of the id, the ego, and the superego. These components of the Freudian psychic system continually conflict with one another. These conflicts are resolved by various adjustments in conscious or subconscious. Defense mechanisms, such as realization, displacement, identification, and suppression, separately or together, can relieve tension or reduce anxiety in the

³ John Garden, *On Leadership* (New York: Free Press 1990), 9-10.

individual. Despite limitations, Freud's theory of personality is useful as a framework for understanding the psychological aspects of managerial decision making.⁴

Trait Theory: Trait is a consistent pattern of action and reaction. The trait approach to personality permits the use of factor analysis for prediction. This analysis reduces a countless number of traits into a small and manageable number of basic and independent factors. However, in attempting to fragment human personality into a number of isolated variables, trait theory overlooks the cohesive substance that organizes and integrates those factors into a single human personality.

Therefore, the trait approach to personality tends to hold the individual apart from the environment as a list of composite factors. One trait that is particularly important for managers is their willingness and ability to make risky decisions that usually involve discernible uncertainty as to the outcome. This trait is referred to as a manager's "tendency", "inclination," or "attitude" toward risk-taking behavior.⁵ We will discuss the factors surrounding risk-taking behavior in more detail later in this chapter.

Holistic Theory: Holistic theories of personality emphasize the totality and interrelatedness of individual behavior. The individual's grasp of objects and events rather than the dictates of particular traits or stimuli determines human behavior, which depends upon the individual's image of the world.

To summarize in terms of the three general categories of personality discussed above, it seems apparent that the managerial decision maker in Freudian terms, tends to

⁴ Kets de Vries and Donald Miller, *The Neurotic Organization* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1984), 132-144.

⁵ Kenneth R. MacCrimmon and Donald A. Wierung, *Taking Risks* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1986), 103-112.

be ego centered, in terms of discernible traits, tends to be highly motivated, and in the context of Maslow's Holistic Theory is oriented toward self actualization through the attainment of goals and objectives.

These general classifications of personality will become more meaningful through a brief review of several empirical studies that were directed toward gaining a broader perspective of the many dimensions of personality with particular emphasis on the integrated process of decision making.

Maslow's theory of personality is of particular interest here because research indicates that it is highly applicable to managerial behavior and thereby to decision making informal organizations. Maslow suggests that human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, the highest of which is the need for self actualization or the need to become all one is capable of becoming.⁶

Personality Effects on Decision Making

The link between personality and decision making is not a simple one-to-one relationship. Managers do not merely act out their private motives in organizational affairs. Rather they transform childhood experiences, disappointments, and memories into action. In this transformation external reality is as important as the non-rational side of the decision-maker's nature. Many managerial actions appear to be puzzling, inconsistent with organizational role, or simply incomprehensible. But such actions begin to make sense, and in fact can be seen to support a persistent inner direction, once the

⁶ Rami Shani and James Lau, *Behavior in Organization: An Experiential Approach* 6th ed. (New York: Irwin Mirror Higher Education Group, Inc., 1996), 58-71.

nature of the individual's inner conflicts and the defenses used to cope with these conflicts are uncovered.⁷

Decision making represents a learned psychological process that is entangled with the decision-maker's personality: Election of choices from among many alternatives clearly represents a psychological process that is learned, similar to other psychological processes. Man is not born with the ability to make decisions nor does he acquire this capacity very effectively simply through the process of trial-and-error in growing older. Rather, he develops competency in decision making by a series of carefully organized experiences that are properly paced to his development psychological readiness.⁸

Numerous studies have confirmed the relationship between personality and managerial decision making. For example, Saunders and Stanton noted that the personality of managerial decision makers provides a general orientation toward goal attainment.⁹ Arroba noted the tendency of managers to rely on feelings or wants in making "quite important" decisions.¹⁰

Taylor's research showed that older managers tend to take longer to reach decisions and are generally less confident of their choices.¹¹ The study of executives by Arroba demonstrated that the cognitive makeup (called "decision style") of managerial

⁷ Sudhir Kakar, "Rationality and Irrationality in Business Leadership," *Journal of Business Policy* 2 (1972) : 40-47.

⁸ Russell N. Cassel, *The Psychology of Decision Making* (North Quincy, MA: Christopher, 1973), 79-80.

⁹ George B. Saunders and John L. Stanton, "Personality as Influencing Factor in Decision Making," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* (1976) : 241-257.

¹⁰ Tanya Y. Arroba, "Decision Making Style as a Function of Occupational Group, Decision Content, and Perceived Importance," *Journal of Occupational Psychology* (1978) : 219-226.

¹¹ Saunders and Stanton, 250-255.

decision makers influenced the selection among alternative courses of action.¹² In their words; “Cognitive style influenced the choices made by executives in this study. The adoption prospects and perceptions of risk were found to be related to the executive’s psychological makeup.”¹³ Finally, numerous studies have shown the effects of stress on managerial decision makers in various phases of the decision making process.¹⁴

In a practical sense, a managerial decision maker’s personality may show its traits in the form of the following preferences:

1. A preference for high, low, or moderate risks and a preference to risk high or low outcome.
2. A preference to look for problems and to keep control of the situation or, alternatively, a preference to give up control of the situation and to wait for problems to emerge on their own.
3. A preference for innovation or for proven methods.¹⁵ Personality attributes also influence the ability of the managerial decision maker to accommodate large amounts of information, deal with the pressures of a crisis, and restructure ideas to relate specifically to the situation at hand.

¹² Tanya Y. Arroba, “Decision Making Style as a Function of Occupational Group, Decision Content, and Perceived Importance,” *Journal of Occupational Psychology* (1978) : 219-226.

¹³ Ronald N. Taylor, “Age and Experience as Determinants of Managerial Information Processing and Decision Making Performance,” *Academy of Management Journal* 18 (1975) : 74-81.

¹⁴ Irving L. Janis and Leon Mann, *Decision Making* (New York: New York Press, 1977), 120-127.

¹⁵ Joseph H. De Rivera, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1968), 166.

4. The decision maker may regard differences of opinion as a threat to his or her position and may react to a given situation temperamentally or with detachment. Moreover, personality attributes also act to shape the “rules” used by the decision maker, such as: what information is to be accepted, what sequence of events must be followed, and how many errors subordinates will be permitted to make. Finally, the managerial decision maker’s personality shapes his or her style of leadership in a decision making situation.¹⁶

It is hard to dispute the influence of personality on the process of choice:

Effectiveness in decision making is directly related to the effectiveness of the executive personality. The successful personality makes decisions freely without the compelling forces of hidden personality factors. Thus, the successful decision maker knows how to prevent his own errors and works to improve those decisions.¹⁷

Since it is not possible to isolate the influence of personality on the integrated process of arriving at a satisfying choice, decision makers in formal organizations should concentrate on improving their understanding of this complex phenomenon. By this means, they will convert its potentially unfavorable consequences into positive effects leading toward an outcome that will attain the original objective. Again, it should be noted that a decision is no less rational because it recognizes the influence of personality. To the contrary, such recognition is more likely to result in a choice that is truly satisfying.

¹⁶ Ibid., 166-167.

¹⁷ Howard Holland, “Decision Making and Personality,” *Personnel Administration* (1968) : 24-29.

Willingness to Accept Risk in Choice Behavior

Risk is defined in the glossary of “Decision Making and Personality” as “a common state or condition in decision making characterized by the possession of incomplete information regarding a probabilistic outcome.” MacCrimmon and Wehrung identify three principal components of risk: the magnitude of loss, the chance of loss, and the exposure to loss. They note that, to reduce the risk in a decision making situation, at least one of these components must be diminished. They also note that the degree of risk attendant on a given decision is directly proportional to the chance and size of the loss and to the decision maker’s degree of exposure to the loss. A risky situation is, therefore, one in which the decision maker is not sure which of several possible outcomes will occur. This uncertainty may lead to an erroneous choice, and, possibly, a financial loss.¹⁸

The definition of risk advanced in this thesis relates the concept of risk to a decision and, more specifically, the outcome resulting from a decision. A risky decision is one that is fraught with uncertainty regarding the likely outcomes of alternative choices in terms of the negative consequences attendant on such choices. The decision maker has some information but not perfect information. Acting in a managerial role, he or she is expected to cope with the uncertainty and to proceed with a choice that presumably reduces the risk to a level acceptable to both the managerial decision maker in a psychological sense and to the organization generally in an economic sense. This relationship explains why the willingness to accept risk is so important for managerial decision makers. They are expected to deal with risk and to make a decision that works to the best interest of the organization. That, in essence, is what it means to be a manager.

¹⁸ MacCrimmon and Wehrung, *Taking Risks*, 10.

The remainder of this section focuses on some relevant studies of individual decision making and on the psychological forces impacting a given manager as he or she goes about the process of making category II decisions.

Empirical Perspectives on Risk Acceptance/Avoidance

Research has shown that individual decision makers vary considerably in their willingness to accept risk in the process of arriving at a choice.¹⁹ For example, it has been found in several experiments involving risk taking that “people who are very much aware of objective probabilities and expected return are governed by other considerations in their risk taking preferences.”²⁰

One personality variable in particular—the intelligence of the decision maker—was found to strongly influence acceptance or avoidance of risk. Highly intelligent subjects stayed with one particular risk strategy on the premise that if it were good in one situation, it would also be good in similar situations. Less bright subjects elected a low payoff strategy and tended to make choices at random or according to previous outcomes.²¹ Moreover, those subjects who elected a low payoff strategy, with moderate or minimal risks, did so because of strong values that belittled failure and placed a premium on modest success. Conversely, the high payoff subjects reflected lower fear and a greater inclination to accept risks that might or might not result in greater rewards.

¹⁹ Siegfried Streufert, “Individual Differences in Risk Taking,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 16 (1986) : 482-497.

²⁰ Alvin Scodel, Philburn Ratoosh, and Sayer J. Minos, “Some Personality Correlates of Decision Making Underder Conditions of Risk,” *Behavioral Science* 26 (1959) : 28.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 27-36.

The following three conclusions can be drawn concerning the experiments above and reflect the influence of personality on the willingness to accept risk in a choice situation:

1. Expected dollar value had little importance in determining risk preferences.
2. Intelligence was not significantly related to the degree of risk taking, but it was related to variability in risk taking.
3. Individuals who were sophisticated about probabilities and expected values were no more likely to maximize expected values than others.²²

Another study, by Henry Morlock, was based on the hypothesis that “the strength of an expectation of an event varies positively with the desirability of the event.”²³ Under moderate levels of decision difficulty, less information is required to decide that a desirable event will occur than that an undesirable event will occur. Thus...the amount of information required for a decision can be affected by the values of outcomes that are independent of the decision.²⁴ The results supported the hypothesis of this study.

Pruitt’s study of the information required making a decision showed that individuals tend to reduce risk by collecting information on the good and bad aspects of each alternative, but that once a decision is made, it takes considerably more information to cause the individual to adopt another alternative. Presumably the subjects in this study had learned to cope with the risk associated with their first decision and were hesitant to

²² Miller, *The Structure of Human Decisions*, 76-89.

²³ Henry Morlock, “The Effect of Outcome Desirability on Information Required for Decisions,” *Behavioral Science* (1967) : 299.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 296-300.

accept different risks associated with another decision.²⁵

Faith and Trust

Faith, like confidence, involves trust, but the object of trust is typically different. interpersonal and reflects our trust in God. When we place confidence in God, we are Whereas confidence is intrapersonal and reflects our belief in our own abilities, faith trusting God. The meaning of the term faith, then, is not much different from the meaning of the term confidence, but the difference is significant: Faith involves not only trust but also commitment. Faith responds to God's invitation. In faith, we are grasped by divine love and invited into a loving relationship. The foundation of faith is this deeply felt personal partnership with God. It is nurtured through worship, prayer, study of scripture, and obedient service.

