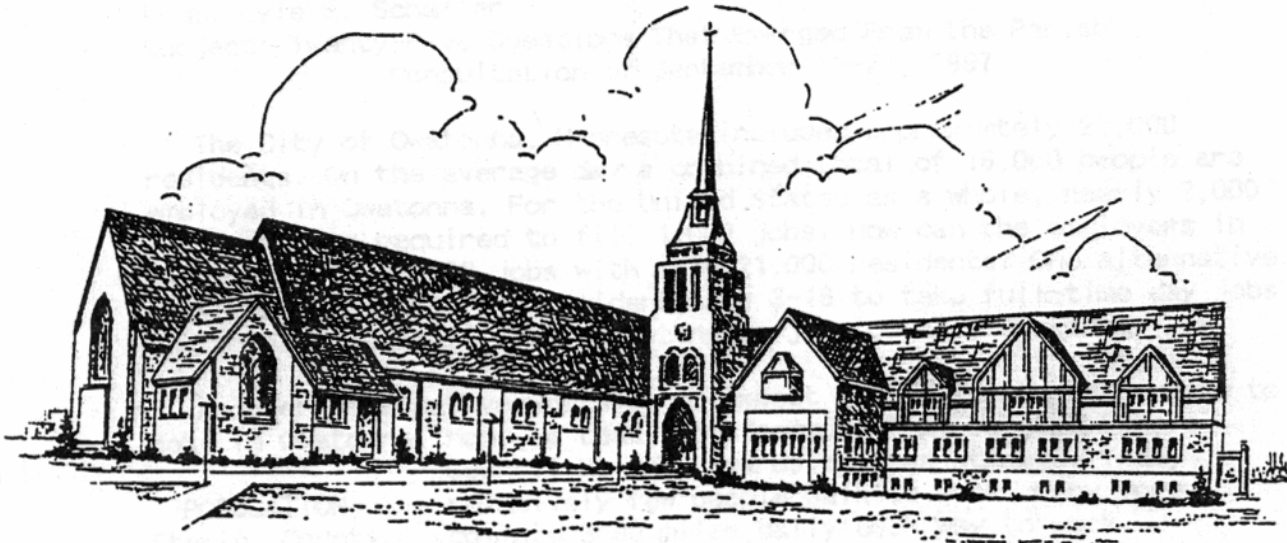


THE CHURCH
IN THE 21ST CENTURY

25

Questions

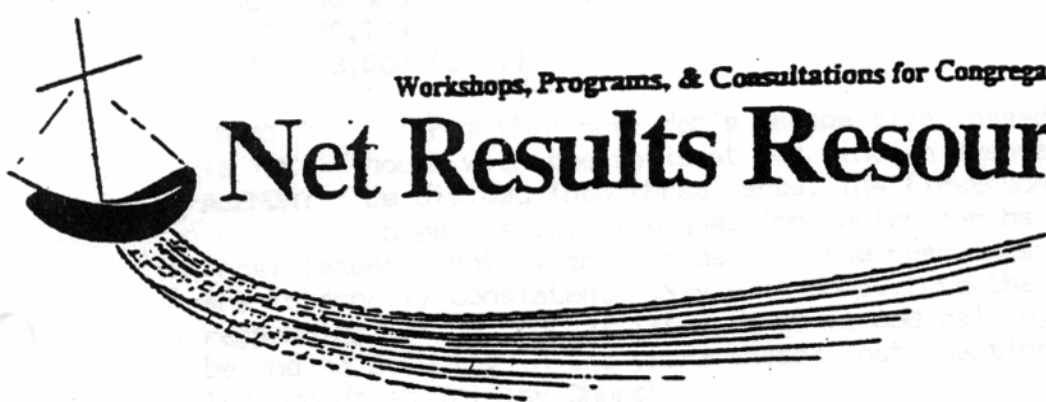


TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

609 Lincoln Avenue • Owatonna, Minnesota 55060

by Lyle E. Schaller

Workshops, Programs, & Consultations for Congregations & Judicatories



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The Church in the 21st Century

TO:

Trinity Lutheran Church
609 Lincoln Ave South
Owatonna, MN 55060

From:

Lyle E. Schaller

Subject:

Twenty-Five questions that emerged from the Parish Consultation of
September 19-21, 1997

The City of Owatonna, MN includes approximately 21,000 residents. On the average day a combined total of 16,000 people are employed in Owatonna. For the United States as a whole, nearly 2,000 residents are required to fill 1,000 jobs. How can the employers in Owatonna fill 16,000 jobs with only 21,000 residents? One alternative would be to require all residents age 3-16 to take full-time jobs and to bar residents from commuting to jobs outside of Owatonna.