Faith and Risk Taking

Faith and risk taking are also related. Abraham, for instance, is the Father of Faith because he believed God, took his family and possessions, and went toward a place promised but not seen. There were obvious risks involved in Abraham's leaving a life that was known having the security of a settled existence and moving toward the unknown, with no concrete, tangible evidence either that he would arrive at the promised destination or that the destination even existed. Risk taking, which is sometimes involved in the mobility that accompanies today's work patterns, is one part of the life of faith but is not synonymous with faith. Let us look more carefully at risk taking, its place in

²⁵ Dean G. Pruitt, "Choice Shifts in Group Discussion: An Introductory Review," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 20, no. 3 (1971) : 339-360.

leadership, and its connection with faith and confidence.

Risk taking involves making decisions in a climate of uncertainty, where information is incomplete and the potential for gain is balanced by a potential for loss or harm. A decision not to act may expose us to losses brought about by rapid change in the environment, whereas a decision to take action may expose us to losses brought about by a failed strategy. Risk taking is motivated by the desire to take advantage of opportunities for realizing gains or to avoid the losses that may come from inaction.²⁶

The central task of leadership is to imagine a future and move people toward it. Therefore, the leader is a risk taker by definition because he or she leads others in particular directions, with no proof of eventual success. It is in the nature of leadership to stake the organization's future on decisions that have to be made with insufficient and ambiguous information. As leaders move an organization from intentions to the realization of those intentions and from a vision to the actualization of that vision, risk becomes a permanent element of the leadership landscape. The actions of leadership expose leaders and the organization to the risk of loss, no matter how well planned the program is or how careful the leader is in managing it. It is impossible to eliminate risk. But effective leaders rarely take risks for the thrill of it. They approach risk prudently. According to Kindler (1985), prudence and risk taking may appear to be contradictory, because prudence implies careful management and sound judgment, and yet only sound judgment allows decisions made in risky circumstances to be made responsibly.²⁷

²⁶ Max Dupree, *Leading Without Power: Finding Hope in Serving Community* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 25-48.

²⁷ Herbert Kindler. "Decisions, Decisions: Which Approach to Take?" *Personnel Journal* no. 1 (1985) : 62.

Preference for and tolerance of risk varies from leader to leader, just as in the general population. A leader's taste for risk may leave the organization vulnerable if the leader underestimates uncertainty, overestimates the probability of attaining the desired outcomes, or makes impulsive decisions. The leader with a taste for risk may operate by the motto "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." By contrast, the leader who is highly motivated to avoid risk may overestimate uncertainty, avoid taking action because he or she is pessimistic, or underestimate the probability of attaining certain goals. This leader, who may operate by the motto "Better safe than sorry," likewise may leave the organization vulnerable. A prudent approach to risk taking involves careful analysis and planning. Decisions should take the reward-to-risk ratio into account; attempts should be made to maximize gains, reduce the impact of losses, and lower uncertainty by gathering information.²⁸

Faith and Reliance on God

Leaders are vulnerable to the normal range of human frailties, from physical illness and moral lapses to eventual death. No matter how well leaders manage themselves, they cannot hope to lead flawlessly. In small and large ways, their shadows will fall over the organizations they lead. Faith can help leaders construct an integrated picture which includes their flaws and vulnerabilities as well as their sense of competence. What faith makes possible is not denial or compensation for a leader's weaknesses, but rather their inclusion in self-awareness. Faith in this context does not negate the leader's efforts at self-improvement, but it does allow the leader to accept his or her human limits without losing confidence in his or her capacity to lead.

²⁸ Malphurs, *Ministry Nuts and Bolts*, 26-27.

Leaders who pray, open themselves before God, and examine their lives and their character cannot escape knowledge of their flaws. But this knowledge helps promote a reliance on God. The confidence born from the life of prayer rests as much on such leaders' belief in God's faithful partnership and presence as on the gifts with which God has endowed them. Confidence bolstered by faith is hedged by gratitude and humility. These leaders know that if they seek to fulfill God's purposes through the way they lead and the ends they serve, they can rely on God's presence and partnership.²⁹

Decision making styles

When choosing a decision making style, a group leader or the pastor must consider not only the levels of quality and acceptance required of that decision, but also such factors as time, team members, capabilities, and team's level of trust. For example, time constraints may require the use of the command decision, or if the level of trust in the team is low a consensus decision may be difficult or impossible to achieve. Nevertheless, Maier's model offers team leaders a good place to start when trying to match a situation with an appropriate decision making style.³⁰

We surmise that, generally, there are three decision making styles: reflexive, consistent, and reflective. An individual style can be determined by answering the ten questions in the exercise on page 81. The individual should select the answer 1-3 that best describes how they make decisions.³¹

²⁹ Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 15.

³⁰ Norman Maier, *Problem Solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups* (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1970), 78-94.

³¹ Steers, *Introduction to Organizational Behavior*, 403-456.

Reflexive Style: A reflexive decision maker likes to make quick decisions (to shoot from the hip) without taking the time to get all the information that may be needed and without considering all alternatives. On the positive side, reflexive decision makers are decisive; they do not procrastinate. On the negative side, making quick decisions can lead to waste and duplication when a decision is not the best possible alternative. Employees may view the reflexive decision maker as a poor manager if he or she is consistently making bad decisions.

If you use a reflexive style, you may want to slow down and spend more time gathering information and analyzing alternatives. Following the steps in the problem-solving and decision making model can help you develop your skills.

Reflective Style: A reflective decision maker likes to take plenty of time to make decisions, taking into account considerable information and an analysis of several alternatives. On the positive side, the reflective type does not make quick decisions. On the negative side, he or she may procrastinate and waste valuable time and other resources. The reflective decision maker may be viewed as wishy-washy and indecisive. If you use a reflective style, you may want to speed up your decision making. As Andrew Jackson once said, take time to deliberate; but when the time for action arrives, stop thinking and go on.

Consistent Style: A consistent decision maker/group tends to make decisions without rushing or wasting time. He or she tends to know when they have enough information and alternatives to make a sound decision. Consistent decision makers tend to have the most consistent record of good decisions. They tend to follow the problem-solving and decision making steps. Maier's research in the area of problem solving

revealed two dimensions that correlate reliably with a decision effectiveness, quality, and acceptance. The quality of a decision is dependent on the decision makers grasp and utilization of the known facts. The acceptance of a decision is dependent on the reactions of the people who must implement the decision.³²

The levels of quality and acceptance required, vary from decision to decision. An effective decision is one that meets that particular decision. Maier developed a decision making model based on his research. This model, which is illustrated below suggests that four decision making styles--consultative, command, consensus, and convenience--are characterized by different levels of quality and acceptance, as follows:

Consultative	=	high quality, high acceptance
Command	=	high quality, low acceptance
Consensus	=	low quality, high acceptance
Convenience	=	low quality, low acceptance ³³

Decision Making Styles Exercise

1. Over all I'm _____ to act.
 - a. slow
 - b. moderate
 - c. quick
2. I spend _____ amount of time making important decisions as I do making less important decisions.
 - a. about the same
 - b. a greater
 - c. a much greater

³² Maier, *Problem Solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups*, 88.

³³ Arthur G. Bedeian, *Management* 3rd ed. (New York: The Dryden Press, 1993), 212-217.

3. When making decisions, I ____ go with my first thought.
a. usually b. occasionally c. rarely
4. When making decisions, I'm ____ concerned about making errors.
a. rarely b. occasionally c. often
5. When making decisions, I ____ recheck my work more than once.
a. rarely b. occasionally c. usually
6. When making decisions, I gather ____ information.
a. little b. some c. lots of
7. When making a decisions, I consider ____ alternative actions.
a. few b. some c. lots of
8. When making a decision, I usually make it ____ before the deadline.
a. way b. somewhat c. just
9. After making a decision, I ____ look for other alternatives, wishing I had waited.
a. rarely b. occasionally c. usually
10. I regret having made a decision.
a. rarely b. occasionally c. often

To determine your style, add up the numbers 1-3 (a=1, b=2, and c=3) that represent your answers to the ten questions. The total will be between 10 and 30. Place and X on the continuum line between ten and thirty that represents your score number.

<u>Reflexive</u>	<u>Consistent</u>	<u>Reflective</u>
10 _____	16 _____	23 _____ 30

A score of 10-16 indicates a reflexive style; 17-23 indicates a consistent style and 24-30 indicates a reflective style. You have determined your preferred decision making

style. Groups also have a preferred decision making style, based on how their members make decision. You could answer the ten questions, changing the **I** to **we** and referring to a group rather than to yourself.

Synthesis

This chapter noted that many variables that compose the psychology of decision making. These variables, in differing combinations and at different times, affect the decision maker in ways that are difficult to see and even more difficult to control.³⁴

The decision maker's tendency to accept or avoid uncertainty was shown to depend upon his or her perception of the desirability of the outcomes of a series of choices leading toward the fulfillment of an objective. The tendency to accept or avoid risk was thus noted as a significant psychological force, especially in the moment of choice. The decision maker who is psychologically disposed to accept uncertainty, prefers a decision situation where the outcome is highly risky. Conversely, the decision maker who cannot, for any psychological reason, cope with uncertainty prefers a choice where the outcome is certain. The unreality of a decision maker conveys a choice where probability of success is great (100 percent). Therefore, they tend to avoid making decisions or make choices where the probability of success is zero—that is the choice for no decision.³⁵

We also found that one's faith in God affects their decision making process. A firm sense of God's partnership and presence makes it possible to take risks in achieving

³⁴ Cassel, *The Psychology of Decision Making*, 187-197.

³⁵ Banks and Power, *Faith in Leadership*, 57-62.

ends that are in keeping with the values of the Kingdom of God. Thus leaders are seeking to take organizations to places where they have not gone before, acting by faith.³⁶

The DMM developed in this thesis enhances the positive psychological forces and minimizes the negative forces by quantifying standardized criteria that have been operationally defined for the decision maker. This ensures a greater amount of validity and reliability. It also instills confidence in the decision maker's choice by having a criterion that weigh/rate God's presence/involvement in the decision making process.

³⁶ Lennon L. Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 43-67.

CHAPTER VI

GOD INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

This chapter will explore the involvement of God in the decision making process. Following a brief Biblical definition of decision making, the researcher will provide three indicators of good decision making. Next, the researcher will suggest principles and provide guidance for the leader's decision making process. Finally, the chapter will discuss how the Bible relates to God's sovereignty planning, and decision making by prayer, scripture, and other beliefs and circumstances.

Biblical Definition

Decision (diakriono)- primarily signifies to make a distinction “hence” to decide, especially judicially¹ to decide a dispute, to give judgment. In Corinthians 6:5 church members are warned against procuring decisions by litigation in the world law of courts. It also signifies discerning in I Corinthians 12:10, Heb. 5:14 and Rom. 14:1.²

Three Indicators of Good Decision Making

In II Samuel 6:6-7, Uzzah is destroyed for touching the ark of the covenant. However you view this strange event—God is all-powerful and we should not take His power for granted. When we consider Uzzah's misfortune in touching the ark, it should

¹ W. E. Vine, *Vine's Dictionary of Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1999), 85.

² Hugh F. Halverstadt, *Managing Church Conflict* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 58-86.

remind us to approach God with reverence and fear. Below are three indicators that can guide us in making good decisions that God will honor:³

Good Decisions Are Made in an Atmosphere of Joy

The first indicator of good decision making is that we have made our decision, not in moments of self-doubt, but in moments of worshiping the living God. Second Samuel 6:14-15 tells the story of David's bringing the ark into the city. It was done in an atmosphere of great joy. David was so carried away he began dancing in excitement. Admittedly this kind of behavior is irregular for most leaders in the secular arena. Some sophisticated folk who were there and at this present time would criticize his immodest dancing. But there is a level of joy in decision making that creates fantastic enthusiasm. This ecstasy welds subordinates together.

Good Leadership Decides in Favor of God Before Self

In II Samuel 7:2 David felt bad that he had his own house, a permanent palace, before God had a house of His own. This kind of spiritual altruism inhabits the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study. But where do prayer and Bible study themselves come from? It is thought that these disciplines arise from our own spiritual neediness. It should be remembered that great leaders are not those who have worked their way up to personal confidence. Nor do they see themselves as God's ready achievers in this world. Spiritual leaders only appear to be giants to others. To themselves they are in desperate need of God.

³ John Maxwell and Jim Dornan, *Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997), 67-88.
Good Leadership Sometimes Makes Decisions to Postpone Deciding.

Is this real evidence for strong leadership? Wouldn't most people see this as a sign of weakness? Quite to the contrary, sometimes a very strong decider can strongly decide to postpone decisions. Such decisions may, in fact, be decisive. The DMM makes allowance for this by establishment a criterion labeled timeliness, where this issue along with others may be considered. This criterion helps the decision maker consider the impact of postponing/ignoring a particular alternative.

In II Samuel 6:10-12, following the death of Uzzah, David decided to do nothing. This decision must have been approved of God. The house of Obed-Edom where the ark came to rest was blessed in that interim of David's indecision. Then when David had a clearer word from the Lord, he clearly decided to bring the ark into Jerusalem. His joyous dancing grew out of his postponed decision. He was just as decisive in postponing a decision as he was in dancing the ark into Jerusalem.⁴

Christian Leader Decision Making

Decision making is a fundamental responsibility of leaders. People who are unwilling or unable to make decisions are unlikely leadership candidates. Leaders may consult counselors; they may seek consensus from their people; they may gather further information; but ultimately they must make choices. Leaders who refuse to do so are abdicating their leadership role. People need the assurance that their leader is capable of making wise, timely decisions. The fear of making a wrong decision is the overriding impetus behind some people's leadership style. Such people become immobilized by

⁴ Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership*, 76-89.

their fear of making a mistake. It is true that all decisions have ramifications, and leaders must be prepared to accept the consequences of their decision. Those without the fortitude to live with this reality should not take on leadership roles. This section will suggest principles and provide Biblical guidance for the leader's decision making process.

A single leadership decision has the potential to significantly impact employees and employees' lives, as well as the organization, so it is critical that leaders base their decisions firmly on Biblical principles that will protect them from mistakes. There are two principles spiritual leaders should follow when making decisions.

Good leadership always involves God in the process.⁵ Moses was met by his father-in-law during a time of great executive stress and given two pieces of advice.

1. *Teach the people more clearly to walk in God's ways.* Many of them will stop being dependent on your wisdom and good nature and will begin to stand on their own two feet, mature enough to discern for themselves between good and evil (Exod. 18:20).
2. *Delegate responsibility to others and share the burden of leadership with them.* (Exod. 18:21).

The essence of Jethro's suggestion is to trust God and delegate advice, "Don't be a Lone Ranger." Be sure that in your network of leadership, you include God and the trustworthiness of team players that can help you discern His will.

⁵ Maxwell and Dornan, *Becoming A Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others*, 151-179.

Leaders Make Decision by Seeking the Holy Spirit's Guidance

Spiritual leaders make two choices every time they make a decision. First, they choose whether to rely on their own insights or on God's wisdom in making their decision. Their second choice is the conclusion they reach or the action they take. People don't naturally do things God's way, because people do not think the way God does (Ps. 118:8).

The world's way of decision making is to weigh all the evidence, compare pros and cons, and then take the course of action that seems most sensible. If spiritual leaders make their choices this way, they could easily lead their organization in the opposite direction of God's will (Prov. 14:12). God does not want people to do what they think is best: He wants them to do what He knows is best, and no amount of reasoning and intellectualizing will discover that. God himself must reveal it. God's Holy Spirit reveals His will to those who are seeking His mind and His heart. God's Spirit will do this through four avenues: prayer, scripture, other believers, and circumstances.⁶

The Holy Spirit Guides Through Prayer

Prayer is the leader's connection with the one who promised, "Call to Me, and I will answer you and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jer. 33:3). The prayer described here is not the variety that is done in haste just before a nervous leader makes an important presentation to a skeptical audience. Prayer should always be a leader's first course of action. Spiritual leaders must spend time in prayer daily, asking God to guide them in each decision they make, not just when they are facing

⁶ Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 196-201.

a situation but also before the fact. Neglecting their prayer life is fool hearted presumption by leaders who assume they already know God's agenda and who believe calling upon God as a last resort is a legitimate function of leadership.

Pastors and leaders of Christian organizations are not the only ones God guides through prayer. God responds as readily to the sincere prayers of Christian business leaders and political leaders. People tend to draw distinctions between secular and spiritual matters. God is not restrained by such artificial boundaries. He is as powerful in the business world as He is in the church. God's wisdom applies as much to mergers, investments, or hiring personnel, as it does to church matters. Decisions made in the political arena can have far-reaching ramifications and require prayer for God's guidance.

At times doing business forces leaders into situations where they face moral dilemmas with no apparent solutions. God is pleased to direct His people to choices that will bring Him the greatest honor. At times the profit motive dictates one course of action while the desire to bring honor to God suggests another.

Prayer will guide leaders to solutions that honor God while maintaining their integrity in the workplace. Prayerless leaders are like ship captains without compasses—they can make their best guess at which direction to go, but they have no assurance they are heading the right way. Prayer keeps leaders focused on the one absolutely consistent factor in their lives—God.⁷ One of the grave realizations of many fallen leaders is that they neglected their relationship with God. Numerous men and women have testified, often in tears, that they became so consumed with fulfilling their official responsibilities they inadvertently spent less and less time with the Lord. After it was too late, these

⁷ Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1994).

devastated leaders discovered that life seldom affords the luxury of putting off important decisions while people neglect their relationship with God. Leaders often overlook their spiritual life because they are too busy doing their jobs on a day-to-day basis. How tragic when leaders face a major decision that desperately calls for God's wisdom but they have grown unfamiliar with His voice. Even more painful is the reality that, in wandering away from God and missing His guidance, they have cost others dearly as well.⁸

There have been leaders who entered difficult situations after neglecting their spiritual life. They eventually turned to God, and He restored them to fellowship with Himself—but not before they, their families, and their organizations suffered grievously. How much better it would have been for them if they had nurtured their relationship with the Lord and avoided calamity in the first place. Just as good leaders know to keep their organizations prepared for whatever contingency the future might bring, so leaders ought to zealously maintain a close relationship with God today so they are prepared to make the necessary decisions tomorrow.⁹

The Holy Spirit Guides Through God's Word

God's Word is the plumb line for Christian living. When people give leaders advice, leaders compare their counsel with God's Word. When leaders sense God is saying something to them in prayer, they confirm it with what He says in His Word. The problem for many leaders is that they are unfamiliar with the Bible. They do not know what it says, so it does not guide them. They do not read it regularly, so it doesn't influence their thinking. When a crucial decision is required, leaders have no alternative

⁹ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *When God Speaks: How to Recognize God's Voice and Responding Obedience* (Nashville, TN: Life way Press, 1995).

¹⁰ Aubrey Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 124.

but to do what makes sense to them and hope it does not violate the teachings of Scripture.

The Holy Spirit Guides Through Other Believers

It is said the difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits! The Book of Proverbs candidly describes the enormity of suffering that results from foolish choices. Proverbs is also peppered with safeguards against unwise decision making. One of these safeguards is enlisting the aid of wise counsel. The confirmation of other believers is a third way the Holy Spirit guides leaders' decision making. Proverbs enjoins, "Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory" (Prov. 11:14, KJV). "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed" (Prov. 15:22, KJV). The essence of these Scriptures can be summed up in two truths: (1) leaders should recruit a variety of godly counselors; and (2) leaders should give their advisors the freedom to express their opinions.

Enlisting advice can help guard leaders against foolish decisions, but leaders must choose their counselors carefully. The Scriptures advise people to seek the guidance of several counselors, thus avoiding the disastrous trap of merely duplicating the mistakes of one person. Because people have expertise in different areas, leaders need counselors who represent many areas of concern.¹¹

Warren Bennis suggests that the downfall of President Richard Nixon came after he surrounded himself with clones of himself. Observes Bennis, "They couldn't tell him anything he didn't already know and so were useless to him" (p. 96). The key to effective

¹¹ Bobb Biehl, *30 Days to Confident Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998).

counselors is not that they agree with their leaders and always support their decisions but that they tell their leaders things they would not know or recognize otherwise.¹²

Leaders should seek the best possible people to work with them and to advise them. These people must know how to think for themselves. They must be well qualified with expertise the leader lacks. They should have a consistently successful track record of demonstrating wisdom when working with others—some people want to be consultants but their track record gives them no credibility. They ought to be able to look at situations from a different perspective. For example, if a CEO is a rational, cognitive thinker who accepts guidance only from other rational, cognitive thinkers, the CEO will consistently recommend the most logical direction for the company. If, on the other hand, the leader also conscripts counselors who are emotional thinkers, they direct the leader away from actions that could appear callous and might needlessly antagonize people.¹³

Good leaders ensure they have varied perspectives available to them before they make important decisions. The one common qualification of a counselor should be a close walk with God. Just being a professing Christian is not qualification enough to be considered credible. Advisors should demonstrate competence as well as a mature faith. Counselors who are not oriented to God can only offer their own advice. Spiritual leaders need counselors who walk closely with God and who take their counsel from Him. Having a mind and character that are being molded by the Holy Spirit gives godly counselors a great advantage over those who do not have God as a frame of reference for their decision making. Admittedly, it is not possible in every situation to enlist the advice

¹² Warren Bennis, *Why Leaders Can't Lead* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1989), 92-101.

¹³ Drucker, *The Effective Executive*, 279.

of fellow believers, especially in narrow fields of expertise. In such cases leaders should seek the counsel of colleagues who demonstrate honesty and integrity in their character.¹⁴

John Gardner comments, “Pity the leader who is caught between unloving critics and uncritical lovers.” One of the great downfalls of leaders is letting their egos hinder their effectiveness. They shield themselves from any form of criticism, so they foolishly quarantine themselves from wise counselors who could give healthy advice.¹⁵

The Holy Spirit Guides Through Circumstances

Leaders are never simply the victims or pawns of their circumstances. Wise leaders watch for God’s activity in the midst of their experiences. Just as God speaks by his Holy Spirit through prayer, the Bible, and other believers, so God can send clear messages to leaders through their experiences. A chance encounter with someone at the airport, an unexpected check in the mail, a surprise phone call are all viewed by leaders in light of what they have been praying about and reading in Scripture. Spiritual leaders astutely evaluate “coincidences” to see if these are God’s answers to their prayers. Spiritual leaders are not discouraged by their circumstances—they are informed by them. Through circumstances and events in leaders’ lives, God leads them forward in His will.

God’s Will and Decision Making

Having surveyed the Biblical data on the nature of God’s sovereign will, the following section will consider the ways in which sovereignty affects the believer’s decision making process. Specifically, it will discuss how the Bible relates God’s

¹⁴ Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, 153-175.

¹⁵ Garden, *On Leadership*, 135.

sovereignty to such important considerations as planning, circumstances, “open door,” and “fleeces.”

God’s Involvement “Opens Doors”

Having faith that He will open doors is scriptural. Our Lord Promises to do it for children (Rev. 3:20). The expression “open door” is found in a few places in the New Testament. The nature of the access or opportunity available is determined by the context. For instance, in Acts 14:27, Paul and Barnabas reported how God “had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles,” meaning that the Gentiles had been given an opportunity to hear the gospel and believe. Most New Testament occurrences of the expression relate to some opportunity for gospel ministry. The nature of such open doors is important for a discussion on the subject of guidance, for their very existence implies that a decision must be made concerning them.

The Apostle Paul’s vision calling him to Macedonia to help open Europe to the gospel was a singular experience in his life. However, there are other times he referred to the “open door” as ministry, “God set before him” (I Cor. 16:9, II Cor. 2:12, Col. 4:3). Actually, he uses the term to communicate opportunities to serve God.

On the basis of these passages, the following conclusions can be made concerning the place of “open doors” in guidance and decision making: (1) the term “door” refers to an opportunity, usually related to the effective ministry of the Word: (2) opportunities, like everything else, come through God’s sovereignty: (3) the nature of various opportunities, as well as the common practice of Paul, indicate that most of the time “open doors” should be utilized as part of wise, resourceful living for the Lord (Ephesians 5:15-16); (4) if a greater opportunity or more pressing work is at hand, it is

acceptable and proper to pass by the open door; and (5) an “open door” is not a direct providential sign from God telling the believer to go in a certain direction. A door is used, not because it is a sign, but because doors facilitate entrance. God opens doors by giving us opportunities to service. Our Lord said to His faithful children “I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it” (Rev. 3:8b).