POPULATION

Steele County

1860 2,863

1870 8,271

1880 12,460

1890 13,232

1900 16,524

1910 16,148

1920 18,061

1930 18,475

1940 19,749

1950 21,155

1960 25,029

1970 26,931

1980 30,328

1990 30,729

1990 33,000

(est.)

Another alternative would be to expect non-residents to commute to jobs in Owatonna. Many do that, some commute from outside Steele County. No one regards that as strange. Today relatively few people walk to work. Many more commute 3-80 miles daily each way to work.

The journey from home to work is growing longer as is the journey to shop (look at the location of the Target discount store), the journey to recreation, the journey to school, the journey to visit friends, and the journey to church.

That illustrates one of the questions that should be on the agenda at Trinity Lutheran Church as the leaders plan for ministry in the twenty-first century. How large is the service area for Trinity Church today? As compared with 1919 - As compared with 2019 - which is far closer in time than 1919?

WHAT IS THE AGENDA?

From this outsider's perspective, based on a total of 37 hours with the folks at 609 Lincoln Avenue, the agenda can be divided into three parts. The first consists of twelve largely subjective questions which can be answered best by local leaders, not by an outsider. If the responses to these questions are internally consistent, they will constitute the context for responding to the central issue of "What is God calling Trinity Church to be and to be doing in the years ahead?" That question is the heart of the agenda at Trinity Church.

Finally, this congregation is faced with an unusually long list of means-to-an-end questions. From this outsiders perspective, it is impossible to provide informed responses to these means-to-an-end issues until after agreement had been reached on the earlier questions.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

A person's convictions about the nature of contemporary reality affects how that individual views the world in general. Those convictions also affect their response to a specific issue. That house is for sale and the asking price is \$150,000. Is that too high, to low, or about right? The answer depends on one's perspective. Is that new 49-year-old pastor young and immature? The 80-year-old says "Yes!" The seventeen-year-old says, "No, the new Pastor is old."

This outsider's assumption is that what the leaders at Trinity believe about contemporary reality will influence how they view the future. After agreement has been reached on the responses to these questions that will provide a useful beginning point for examining the other issues before Trinity Church.

1. IS THIS A LARGE CONGREGATION?

Average worship attendance is a more uniform and consistent yardstick to use in measuring size than is membership. Approximately 100 of the 10,950 congregations in the ELCA report an average worship attendance of 825 or more. That means Trinity Church in Owatonna ranks in the top one percentile. Approximately 99 percent of all ELCA parishes report a smaller attendance at weekend worship.

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

1980	783
1981	730
1982	708
1983	769
1984	773
1985	797
1986	872
1987	835
1988	803
1989	841
1990	797
1991	857
1992	850
1993	844
1994	831
1995	860
1996	822
1997	???

MEMBERSHIP

<u>Year</u>	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
1992	3,605	2,658
1993	3,452	2,539
1994	3,487	2,560
1995	3,428	2,528
1996	3,377	2,515

If the comparison base is shifted to Minnesota, which is covered with lakes and large Lutheran Churches, in 1995 Trinity Church ranked 20th among the 1,200 ELCA parishes in this state in average worship attendance.

Is this really a very large parish?

2. DO WE WANT TO ACT LIKE A LARGE PARISH OR LIKE A VERY LARGE CHURCH?

A pair of useful lines of demarcation are (a) a large congregation runs between 450 and 700 at worship and a very large parish averages between 700 and 1000 at worship while (b) a megachurch averages more than a thousand at worship. (Some will argue that it is at least 1800 at worship to be classified as a megachurch.)

The congregation averaging 800 to 900 at worship often has a choice between (a) acting like a large church and watching the average worship attendance gradually drop to well under 700 or (b) acting like a very large congregation and rejoicing as that average climbs toward, and sometimes past, 1000. This often is a self-fulfilling prophecy type of issue.

Should Trinity Church act like a flock of 3,400 baptized members cared for by several shepherds? Or as a worshiping community with 500 regular attendees (60% of whom are female) and 1,000 irregular attendees? Or as a large congregation of congregations? Or as a very large congregation of congregations of groups, classes, choirs, circle, organizations, individual, commissions, and fellowships? Or as a megachurch composed of several worshiping communities and a network of networks designed to minister to families and individuals? (See questions 9 and 10).