As a postscript to this discussion, it seems appropriate to note that God can also close doors. We should not automatically assume that a closed door means an opportunity is permanently denied to us. Perhaps the timing is off and God wants to open the door at a later date.¹⁶ The DMM presented in this study provides the decision maker with God given opportunities/open doors in the form of alternatives/choices. It also gives them Biblical criteria. The Holy Spirit can guide them as they prayerfully decide which alternative best lines up with the will of God.

God Involvement: “Fleeces”

One approach to decision making that is invariably discussed by writers and speakers on the subject is the practice of “putting out a fleece.” Both the expression and the technique are based on the experience of Gideon. “Putting out a fleece” is a method of determining God’s individual will in a given situation by determining in advance a circumstantial sign by which God can indicate the right decision. Where as it may not be very exegetical to use Judges 6 to support it, the concept is not inconsistent with the

¹⁶ Ibid., 221.

traditional view of decision making. But it cannot be supported by the passage on which it is based.¹⁷

At a number of points, let us look at a few where Judges 6, according to Friesen, fails to authenticate the contemporary practice of “putting out a fleece.” In the first place, Gideon’s fleece was not simply a circumstantial sign, but rather a miraculous display of supernatural power. Second, Gideon was not employing the fleece to ascertain guidance, but to gain confirmation of guidance already given. And the guidance already given came by means of supernatural revelation. So Gideon was not seeking the right decision, but enough faith to believe that God’s deliverance would come through him. Third, rather than being an example of a proper approach to receiving guidance, Gideon’s demand for further signs were really an expression of doubt and unbelief. God’s instructions to Gideon were clear, as He Himself indicated (6:37). Apparently, God graciously acceded to Gideon’s lack of faith because of the severe circumstances, which tested him.¹⁸

Synthesis

Friesen argues that the distinguishing feature of this whole process is that the decision maker chooses the circumstantial sign (as opposed to an “open door” of opportunity provided by God.) Since the individual names the fleece, the character of fleeces varies greatly. A fleece that demands a miracle for fulfillment (like Gideon’s sheepskin) will automatically receive a negative “answer.” This kind of fleece is of no value whatsoever in coming to a decision, and may result in harmful consequences, if

¹⁷ George Barna, *The Power of Vision: How You Capture and Apply God’s Vision for Your Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Regal Publications, 1992).

¹⁸ Ibid., 121-123.

valid criteria such as those used in the DMM for decision making are ignored.¹⁹ The DMM ensures planning and valid Biblical criteria are used in the decision making process.

“Putting out a fleece” is an invalid practice that sometimes works when it is really wisdom in disguise. In short, while God’s sovereign may not be directly related to various aspects of decision making, its reality should govern the believer’s attitude in decision making. Humble planning is the proper response to the sovereign will of God. In all decisions, the believer should humbly submit, in advance, to the outworking of God’s sovereign will as it touches each decision.

Tim LaHaye says that no method or technique, whether a fleece or the DMM, used in this study, should be used independent of God’s word and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a fleece/open door should be used sparingly, with prayer for major decisions as the Spirit leads. It should be used to confirm God’s involvement, not to find it.²⁰

¹⁹ Tim LaHaye, *Finding God’s Will in a Crazy Mixed-Up World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989), 125-129.

²⁰ Friesen, 222.

CHAPTER VII

GROUP DECISION MAKING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

This chapter will present various decision making tools/techniques. It is important for a group to approach its task in a logical, organized, and systematic manner. A structured and systematic decision making process using graphical technique, such as the DMM presented in this study, provides better solutions than an unstructured process.¹ Graphical decision making techniques let you know where you are and where the variations lie.² Therefore, this chapter will begin by discussing the major advantages and disadvantages of group decision making in contrast to individual decision making. In addition, it will consist of practical descriptions, instructions and examples of techniques/tools that facilitate the group decision making process: Flow Chart, Check Sheet, Brainstorming, Nominal Group Techniques, Force Field Analysis, Pareto Chart, and Matrix.

Advantages of Group Decision

Individual and group decisions each have their own set of strengths. Neither is ideal for all situations. The following list identifies the major advantages that groups offer over individuals in the making of decisions:

¹ Sileva Soula, 'Quality Problem Solving, Decision Making' *Nursing Case Management Journal*. (1960), 1 no. 5, 20.

² Drucker, 143-153.

1. **More complete information and knowledge.** Two heads can be better than one. There is more information in a group than typically resides with one individual. So groups can provide more diverse input into the decision.
2. **Increases acceptance of a solution.** Many decisions fail after the final choice has been made because people do not accept the solution. However, if people who will be affected by a decision and who will be instrumental in implementing it are able to participate in the decision itself, they will be more likely to accept it and encourage others to accept it. Participation in the process increases the commitment and motivation of those who will carry out the decision. Since members are reluctant to fight or undermine decisions that they helped to develop, group decisions increase acceptance of the final solution and facilitate its implementation.
3. **Increases legitimacy.** Our society fosters democratic methods. The group decision making process is consistent with democratic ideals, and therefore, may be perceived as more legitimate than decisions made by a single person. When an individual decision maker fails to consult with others before making a decision, the fact that the decision maker has complete power can create the perception that the decision was made autocratically and arbitrarily.

Disadvantages of Group Decision

Group decisions are not without drawbacks. The following lists the major disadvantages to group decision making:

1. **Time consuming.** It takes time to assemble a group. The interaction that takes place once the group is in place is frequently inefficient. The result is that

groups take more time to reach a solution than would be the case if an individual were making the decision.

2. **Pressures to conform.** There are social pressures in groups. The desire by group members to be accepted and considered as an asset to the group can result in squashing any overt disagreement, and thus encouraging conformity among viewpoints.
3. **Ambiguous responsibility.** Group members share responsibility, but who is actually responsible for the final outcome? In an individual decision, it is clear who is responsible. In a group decision, the responsibility of any single member is watered down and less clearly defined.³
4. **The DMM established in this study eliminates the disadvantages listed above.** The DMM offers decision makers a quick, anonymous, concise, concrete, and objective method for group decisions. The remainder of this chapter will be a brief description of some of the graphical decision making techniques.

Flow Chart

A flow chart is a pictorial representation showing all of the steps of a process. Flow charts provide excellent documentation of a program and can be a useful tool for examining how various steps in a process are related to each other. Flow charting uses easily recognizable symbols to represent the steps.

By studying these charts, you can often uncover loopholes—which are potential

³ Janis and Mann, *Decision Making: A Psychological Analysis of Conflict Choice and Commitment*, 144-160.

sources of trouble. Flow charts can be applied to anything from the travels of an invoice or the flow of materials to the steps in making a sale or servicing a product. The following provide guidelines for using the flow chart in the decision making process:

1. Draw a flow chart listing what steps the process should follow if everything worked right.
2. Compare the steps of the flow chart to find where they are different because this is where problems arise.
3. The steps below will help the decision maker construct a flow chart.
 - a. Define the boundaries of the process clearly
 - b. Use the simplest symbols possible
 - c. Make sure every feedback loop has an escape

There is usually one output arrow out of a process box. Otherwise, it may require a “decisions diamond.”⁴

Check Sheet

Check sheets are used when you need to gather data based on sample observations in order to begin to detect patterns. This is the logical starting point in most problem solving. Check sheets are simply an easily understood form used to answer the question, “How often are certain events happening?” It starts the process of translating “opinions” and facts. Constructing a check sheet involves the following steps:⁵

1. Agree on the event observed. Everyone has to be looking for the same thing.

⁴ Rocco Cottone, “Social Constructivism Model of Ethical Decision making in Counseling,” *Journal of Counseling and Development* 79, no. 4 (2001) : 39-45.

⁵ Herbert Simon, *The New Science of Management* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1977), 46-61.

2. Decide on a time period to collect data. This could take weeks without the DMM. The DMM can reduce this process to hours.
3. Design a form that is clearly labeled with adequate space for entering data.
4. Collect the data consistently and honestly. The method of collecting data from participants will enhance the adherence to this principle.

Brainstorming

*This is an excellent way for work groups to pool their creative resources in order to quickly produce new and unusual problem-solving ideas.

*When combined with a number of other practices such as evaluation, application, and revision of solutions, it is a powerful problem-solving tool.

*A chairperson is selected whose role is both to motivate the group to produce ideas and to screen out critical comments.

*A secretary is also selected whose job is to maintain a written list, where everyone can see it, of the ideas that come up during the session.

Steps/rules included

*Suspend all judgment. Don't criticize or evaluate ideas, including your own.

*Contribute whatever ideas come to mind. Encourage ideas, no matter how wild or incomplete.

*Speak whenever anything comes to mind, even when others are speaking.

Repeat your idea, if necessary, until it gets noted.

*Build on and combine with any ideas you hear. "Hitchhiking" on another's words, meanings, and images is very effective.

*The larger the number of ideas, the better this process works. The best ideas

often come late in the session.

After the brainstorming session, the ground rules change radically. You must set up the criteria for evaluation. Evaluate all the ideas and choose the best two or three possible solutions.

Nominal Group Technique

- *This method ensures that all members of a group participate.
- *The process can be readily understood, communicated, and used without extensive prior training. Participants in their organizations can use it immediately, and skills can be transferred to other organization members.
- *It usually works best when used with seven to eleven participants.
- *A chairperson is selected whose role is to be assertive and follow the nominal group technique format. They also serve as group recorder.

Steps included

- * Group members write key ideas silently and independently.
- * In a round robin session, the ideas of group members are recorded on a flip chart visible to the entire group. Round robin recording means going around and asking for **one** idea from **one** member at a time.
- * Each idea is discussed in turn. Members ask questions, make clarifications, or agree or disagree with the ideas.
- * The judgments of individual members are combined to determine the relative importance of individual ideas. Members take a preliminary vote on priorities.

Members take a final vote on priorities, which combines individual judgments into a group decision. The final vote provides a sense of closure and accomplishment.

Force Field Analysis

*This process provides participants with a means of thoroughly diagnosing factors causing a particular problem by looking beyond the obvious and into new responses to the problem conditions. Thus generating a more creditable alternative to decide upon.

*It gives the participants access to more data and alternatives. It also gives a greater awareness of possible implications in terms of later consequences.

*Groups of about six or seven are considered ideal. However, individuals or larger groups can effectively use the method.

Steps included

*Define the problem as a condition that exists with forces impinging upon it.

*Brainstorm the driving and restraining forces that affect this particular problem.

*Concentrate efforts on the restraining forces by ordering the list into priorities.

*Eliminate restraining forces that would take more time, money, or resources to change.

*Having established those restraining forces that can be worked with by the group, attempt to establish specific ways of reducing the restraining forces in a manner that will minimize possible offsetting reactions.

*Develop specific proposals including methods for implementation and group accountability.

* Present the specific proposals to the entire group. Entertain suggestions to be sure that the various proposals are integrated into a strategy for action.

- * At some agreed upon date in the future, evaluate what impact the various suggestions have had.

Pareto Chart

A Pareto chart is used when you need to display the relative importance of all of the problems or conditions in order to choose the starting point for problem solving/decision making. It helps identify the basic cause of a problem. A Pareto chart has a special form of vertical paragraphing, which helps determine which problems to solve and in what order. A Pareto chart based upon either check sheets as we discussed earlier in this chapter or the researcher's DMM, helps direct the attention and efforts to the truly important problems or alternatives.

Steps include

- * Select the problems that are to be compared and rank ordered by brainstorming or using existing data.
- * Select the standard for comparison unit of measurement (e.g., annual cost, frequency, criteria, ratings, options etc.).
- * Select time periods to be studied (e.g., eight hours or criteria, rate, options).
- * Gather necessary data on the site of each category (e.g., option A received X ratings, or criteria #2 was rated a seven on option A).
- * Compare the frequency or cost of each category relative to all other categories.
- * List the categories from left to right on the horizontal axis in their order of decreasing frequency or cost. The categories containing the fewest items can

be combined into an “other” category, which is placed on the extreme right as the last bar.