What do you believe? Should Trinity act like a large parish or act like a very large congregation in planning for tomorrow, or like a future megachurch?

3. HOW MUCH CHANGE IS ACCEPTABLE HERE?

From this outsiders perspective, the BIG unknown is how much change would be acceptable at Trinity. The road to the absolute minimum degree of change will take Trinity to an average worship attendance under 700. To continue on a plateau in size will require a moderate degree of change. To move up into the megachurch bracket will require radical changes.

This question is placed very high on this list because (a) the level of contentment with the status quo at Trinity appears to be unusually high and (b) there does not appear to be a broad-based demand for major changes.

4. WILL THE FUTURE BE MORE OR LESS COMPETITIVE?

Overlapping that third question is one that is impossible to answer with absolute certainty. Will Redeemer Lutheran Church discontinue sending members to Trinity? Will St. John Lutheran Church double its average worship attendance to over a thousand by 2007? (That appears to be a real possibility.) Will a new independent church become a major competitor to reach younger generations? Could Our Savior's Lutheran Church double in size by 2007? Will Good Shepherd Lutheran Church attract many of the future newcomers to Owatonna? Will the Associated Church become a major competitor to Trinity church?

One answer is no one knows. The safe answer is at least four of those six questions will receive a "yes" answer. That would make it even easier for the membership at Trinity Church to gradually grow smaller and older. What do you believe will happen?

5. IS THIS A LOW OR A HIGH EXPECTATION PARISH?

What is the nature of the expectations projected to people by Trinity Church? One local example of a high expectation church is Bethel Baptist Church (BGC) which (a) reports 450 members, (b) expects every member to be at worship every weekend, and (c) averages 700 at worship. A second example of a high expectation ministry appears to be the VISION choir at Trinity Church.

Do you believe Trinity Church is a low expectation congregation, or do you believe Trinity is a high expectation church? What do the facts suggest?

THE SURVEY OF WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

One part of the advance preparation for this visit called for a survey of worship attendance covering four consecutive Sundays. The coverage was only 93 percent so a degree of caution should be exercised in interpreting the results. The usher count reported an average attendance of 881 while the survey indicated an average attendance of 821. Frequently an undercount of that magnitude is a result of (a) a few regular attendees did not turn in a card every Sunday and (b) several visitors did not turn in cards.

The most significant item to come out of this survey was that of the 2,500-plus confirmed members, 42 percent did not participate in the weekly corporate worship of God at Trinity even once, 40 percent worshiped here either once or twice in that four-week period, and only 18 percent worshiped at Trinity on three or four Sundays out of that four-week period.

SURVEY OF WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Spring 1997

	<u>Joined 1987</u> <u>or earlier</u>	<u>Joined 1988</u> <u>or later</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Member attending one Sunday	377	243	620
Member attending two Sundays	235	149	384
Members attending three Sundays	200	88	288
Members attending four Sundays	106	54	160
Average number of constituents			46
Average number of visitors			52
Average number of children			110
Usher count of attendance for these four Sundays was 1037; 731; 920; and 836.			

Among the 1452 members who worshiped at Trinity at least once in that four-week period, only 448 (31 percent) attended at least three times. After allowing for the undercount, a reasonable estimate is 20 percent of the confirmed members worshiped at Trinity at least three times in that four-week period, and twice that many stayed away completely. That resembles a low expectation church.

THE LEVEL OF GIVING

A second statistical yardstick for measuring the level of projected expectations is the level of giving. Congregations such as Trinity that have no debt and are not engaged in a major capital expenditure campaign usually receive from member contributions an amount equal to \$25 to \$40 per week per worshiper. Thus $820 \text{ worshipers} \times \$25 = \$20,500$ per week $\times 52 = \$1,066,000$ or $\$30 \times 900 \times 52 = \1.4 million. Thus, if Trinity Church were averaging 900 at worship and the giving was at a moderate level, total receipts from all contributions would be \$1.4 million.

Why is it so low? One reason may be low expectations. Another may be not helping people understand the price of church has gone up since the 1970s and 1980s. A third may be the pacesetters are setting a slow pace. In a congregation of this size and type, we would expect the chances to be 9 out of 10 that the top contributors would give a combined total of approximately \$125,000 in 1996. This could be \$25,000 plus \$20,000 plus \$15,000 plus seven contributions in the \$8,000 to \$10,000 bracket. At Trinity Church in 1995 the combined total of the top ten in 1996 was \$88,742, and the range was from \$11,965 to \$8,060 for the fifth largest down to \$6,355 for the tenth.