- * Above each criteria or category, draw a rectangle whose height represents the ratings in that criterion.

Matrix

The decision matrix is a technique to assist teams in objectively evaluating alternative ideas. It is most often used to force the team to seriously consider all the major ideas and is used when the final selection among alternatives is particularly complex. Most often, when making a decision, no single perfect solution exists. Options A, B, and C might meet some of the criteria, while options D and E might meet other criteria, but not those met by options A, B, and C.

By listing the options and matching them against the criteria on a chart, you will be able to clearly see which option meets most of the criteria.⁶ The matrix can also maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages of group decisions, identified earlier in this paper. The matrix will make it possible to quickly and easily collect data and obtain groups/congregational input in any given selected setting. For example, the leader can gather information by having the members rate the applicable items during a Sunday School, Worship Service, Bible Study, or other group meetings.

A matrix is nothing more than a grid with as many cells as needed for the problem/alternative being analyzed. Meredith said, “A matrix is one of the handiest,

⁶ Bradsky, *Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement*, 24-31.

clearest methods of sorting information. Anytime I can reduce information to a matrix, I find it analytically illuminating” (p. 115).⁷

The purpose of the information on the matrix is to show some relationships among the items that are listed. The next step is to target one of these items for improvement. While completing the improvement/alternative matrix, members of the management team should have gained a broad perspective of items and results. The matrix can be used in several ways to help team members reach consensus on one item to target. Let members of the team help decide what criteria to apply in selecting the area for improvement. Any one of the following methods will work well:

Some programs find that the numbers in the “Totals” column indicate areas the program should select for improvement—the most likely candidates for selection have the highest totals. For this reason, the team chooses to simply select the item with the highest “Total.” Many times, members of the management team will look for an item that shares characteristics with other items and is relatively easy to implement. By focusing on a key area, improvements—may occur in many areas.

Sometimes a particular criterion is considered especially important. This importance can be reflected in the “Totals” column by doubling each rating under this criteria (multiply each rating by two), then adding the new ratings together to get new totals. The new totals will reflect the emphasized criteria. This same principle may be used to weight every criterion. The most important criteria can be multiplied by “5”; the next important by “4”; the third most important by “3;” and so on. Rating/weighting will be discussed further in chapter eight.

⁷ Ibid., 22-115.

All of the items that end up listed on the matrix probably represent important opportunities for improvement. Members of the management team can also simply choose the item they would like the improvement team to work on. They can do this by a simple rating. In the final analysis a matrix enables, among other things, to accomplish the following tasks: Separate elements of a problem, categorize information by type, compare one type of information with another, compare pieces of information of the same type, and see correlations (patterns) among information.⁸

Synthesis

A review of the literature indicates that there are a variety of tools and techniques utilized to learn about a problem and decide on an effective solution. The one presented in this study is the most helpful and valuable in organizing information/data that promotes quality decision- making.⁹ These decision/problem analysis tools provide a structured and systematic thinking process for dealing with a plan or problem.¹⁰ When evaluating the advantages versus the disadvantages for each tool presented in the chapter, clearly the matrix exhibits many more advantages and much fewer disadvantages. It is also a simpler and faster approach, which Chesla says is used in implementing and evaluating solutions that have been decided upon.¹¹ Therefore, the writer selected the

⁸ Herbert Kindler, "Decisions, Decisions, Which Approach to Take," *Personnel Journal* 62, no. 1 (1985) : 47-56.

⁹ Bradsky, *Guide of Tools for Continuous Improvement*, 5-7.

¹⁰ Altier, *The Thinking Manager's Tool Box: Effective Processes for Problem Solving and Decision Making*, 115.

¹¹ Elizabeth Chesla, *Practical Solutions for Every Day Work Problems* (New York: Learning Express, LLC, 2000), 89-100.

matrix and developed Biblical based criteria to maximize the effectiveness/quality of the decision making process and organization.

CHAPTER VIII

MATRIX CRITERIA

The utility of the Decision Making Matrix (DMM) offers two advantages over many of the other tools discussed in chapter seven. First, the relative differences in utility values of outcomes are more easily perceived in a matrix than the other tools.¹ Second, arithmetic calculations are easier to perform.² It is also far less complicated than the tree used by Yetton and Jargo in their normative model discussed in chapter four. This is due, in part, to the different configurations of the two structuring devices. It is busy, sort of sprawls out, and is sometimes unsymmetrical. Also, the focus of DMM is squarely on alternative outcomes, while trees tend to direct attention from the outcomes.³ Also, the matrix facilitates arithmetic operations, which makes it more suitable than a tree for analyzing a problem from a different perspective and with different classes of outcomes.

This chapter will provide an analytical presentation and validation of the criteria used to develop the DMM. Each criterion will be evaluated and compared with those most advocated by other decision making theorists. A decision analysis will be presented for rating/weighing the criteria and ranking the proposed alternatives to a given problem. In addition, at the end of each criterion the researcher will provide a progressive

¹ Wayne Lee, *Decision Theory and Human Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1971).

² Harold Kuntz and Heinz Weichrich, *Management* 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill).

³ Hughes, Gennett and Curphy, 54-57.

illustration that evolves to the total of criteria used in the DMM. These illustrations will depict the relationship among criteria and the semantics used in the DMM.

The Eight Steps of Utility Matrix Analysis

Jones offers the following eight steps the researcher used as a guideline in developing the DMM:⁴

Step 1: Identify the options and outcomes to be analyzed

Step 2: Identify the perspective of the analysis.

Step 3: Construct a utility matrix.

Step 4: Assign a utility value of 0 to 100 (unless dollars are used) to each option outcome combination—each cell of the matrix—by asking the Utility Question: If we select this option, and this outcome occurs, what is the utility from the perspective of...? There must be at least one 100 unless dollars are used.

Step 5: Assign a probability to each outcome. Determine or estimate this probability by asking the probability question: If this option is selected, what is the probability this outcome will occur? The probabilities of all outcomes for a single option must add up to 1.0.

Step 6: Determine the expected values by multiplying each utility by its probability and then adding the expected values for each option.

Step 7: Determine the ranking of the alternative options.

Step 8: Perform a sanity check.⁵

⁴ Jones, *Ministerial Leadership in a Managerial World*, 47-52.

⁵ Chesla, *Practical Solutions for Every Day Work Problems*, 115-141.

Selecting Potential Alternative/Improvements

At this point in the process, the DMM (see Appendix C on page 142) should be used to help the leader gain input from selected participants. The DMM can be used to examine each possible improvement against a set of criteria. List each potential improvement in the left-hand column. Ask the members of the team to develop criteria for ranking the headings. Decision making theorists suggest that they consider criteria such as expense, whether significant progress can be made, how important that improvement will be to overall quality, and the extent to which it will be a problem if ignored. Members of the team may also develop other criteria. Any criteria that the team feels is particularly important can be weighted.⁶ For example, a criterion of health and safety might be given a double weight worth twice the points.⁷ Each potential improvement project is rated by each criterion. This process will encourage discussion and the sharing of perceptions and ideas. When the ratings are complete, review the results, and select one or more improvements to pursue. Usually the improvement selected will be on one of those with the highest ranking.

A simpler and faster approach is to rate each improvement high, medium, or low. It may help to list several criteria to keep in mind as the team works toward consensus on the ratings. The team then discusses those improvements with “high” ratings to select one or more improvements.⁸

⁶ Molitor, *The Power of Agreement*, 234-23.

⁷ Jones, *The Thinker's Tool Kit: 14 Powerful Techniques for Problem Solving*, 139-144.

⁸ Carolyn H. Smeltzer, Nancy M. Formella and Heather Beebe, “Working Restructuring: The Process of Decision Making,” *Nursing Economical Journal* 11, no. 4 (1993) : 215-221.

Criteria Definition and Validation

Whereas very few decision making experts use group performance as the evaluation criterion for whether or not a leader is effective, most decision making experts use factors/criteria from the normative model to determine decision effectiveness.

Decision effectiveness is evaluated on the basis of five criteria: (1) the organizational mission, (2) decision quality, (3) decision acceptance, (4) timeliness, time required to reach a decision, and (5) involving God. Since these criteria have been validated with the extensive research of decision theorists such as Victor H. Vroom, and Arthur G. Jago,⁹ they are used as a basis for criteria for the DMM in this study and discussed below.

A criterion is a rule or standard by which to rank the alternatives in order of desirability. The use of “criterion” to mean objective is incorrect. Generally, it is any standard by which something is judged.¹⁰ In logic it is a contingent condition neither necessary nor sufficient for the truth of the judgment but a reliable indication thereof. Criteria are normative requirements which should be met/measured.¹¹

Group decision making criteria: Doubtless there are many criteria by which the decisions made by groups can be evaluated. But for the purpose of this study these are The biblical values integrated in a mission statement:¹² acceptance, quality, God involvement, time and significance of the problem.¹³

⁹ Vroom and Jago, *The New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organizations*, 15-28.

¹⁰ Dawson, *Confident Decision Maker*, 27-36.

¹¹ Alvar O. Elbing, *Behavioral Decisions in Organization* 2nd ed. (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1978), 62-74.

¹² Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 110-113.

¹³ Richard Daft, *Leadership Theory and Practice* (Fort Worth, TX: The Dryden Press, 1999), 107-109.

Mission as a Criterion

The first criterion for the DMM used in this study is the mission statement.

Remember the mission is the reason we exist and what God has called us to do. It is important because it dictates the ministry's direction, function, and future. It also shapes its strategy and facilitates the evaluation of the ministry.¹³

Once the mission has been validated as the criterion for the DMM, we must develop a written mission statement. Values influence the organization's overall behavior; drive the decisions made, the problem resolved, and goal set; and catalyze ministry involvement. Therefore, the mission statement must incorporate the ministry's core values, as discussed in chapter 2 of this study.¹⁴ As always, we start with the Bible to identify values. God has not left us clueless when it comes to building a value base. We may appropriate a comprehensive group of values from the life principles described in the scripture.¹⁵ Figure 8-1 displays the mission criterion for the DMM.

Mission Criterion
Supports the Mission of the Ministry

Figure 8-1. Mission criterion.

Quality as a Criterion

Decision quality refers to the factors, which are important for considering decisions to facilitate improvement, leader effectiveness, or group performance. For instance, a decision on where to place a water cooler in a church/organization requires

¹⁴ Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 65-79.

¹⁵ Barna, *The Man Who Brought Marketing to Church: Leadership 16*, 28-53.

low decision quality, because it has little impact on group performance, whereas a decision on work assignments requires high decision quality.

Therefore, decision quality means simply that if the decision has a rational or objective determinable better or worse alternative, the leader should select the better alternative.¹⁶ The DMM model is consistent with what Vroom and Jago is intended quality in their model to apply when the decision could result in an objective/measurable better outcome for the group or organization, that is consistent with its goals/mission.¹⁷

Figure 8-2 displays the mission and decision criteria for the DMM.

Mission Criterion	Decision Quality Criterion
Supports the Mission of the Ministry	Overall Quality of the Ministry

Figure 8-2. Decision Quality Criterion.

Decision Acceptance as a Criterion

Decision acceptance refers to how important it is for group members to accept decisions in order for them to be successfully implemented. Some decisions do not require group acceptance to be successfully executed, whereas group members must accept others in order to be successful (selecting fund raising performance objectives). In other words, decision acceptance implies that followers accept the decision as if it were their own and do not merely comply with the decision. Acceptance of the decision outcome by subordinates may be critical, particularly if it is the followers/subordinates

¹⁶ Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing Lessons of Experience*, 52.

¹⁷ Vroom and Jago, *The New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organizations*, 117-135.

who will bear principal responsibilities for implementing the decision. With such acceptance, there will be little need for supervisors to monitor compliance, which can be a continuing and time consuming activity (and virtually impossible in some circumstances such as with a geographically dispersed staff).¹⁸ Figure 8-3 displays the mission, decision quality, and decision acceptance criteria, for the DMM.

Mission Criterion	Decision Quality Criterion	Decision Acceptance
Supports the Mission of the Ministry	Overall Quality of the Ministry	Team Members View it as Important

Figure 8-3. Decision Acceptance.

Timeliness as a Criterion

Time required to reach a decision is the third factor or criterion. Decisions must be made in a timely fashion. Some decisions can be made slowly (choice of color when repainting an office), whereas others may require immediate action (whether or not to invest in a particular stock or bond).

Many factors contribute to the importance of time: organizational differences, budgetary cycles, staffing level, and illness of key participants are among them. It should be noted that the value of time does not depend on the particular decision being made but rather with other ongoing events impinging on the leader. Therefore, in the DMM developed in this study the researcher decided to use time as a criterion (e.g., will it be a

¹⁸ Ibid., 56-64.

significant problem if ignored and can alternative/solution be accomplished in one year).¹⁹ Figure 8-4 displays the mission criterion, decision quality, decision acceptance, and decision timeliness of the DMM.

Mission Criterion	Decision Quality Criterion	Decision Acceptance	Decision Timeliness
Supports the Mission of the Ministry	Overall Quality of the Ministry	Team Members View it as Important	Solution Accomplished within 1 Year

Figure 8-4. Decision Timeliness.

Involving God as a Criterion

Great leadership is always involved in decision making. A servant leader wants God close at hand.²⁰ Leaders must demonstrate God's involvement in the decision making process by seeking guidance through prayer and the Word of God.²¹ Therefore, major decisions should not be made without consulting the Bible and prayer.²² It is imperative that the DMM developed in this study has a criterion that considers whether God was involved in the decision making process. Figure 8-5 displays the complete criteria used in the DMM.

Mission Criterion	Decision Quality Criterion	Decision Acceptance	Decision Timeliness	Involving God
Supports the Mission of the Ministry	Overall Quality of the Ministry	Team Members View it as Important	Solution Accomplished within 1 Year	God Involvement

Figure 8-5. Involving God.

¹⁹ Daniel D. Wheeler and Irving L. Janis, *A Practical Guide For Making-Decisions* (New York: Free Press, 1980), 145-158.

²⁰ Miller, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership*, 82-83.

²¹ Blackaby and Blackaby, *Moving People on to God's Agenda: Spiritual Leadership*, 178-179.

²² LaHaye, *Finding God's Will in a Crazy Mixed-Up World*, 27-28.

Criteria Weights

Although, the criteria are not weighted in the DMM presented in this study, the researcher will discuss the two that are used most often by decision maker theorists. The two methods most used to weight criteria are called weighed ranking and “Liberty” criteria.²³

Weighed ranking: We may not realize it but humans are constantly ranking things: the food we buy in the grocery, the clothes we wear each day, the route to work, the section of the Bible we read, and so on. Like most of what we do mentally, this ranking is an unconscious but instinctive process that facilitates, and perhaps even enables our decision making. Because these everyday decisions are unconscious, we are not aware that they involve ranking.

To rank means to assign a position to something relative to other things. Our instinctive (we are born with it) ability to rank things quickly and effortlessly is indeed a blessing. As with our other mental traits, we would be in serious trouble making decisions without this built-in software for ranking.²⁴

The Nine Steps Of Weighted Ranking

Step 1: List all of the major criteria for ranking: Write down in a column all the criteria for ranking.

Step 2: Pair rank the criteria. We now must determine which of these criteria is the most important. To do that we simply pair rank them: The first against the second,

²³ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Psychology* 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 141-149.

²⁴ Ross A. Webber, *Management: Basic Elements of Managing Organizations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1975), 271-291.

first against the third, and so on. Add up the votes/values you give to each criterion. The one with the most votes is the top criterion, the one with the second most votes is second, and so on.

Step 3: Select the top several criteria and weight them in percentiles (their sum must equal 10). Weight each criterion by dividing 100 points among them according to the importance you assign to each. Convert these points to percentiles; remember their total must equal 1.0.

Step 4: Construct a weighted ranking matrix and enter the items to be ranked, the selected criteria, and the criteria weights.

Step 5: Pair rank the items by each criterion, recording in the appropriate spaces the number of votes/values each item receives. At this juncture the complication mentioned earlier starts. But there's no way around it if we are to rank all options reason for the DMM that has criteria that are equally valued by team members.

Step 6: Multiply the votes by the respective criterion's weight. In-other-words, multiply the number of votes for each entry under each criterion by that criterion's weight.

Step 7: Add the weight values for each item and enter the sums in the column labeled total votes/values.

Step 8: Determine the final ranking and enter it in the last column labeled "Final Ranking" (the item with the most points is ranked highest).

Step 9: Perform a sanity check. Check to see whether the results make sense. If not, go back and check the rankings, the weights, and the arithmetic. Now copy the final

rankings into the last column of the ranking. Then label that column “Weighted Ranking.”²⁵

Liberty Criteria Technique

This technique is more suitable for measuring performance. Next, we will describe the liberty criteria. The liberty criteria technique offers the readers mathematical calculations. Let us begin by explaining the meaning of the liberty acronym:

- L** evel: Set your standards at the adequate level. Your statements describe a responsibility when it is satisfactory (fully and adequately) accomplished.
- I** mportance: Do not compile a long laundry list of standards. Limit results expected to those key results, which are observable and measurable.
- B** ehavior: Personality traits (like punctuality, attendance, appearance, courtesy, dependability, versatility) must be clearly job related. Your standards will make them so.
- E** xcellence: State **HOW WELL** the duty is to be done. Quality, accuracy, and neatness are important to most jobs. Standards may already exist in agency, state, or federal requirements. Error tolerance levels may be indicated.
- R** ate: State **HOW MUCH/HOW FAST**, if this is important to the duty. Key considerations here may be “daily”, “monthly”, allowable turn-around time, deadlines, time estimates, caseload projections, even words-per-minute.

²⁵ Jones, *Ministerial Leadership in a Managerial World*, 138-177.

- Time:** Keep in mind that your work plan is for a specific period of time (normally six months). Standards may often include dates (e.g. “by January 1, 2002....”).
- Yardstick:** End all standard statements with the words: “as indicated by...” what specifically will be used to measure whether the standard has been met: Observation? Absence of complaint? Progress reports? Records? Lack of need for revision?

In instances of combined functional and line supervision (e.g. the therapeutic team model or case management teams), the Yardstick should identify the evaluation of each function.²⁶ See criteria weight calculations on page 120.

The Decision making Matrix

The decision making matrix presented in Table 2 on page 121 instructs the participants to list potential areas of growth and development, rate each of the items using a 1 (low priority) - 10 (high priority) scale, then add up the numbers and write the total in the column provided. Viewing Table 2 on page 121 from left to right: first, the source column allows the participant to annotate the origin of the problem (e.g. Q = Questionnaire); second, the alternative column provides a list of possible solutions derived from the problem-solving/decision making process; the next five columns provide criteria for the decision making matrix (note that the criteria are equally weighted in order to facilitate a parsimonious decision making process); the next column, “Other”, is reserved for situation-specific criteria. The bottom of the matrix as stated earlier provides a key for the sources (see Appendix C on page 142).

²⁶ Leonard R. Stayles and George Strauss, *Managing Human Resources* 2nd ed. (London, Eng.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 116-137.

Calculating Weight Percentages

Step 1: Assign Time and Consequences Criteria.

Step 2: Multiply Time Factor by Consequence Criterion.

Step 3: Total Product Criteria.

For example, time can indicate the number of hours per week spent in the performance of the responsibility. Consequence can indicate the seriousness of effect ranging from virtually no damage to extreme damage.

Duties	Hours Per Week	Consequences	Time Criteria	Consequences Criteria	Product Criteria
1 -	6 1/2 – 10	Moderate _____	3	x	3 = 9
2 -	10 1/2 – 20	Extreme _____	4	x	5 = 20
3 -	2 1/2 -- 6	Moderate _____	2	x	3 = 6
4 -	0—2	Little _____	1	x	2 = 2
5 -	0—2	Extreme _____	1	x	5 = 5
6 -	0—2	Extreme _____	1	x	5 = 5
					<hr/> 47 Total

Step 4: Divide each Product
Criterion by the Product Criterion Total

Step 5: Total the first two
decimal places

9 ÷ 47 = .191	.19
20 ÷ 47 = .425	.42
6 ÷ 47 = .127	.12
2 ÷ 47 = .042	.04
5 ÷ 47 = .106	.10
5 ÷ 47 = .106	.10

Step 6: Round up numbers in step 5 should total 1.00.

TABLE 2
Decision making Matrix

Instructions: List potential areas of growth and development, rate each of the items using a 1 (low priority) – 10 (high priority) scale, then add up the total number and write the total in the column provided. You may add your own criteria.

[illegible]

Synthesis

This chapter basically validated the criteria used to develop the DMM. With the exception of the God involvement criteria, the other criterion (i.e., mission, acceptance, quality and timeliness) and, are prolifically promoted among secular²⁷ and Christians²⁸ theorists/writers. Higgins says, that the God involvement criterion mandates a guide to help Christians make better decisions.²⁹ LaHaye deems the criterion necessary to ensure the decision maker reads the words to make God guided decisions.³⁰ Friesen suggests considering God's sovereign, moral, and individual will in the decision making process.³¹ Vroom and Jago's studies conclude that no leadership theory surpasses the Vroom-Yetton normative model in its scientific validity and practical usefulness. "In every test attempted, the model is shown to improve the effectiveness of organizational decision making." (p. 83).³² In addition, they report that there are thousands of studies that validate the acceptance quality and timeliness criteria. Therefore, it is imperative that these criteria be included in developing the DMM in this study.

²⁷ Daft, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 144.

²⁸ Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership*, 56-82.

²⁹ Higgins, "Decision Making and Personality," 20-31.

³⁰ LaHaye, *Finding God's Will in a Crazy Mixed-Up World*, 71-80.

³¹ Friesen, 55-61.

³² Vroom and Jago, 80-99.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This chapter will summarize and synthesize chapters one through eight. It will consist of an introduction, summary, interpretation, and conclusions drawn from the findings in the order of the research questions as presented in chapter one. Next, conclusions that have not been hypothesized and that are not directly related to the research questions or hypothesis will be discussed. Lastly, any comparisons or contrasts with others' quantitative/qualitative conclusions will be presented.

The major purpose of this study was to identify and analyze Biblical-based criteria to maximize the effectiveness/quality of decision making. The theoretical framework that drove this study was core values and the Yetton and Vroom normative model for decision making. Additional purposes were to assist ministries and organizations in developing a user friendly decision making matrix to facilitate quick and effective decisions. The DMM developed in this study promotes participation of group members in the decision making process. This enhances the acceptance of the decision by those responsible for implementing it.

The review of the literature provided an overview of the meaning of various aspects of decision making, the importance of this study, criteria and techniques for decision making, and review of theories/models relevant to making decisions. Also, a

large section of the literature review presented in this study focuses on strategic planning, the psychology of decision making and involving God in the decision making process.

The results of an analytical study of the literature and an evaluation of data of the decision makers theorists and models, particularly the normative model, give us the best criteria for making effective/quality decisions: the mission, acceptance, quality, timeliness, and God's involvement.

Conclusion

Research Question 1

1. What role does strategic planning play in the decision making process?

Strategic Planning

The typical church in North America is like a sailboat without a rudder, drifting aimlessly. As if that is not bad enough, the winds of change and the currents of postmodernism are relentlessly blowing and pulling the church even farther off course. The rudder that the church is missing is a good strategic planning process. Without it, the typical sailor—today's pastor—will find it difficult to navigate in any situation.

One purpose of this thesis was to provide the church and its leadership a good strategic plan that enhances the decision making process. This is the necessary rudder that will Biblically and thoughtfully guide the church through these and future times of unprecedented, convoluted change. A good strategic planning process, as captured by a good strategic planning model, is important for numerous reasons. Here are eight:

1. The church decides on how it envisions its God-determined future and how best, through specific strategies, to accomplish that future.