In this size and type of congregation, the second ten usually contribute a combined total equal to one-half the top ten. At Trinity that figure in 1996 was \$50,748 suggesting one can be in the top twenty for well under \$100 per week.

What do you believe? Is this largely a congregation of low-to-middle income households, or is the relatively low level of financial support a product of low expectations?

What do you believe? Is the low frequency of worship attendance something that has just happened, or is this a congregation that projects low expectations of members?

Do you believe it is reasonable to expect youth to be in both worship and Sunday School when most adult members either are not here on Sunday morning or are present for only one period of time? Do you believe Trinity Church should move in the direction of becoming a high expectation parish? Or do you believe this is an irrelevant issue? Or do you believe this is related to the widespread impression that a relatively small number of members carry most of the volunteer work load? Or do you believe that in a very large congregation the paid staff should do more and the volunteers less? Or do you believe paid staff should be enlisting, challenging, training, working with, and nurturing volunteers?

6. WHAT IS THE TURNOVER RATE?

The basic generalization is the larger the size of the congregation and/or the younger the membership and/or the faster the rate of numerical growth and/or the larger the area served by that congregation and/or the weaker the denominational ties and/or the higher the expectations projected of people and/or the lower the proportion of members who identify themselves by their ancestry and/or the greater the degree of diversity in the theological position of the members, the higher the rate of turnover in the membership.

TURNOVER IN CONFIRMED MEMBERSHIP				
	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
Adult Baptism	3	4	1	1
Transfers in	92	91	57	37
Affirmation of Faith & Confirmation	64	74	71	71
TOTAL GAINS	169	169	129	109
Deaths	24	25	28	24
Transferred Out	35	51	48	31
Removed *	219	62	106	65
TOTAL LOSSES	278	138	182	120
Net Change	-109	31	-53	-11

* Removed includes removed, released, and placed on inactive list.

The congregation of this size and type with 2,500 confirmed members that has a moderately proactive system for inviting strangers to participate in the life and ministry of that parish can expect to receive 250 to 600 new confirmed members annually.

The congregation of this type and size that prefers to "let it happen" and does not have a proactive system for inviting strangers typically will receive 100 to 200 new confirmed members annually. The BIG variable is the number of youth being confirmed.

The most useful indicator to measure the attractiveness of a parish to church shoppers is the number of confirmed members received by letter of transfer. In the highly attractive congregations that number is equal to 7 to 10 percent of the confirmed membership. In the moderately attractive parishes that number is more likely to be equal to 5 to 6 percent of the confirmed membership.

In the ELCA the death rate among the confirmed members in 1995 was 12 per 1000 confirmed members. For the American population, age 14 and over, the annual death rate is 10.7 per 1000 residents in that age cohort. At Trinity Church the death rate averaged 10.1 to 1,000 confirmed members annually for the 1993-96 period. That suggests this is a younger than average collection of ELCA church members, and close to representative of the American population.

Total losses in the confirmed membership for the 1994-1996 period averaged 147 annually. That is equivalent to 6 percent of the confirmed membership. The very large, rapidly growing, high expectation, regional church with a relatively young membership often reports annual losses in the confirmed membership is between 10 and 20 percent of the confirmed membership.

Do you believe the turnover rate at Trinity Church is relatively low? If so, to what do you attribute that relatively low rate? Are you comfortable with your answers?

7. WHERE IS THE FUTURE?

Is the future of the ELCA with the small church, or with the large parish, or with the very large congregations, or with the megachurch?

If one refers to congregations, the answer appears to be with the small congregation averaging 125 or fewer at worship. That category includes 60 percent of all ELCA affiliated congregations. Only 2.5 percent report an average worship attendance of more than 500.

If, however, one counts churchgoers, in all of American Protestantism 6 percent of all congregations account for 31 percent of all worshipers on the typical weekend and that probably will be 10 percent account for 50 percent in 2025. (In the ELCA, 9 percent of the congregations account for 31 percent of the worshipers on the typical weekend.)

Do you believe the future of the ELCA is with congregations averaging fewer than a thousand at worship, or with those averaging more than a thousand? Which do you believe will be most attractive to churchgoers born after 1985?