2. The process prompts the church to be proactive not reactive—to be aggressive, not passive—“salt and light”—in this present world. In this way churches can prepare for a future that honors Christ and they can make things happen, rather than waiting for things to happen and becoming victims of the times.
3. It forces churches to think about and focus on such deep Biblical/theological issues as core purpose, mission, values, vision, and strategy.
4. A good strategic model helps the ministry discover its strengths as well as its weaknesses, its opportunities as well as its threats.
5. Strategic thinking helps churches face the reality of chaotic change and make the tough decisions.
6. A good strategic planning model will help the church be positive, not negative, in its approach to ministry—to envision what it can do.
7. It invites the church to discover the trends driving both the secular world and the evangelical church and their positive or negative effect on the ministry.
8. The planning model gets everyone on the same page so that the entire church team has a common context for decision making and problem solving.¹

Decision and the Mission

The mission of the strategic plan is the most critical element of the strategic plan.²

It incorporates the other elements of the plan (core value, vision, and strategy).

¹ March, *Primer on Decision Maker*, 111.

² G. Maljers, “Strategic Planning and Intuition in Unilever,” *Long Range Planning Journal* 23, no. 2 (1990): 21-25.

Therefore, it was used as a criterion for developing the DMM presented in this study.

Every day church leaders have to make decisions. It comes with the ministry. A dynamic mission or intent not only focuses on the church's future, but also sets important boundaries. It guides what the church will and will not attempt. It provides direction for when to say yes and when to say no. As indicated earlier in this study, the mission is to the ministry what a rudder is to a ship, a compass to a navigator, a template to a machinist. It provides a framework for critical thinking, a standard or criterion for all decision making.

Sincere (and sometimes not so sincere) people often approach a church board or pastor with suggestions for new areas of ministry that could potentially lead the church away from its divine direction. However, a clear, shared mission will protect the pastor and the board from involvement in numerous tangential activities. Their response can be, "Thanks so much for your interest, but that would lead us away from our mission."³

Research Question 2

How can you help your organization bring diverse groups of individuals together to make critical decisions in just days/hours regarding problems that have been plaguing them for months, even years?

Decision and Structure

The central characteristic of effective, successful churches has to do with decisions and structure. Those congregations that have a solid, participatory decision making process and a streamlined organizational structure can be ranked 8, 9, or 10 on

³ Dale Galloway, *Leading with Vision* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1999), 42-47.

this characteristic. Solid decisions are made, ownership and openness to all opinions are high, the process is as important as the decisions, and the organizational structure is streamlined and constructive.

It is important to observe that there is a direct correlation between decision making and structure. A solid, participatory decision making process contributes to a streamlined organizational structure and a streamlined organizational structure facilitates solid, participatory decision making. Congregations that have a cumbersome decision making process will be likely to have a complex organizational structure. By the same token, their complex organizational structure will contribute directly to the cumbersomeness of the decision making process.⁴

Research Question 3

What are the major elements, variables, and criteria in deciding what solutions/alternatives to select?

Planning

Planning may be defined as a managerial activity that involves analyzing the environment, setting objectives, deciding on specific actions needed to reach the objectives, and also providing feedback on results. Planning has many advantages. For example, it helps church or ministry administrators to adapt to changing environments, take advantage of opportunities created by change, reach agreements on major issues, and place responsibility more precisely. It also gives a sense of direction to staff members as

⁴ Callahan, *Effective Church Leadership*, 115-124.

well as providing a basis for gaining their commitment. The sense of vision that can be provided in a well written plan also instills a sense of loyalty in church or ministry members or constituents.

A church can benefit from the planning process because this systematic, continuing process allows it to:

1. Establish goals, objectives, priorities, and strategies to be completed within specified time periods. Planning will enable the church to assess accomplishment of the goals that are set and will help motivate staff and members to work together to achieve shared goals.
2. Achieve greater staff and member commitment and teamwork aimed at meeting challenges and solving problems presented by changing conditions.
3. Muster its resources to meet these changes through anticipation and preparation. “Adapt or die” is a very accurate admonition.

Pastors cannot control the future, but they should attempt to identify and isolate present actions and forecast how results can be expected to influence the future. The primary purpose of planning, then, is to ensure that current programs can be used to increase the chances of achieving future objectives and goals; that is, to increase that chances of making better decisions today that affect tomorrow’s performance.

There are basically two reasons for planning: (1) protective benefits resulting from reduced chances for error in decision making, and (2) positive benefits in the form of increased success in reaching ministry objectives.

A careful study of the Bible demonstrates the appropriateness and necessity for believers to plan their daily affairs. What does the Bible say about planning? We believe

the Holy Spirit helps us know God's will and anointed actions. We do our best, then ask God for His best. Our spirit confirms when the right plan is in the will of God. Nothing in this study is meant to imply that the Lord is to be left out. Remember that a church's master plan should be the Master's plan for the church. Consider the following Bible verses:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Luke 14:28</i> | Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? |
| <i>I Corinthians 14:30</i> | But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. |
| <i>Proverbs 16:3</i> | Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. |
| <i>Proverbs 16:9</i> | In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. |
| <i>Psalms 20:4</i> | May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. |
| <i>Colossians 3:23</i> | Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. |
| <i>Proverbs 15:22</i> | Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. |
| <i>Proverbs 20:5</i> | The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out. |
| <i>Proverbs 24:3</i> | By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established. |

I Corinthians 14:33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.⁵

Participatory

The effective congregation/organization has a participatory decision making process when three things are well in place: ownership, openness, and a dynamic relationship between the informal and formal arenas of participation. The decision making process is participatory when there is a high degree of ownership both for the process and for the decisions reached. This is not to suggest that everyone agrees with the process or with the decisions that result from the process. Rather, it is to suggest that overall there is a sense of genuine and authentic ownership for the way that local congregation goes about making decisions and for the results the process yields. Indeed, the process should nurture and facilitate ownership, and the decisions that result reinforce the high degree of ownership that the process has nurtured.

The process is participatory whenever it is open and inclusive rather than closed and restricted. That does not mean to suggest that every person in a congregation should be forced to participate in every decision that needs to be made in that congregation. There existed some years ago a fad for total consensus for every decision. Pastors or leaders of congregations should rid themselves of the notion that everyone in the congregation should be included in every decision—or that everyone in that local congregation even wants to be included in every decision. In fact, most people do not. Rather, they want the sense of openness and wisdom on a given matter if they want to do so.

⁵ Migliore, Robert, Loudon, *Church and Ministry Strategic Planning: From Concept to Success*, 104-112.

The DMM presented in this study provides the necessary structure and promotes open participation that instills ownership.⁶

Group participation also fosters acceptance, another critical criterion for making quality and effective decisions. The acceptance criterion helps to support the decision. The group's acceptance of the decision is very important to its implementation.⁷

According to Vroom and Jago a manager that values or uses participation and acceptance as criteria for making decisions can expect to increase the quality of the decisions.⁸ This quality is measured to the extent to which it is consistent to the organization's goal or mission. They advocate that all other things being equal, major decisions in which quality of the decision is of considerable importance warrant more participative and acceptance processes.⁹

Group participation does not only affect the criteria of acceptance, mission, and quality, it can have a profound effect on the timeliness criterion used in this study. When the group accepts a decision, they are more likely to be committed to implement it in a timely manner. This can impact the cost of implementing a given decision.¹⁰ Therefore, as the result of the analysis and evaluation of the literature and models/theories presented by other decision maker experts, the researcher has concluded that the best criteria for

⁶ Lee, *Decision Theory and Human Behavior*, 51-54.

⁷ Samuel C. Certo, *Supervision, Concept and Skill Building*, (Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000).

⁸ Vroom and Jago, *The New Leadership: Managing Participation in Organization*, 101.

⁹ Ibid., 35-87.

¹⁰ Jean Pugh, "Shared Governance Sharing Power and Opportunity," *Journal of Nursing Administration* 27, no. 3 (1997): 2-13.

making good effective decisions are mission, acceptance, quality, time and involving God in the process.

Research Question 4

How can you develop a model that facilitates effective and qualitative decisions and that demonstrates good stewardship of resources in a timely and easy manner?

Deciding Specific Priorities

Once you have formulated the specific implementation goals, you must next prioritize them. Ask, which will we do first, second, third, and so on? The highest priorities are those things that need to be done right away, if not yesterday. Deciding strategic priorities allows the church to focus all its resources—people, energy, finances, creativity, and so on—on what needs to be done now. To fail to set priorities means that everything will become a priority. When everything is a priority, then nothing is.¹¹

How do you determine what is and is not a priority? The answer is threefold. First, you must bathe your situation in prayer. Ask God to show you the priorities, remembering that He may have already done this, and they are obvious. Second, determine what goals will have the greatest impact on the church's ability to accomplish its mission and implement its strategy. Third, determine which of these will have the most immediate impact. Ask, which will bring quick but significant enduring results?

Determining specific priorities is not easy. You have to make reasonably quick decisions and take risks. If you are a slow decision maker and you are a reluctant risk

¹¹ Callahan, *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, 86-88.

taker, setting priorities will be a struggle. Get help from those in the congregation who do it for a living and are good at it.

Stewardship

Stewardship is a pivotal shift in leadership. Followers are empowered to make decisions and they have control over how (i.e., the strategy of doing their own jobs). Leaders give followers the power to influence goals/mission, systems, structure, time, cost, and be leaders themselves. No matter how good a decision may be, it cannot be implemented if it takes too long or costs too much money/other resources.¹² The DMM ensures that these issues are weighed by the decision maker.

Research Question 5

What are some indications that our decisions are consistent with the will of God?

God gives us eight basic indicators that point us to His will. A sensitive response to each will ensure us of a safe, confident journey down the road of God's wisdom.

Surrender

The first indicator that directs you to God's will is your ability to surrender to His Word. You must determine in advance that you will obey God's will—even before you know what it is. We have already seen that God has a will for your life. But when you discover it, will you do it—even if it is something that at first you do not really find appealing? In His model prayer for Christians, our Lord taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). That is still the

¹² Daft, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, 373.

model for the child of God to do on this earth the will of God on earth as it is fulfilled in heaven.

Our Lord should be a prime example in such cases. He said “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” and “I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (JN. 4:34a; 6:38 NKJV). Ask yourself, “What do I really want out of life?” Do you insist on having your own way? Or do you love and trust God to the point that you want to embrace His will more than anything else?

Prayer

A second indicator that leads you to God’s will is prayer. The Bible challenges us: “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7 NKJV). The apostle Paul added, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6 NKJV, emphasis added). To the Colossians he declared, “For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:9-10).

The three Scripture verses above verify that God wants us to pray when seeking His direction. He wants us, of course, to pray about everything and to “pray without ceasing” (I Thess. 5:17 NKJV). Prayer is an integral part in helping us to make proper choices. But God has something else in mind in teaching us to pray when seeking His leading. He wants us to draw closer to Him, to acknowledge Him in all our ways.

God seems to have four ways to get our attention so that we earnestly seek Him: financial difficulties, health problems—personal or family, marital disharmony, and uncertainty about a change in life. Such difficulties should draw us closer to God and enrich our spiritual life. As a result, the decision making trauma that drives us to pray will prove beneficial.¹³

The Holy Spirit

The third indicator that points us to the will of God is the indwelling Holy Spirit. We want to look at the Spirit's guiding force in our lives. When we are controlled by the Spirit, His presence within us directs us to God's will. Our Lord promised, "The Spirit of truth...dwells with you and will be in you...He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (JN. 14:17, 26 NKJV). Passages from Romans 8 helps us to understand how the Spirit leads us in our lives, decisions, desires, and happenings—even when we are not aware of it (Rom 8:5-14, 26-29).

The Spirit's guidance will always coincide with God's Word. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word, inspiring His servants to transcribe it. Therefore, we can be certain that He will not lead us in ways that are contrary to it. In many instances He brings Scripture to mind just when we need it in making decisions.¹⁴

Circumstances

When you speed down the freeway, you not only read the official road signs but you also pay attention to the traffic signs. If it is rush hour, you begin to concentrate more

¹³ Milton Rokreach, *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1968), 33-44.

¹⁴ Gerardo Ungons and Daniel Burnstein, *Decision making: An Interdisciplinary Inquiry* (Boston, MA: Kent Co., 1982), 89-104.

intensely on the traffic signs. So it is in life. You pay attention to the circumstances that are evidences of divine providence. These circumstances or indicators take many forms, and Christians must learn to be sensitive to them. They may involve job transfers, financial difficulties, national or international problems (such as military service), sickness, or even the death of a loved one.

Circumstances have a profound effect on everyone—particularly a Christian whose loving heavenly Father works all things “together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28 NKJV).

Open Doors

Open doors are scriptural. Our Lord said to His faithful children, “I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it” (Rev. 3:8b NKJV). Some think this promise was given only to ministers and missionaries, but the text is not limited to the professional Christian worker. It was given to the whole church of Philadelphia, a prophetic foreglimpse of the entire Bible believing church of our day, numbering into the millions (see page 93 as previously discussed for further details of this sign).¹⁵

Peace in Your Heart

The fifth indicator that points us to God’s will is a peaceful heart. God is not the author of confusion. Scripture tells us that “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable” (James 3:17a NKJV). When God is leading you in some specific way, you can expect His supernatural peace that you are doing His will. Scripture tells us that we not only can determine God’s will but also can enjoy His confidence when we find it

¹⁵ Henry and Richard Blackaby, *Moving People on to God’s Agenda: Spiritual Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2001), 55-67.

(see I John 5:14-15 NKJV). The confidence John identifies seems equivalent to the peace Paul cites when he tells the Philippians not to worry but to pray with thanksgiving about the burdens and decisions of life. As a result, “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7 NKJV). Notice that both your mind and heart will be given peace when you discover God’s will.

Peace functions like an “umpire” when making decisions. The bigger the decision, the more peace God seems to administer. There are times when people should reflect on these words “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts”—(Col. 3:15a NKJV). The word rule literally means “umpire.” In an athletic contest the umpire decides whether the runner is “safe” or “out,” “in bounds” or “out of bounds.” Inner peace is God’s supernatural sign that decides “safe” or “out” as we attempt to discern His will.

Your Own Desires

God’s will can mean pursuing one’s own interests. We forget that God’s Holy Spirit is within us; when we surrender to His will, He can give us Godly desires. Romans 8:16 indicates that the Holy Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (NKJV). One evidence that we are supernaturally indwelt by the Spirit is that we are led by God. Paul told the Philippians, “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13 NKJV). Similarly, the psalmist taught that if you “delight yourself in the Lord...he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps. 37:4).

Godly Advice

Another significant indicator is the advice God sends our way in the form of dedicated Christian counselors. This is particularly true of major decisions in life. Most

decisions can be made on our own, but the more important and complex the decision, the more deliberate we should be in evaluating the issues. At that point, the Lord may send us someone in whom we can confide, someone who can objectively administer good, sound, Bible-based advice.

The Word

The Bible is dependable for decision making. It provides answers to questions of spiritual faith and how to live a faithful life through one's relationship with God. It also provides examples of the kinds of decisions Christians should and should not make by showing us the kinds of decisions God's people make.¹⁶

Recommendations

Further study is recommended to analyze and quantify the effect that certain criteria have on various generations. The value of some of the criteria used in this research can change from one generation to another.¹⁷ Therefore, when developing a tool such as the DMM, it is essential to select a diversity of generations which is representative of the organization to form a team to develop criteria to guide in the decision making process.¹⁸ This will ensure that the team realizes that there are more important programs. The servant leader will get input from at least a true sampling of an organization before making decisions on major issues.

¹⁶ Higgins, "Decision Making and Personality," 22-33

¹⁷ Ralph Moore, *Friends: The Key to Reaching Generation X* (Ventura, CA Regal Books, 2001), 18-43.

¹⁸ Ray Fulenwider, *The Servant Driven Church: Releasing Every Member for Ministry* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Co., 1997), 44.

It is essential that more emphasis be placed on the training of our leader to make effective and quality decisions in a fast manner. The DMM presented in this study is only as good as the ability of the leaders¹⁹ to use it and to train others how to do so.²⁰ The researcher also suggests that Christian schools, colleges, and seminaries make decision making an intricate part of its academic curriculum.

Whereas the criteria found in this study are consistent with those used by both secular and Christian decision makers who make effective decisions, the criterion of God's involvement is unique to the Christians decision maker. This criterion is essential if we intend to ascertain God's will in the decision making process.²¹ Furthermore, this study recommends some Biblical indicators (the Word, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, prayer, circumstances, Godly advice etc.) be used to help in determining whether God's involvement is used in the decision making process. Therefore, leaders can use the criteria found in this study to make difficult decisions much easier, faster and better. The DMM presented in this study will also increase ministry effectiveness in the area of stewardship both financial and spiritual gifts to make the individual effective and have a quality ministry.²²

¹⁹ Neal McBride, *How to Build a Small Group Ministry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Books and Bible studies, 1995), 121-142.

²⁰ Friesen, 15-44.

²¹ LaHaye, *God's Will in a Crazy Mixed-Up World*, 111-113.

²² Gangel, *Coaching Ministry Teams: Leadership and Management in Christian Organizations*, 17-84.

APPENDIX A

CORE VALUE ASSESSMENTS

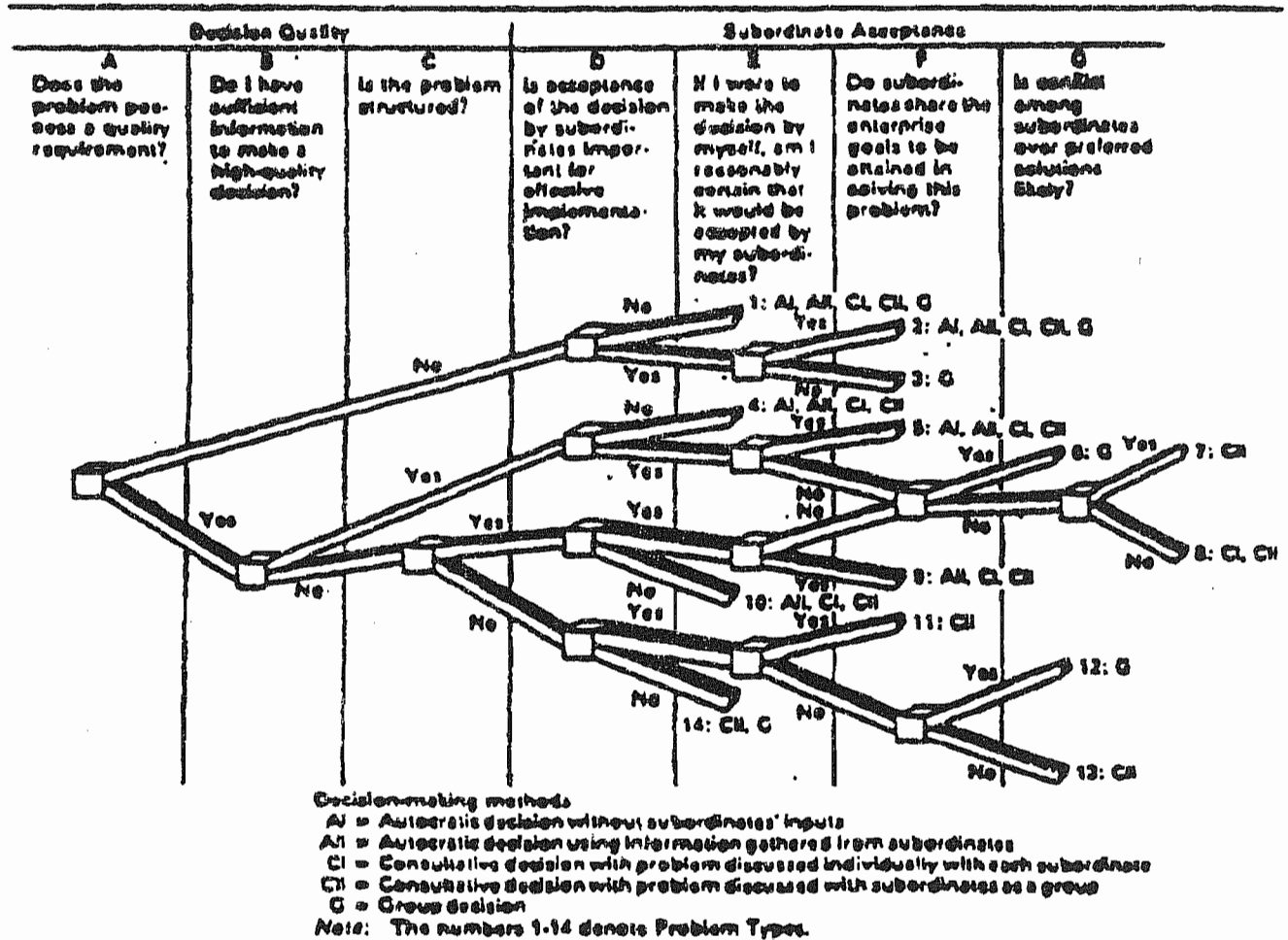
What are the core values of this organization? Rate each of the core values listed below from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 the highest). You need not to be over analytical. Work your way through the list quickly, going with your first impression.

Write down all the core values that received a rating of 4 or 5 (list no more than what you believe are the 12 most important values.) Then rank these according to priority (place the number 1 in box of the highest, 2 in box of the next highest, and etc.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. godly leadership | 1 2 3 4 5 | 26. Christian education (all age) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. a well-mobilized laity | 1 2 3 4 5 | 27. ordinances | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. Bible-centered preach/teach | 1 2 3 4 5 | 28. equal rights | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. the poor & disenfranchised | 1 2 3 4 5 | 29. compassion | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. creativity and innovation | 1 2 3 4 5 | 30. growth | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. world missions | 1 2 3 4 5 | 31. community service | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. people | 1 2 3 4 5 | 32. the environment | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. attractive grounds & facilities | 1 2 3 4 5 | 33. responsibility | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. financially responsible | 1 2 3 4 5 | 34. the lordship of Christ | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. the status quo | 1 2 3 4 5 | 35. dignity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. visitors | 1 2 3 4 5 | 36. loyalty | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. cultural relevance | 1 2 3 4 5 | 37. fairness and equity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. prayer | 1 2 3 4 5 | 38. technology | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. sustained excellence/quality | 1 2 3 4 5 | 39. efficiency | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. fellowship/community | 1 2 3 4 5 | 40. ethnic diversity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 16. evangelism | 1 2 3 4 5 | 41. enthusiasm | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 17. family | 1 2 3 4 5 | 42. discipline | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 18. God's grace | 1 2 3 4 5 | 43. teamwork | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 19. praise & worship | 1 2 3 4 5 | 44. life (profile) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 20. a Christian self-image | 1 2 3 4 5 | 45. authenticity | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 21. social justice | 1 2 3 4 5 | 46. life-change | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 22. excellence | 1 2 3 4 5 | 47. the Great Commission | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 23. commitment | 1 2 3 4 5 | 48. humor | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 24. counseling | 1 2 3 4 5 | 49. optimism | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 25. civil rights | 1 2 3 4 5 | 50. other | 1 2 3 4 5 |

[illegible]

VROOM AND YETTON'S DECISION TREE FOR DETERMINING APPROPRIATE DECISION-MAKING METHOD



Victor H. Vroom, "Decision Making in Organizations: A Case Study in Programmatic Research," in *Virginia Tech Symposium on Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 1, ed. Joseph A. Sgro (Lexington, MA: Lexington, 1981), 204.

APPENDIX C

Decision-Making Matrix

Instructions: List potential areas of growth and development, rate each of the items using a 1 (low priority) – 10 (high priority) scale, then add up the total number and write the total in the column provided. You may add your own criteria.

Source	Alternatives	Supports the Mission of the Ministry	Team Members View it as Important	Overall Quality of the Ministry	Solution Accomplish- ed Within 1 Year	God's Involvement	Other	Total

Q= Questionnaire
N= Needs Assessment

G= Groups (small)
C= Congregation

L= Leadership
S= Situational

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