8. HOW LARGE IS THE CIRCLE?

Do you believe Trinity Church should see itself as primarily a parish for Owatonna residents? The survey of worship attendance revealed 1,384 worshipers live in zip code 55060, 25 in 55924, 25 in 55049, 5 in 55021, and 4 in 56093.

Should Trinity Church expect that in 2007 35 percent of all worshipers will live outside Owatonna, or 50 percent, or 20 percent or 5 percent?

What you believe probably will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. What you believe will be a major factor in planning for real estate needs.

9. INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES?

Do you believe the primary focus on ministry planning at Trinity Church should be on (a) individuals (choir members, youth, senior adults, children, et al.) or (b) family constellations (parents with very young children, empty nest couples, families that include teenagers, newlyweds, et al.)?

Before answering, you may want to read the article by Michael D. Resnick, et al. "Protecting Adolescents From Harm," Journal of the American Medical Association, September 10, 1997, pp. 823-832 and/or The Growth of the Mind by Stanley I Greenspan, M.D.

10. SINGLE GENERATION OR MULTIGENERATIONAL?

Paralleling the last question, do you believe Trinity Church should focus on separate generations in program planning or create more opportunities for intergenerational inaction? For example, should every worship team be intergenerational or monogenerational? Should a surrogate Grandmother's Club and a Surrogate Grandfathers' Club be created as part of the support system for the weekday nursery school? Do you believe Trinity Church should design and offer all-day trips that are single generational or multigenerational? Should evening Bible study groups be organized on a single generation basis or multigenerational?

NOTE: The responses to questions 9 & 10 should be consistent!!

11. SEPARATE EMPIRES OR INTERLOCIING?

The present system at Trinity Church appears to be organized largely as a series of separate events, ministries, and programs. Examples include the weekday nursery school, adult choirs, the Sunday School for children and youth, worship, et al.

An alternative is to design a series of networks in which every component in that network is designed to be compatible with and to under grid every other component of that network.

An increasingly common example of this is the package of ministries designed for parents of young children that include (1) a coed adult Sunday School class for these parents, (2) a weekday nursery school that is an extension of the Sunday School for children age 3-5, (3) Vacation Bible School every summer, (4) parenting classes, (5) music and motion-based learning experiences for children birth to age 4 (see Early Childhood Connections, P.O. Box 4274, Greensboro, NC 27404-4274 - \$30, for a one-year subscription), (6) a Surrogate Grandmothers' Club that calls on new mothers, (7) a coed softball team in the church league, (8) an annual picnic, (9) a Tuesday Bible study group for mothers of infants and very young children, (10) a weekly worship experience held in a parlor-type setting designed for families with very young children, (11) a monthly potluck dinner, (12) a single parent support group, (13) a coed volleyball league for January thru March, (14) a family camp week every summer, (15) marriage enrichment events or retreats, (16) a vocal choir of parents of young children, (17) a Parents Day Out once a week, (18) an annual clothing exchange, and a dozen other groups, events, organization, programs, and ministries.

What do you believe? Should the total ministry at Trinity Church be conceptualized as a series of separate events or as a network of overlapping networks? Will those networks be designed to reach and serve people on the basis of the life cycle or on the basis of their faith journey?

12. INTENTIONALITY OR LET IT HAPPEN?

Do you believe Trinity Church should plan in a systematic and comprehensive manner for the next five years? Or should this parish relax and react to whatever the future may bring when that happens? How intentional should we be in our ministry?

After agreement has been reached on the responses to these, and perhaps a few other preliminary questions, it will be easier to find agreement on the BIG central issue at Trinity.

WHAT IS THE LORD CALLING TRINITY CHURCH TO BE AND TO BE DOING IN THE YEARS AHEAD?

The dream that every congregation will agree on a clearly defined statement of purpose or develop a mission statement or articulate a vision for its future has degenerated into a

blizzard of clichés. Most mission statements are so general that they (a) could be adopted by thousands of other congregations, (b) do not include any benchmarks that can be used to measure progress and (c) do not provide a clear sense of direction for the decision-making processes.

A more useful approach for very large congregations is to define a distinctive special thrust in ministry. That very brief statement can be used to evaluate every proposal for the reallocation of resources or for a new ministry or for adding a new staff position or for a change in schedule. Examples include these statements:

- ❖ Our central goal is to persuade non-believers of the truth and relevance of the Christian gospel.
- ❖ Our special call is to minister to the lonely, and alienated, and the hurting.
- ❖ Our goal is to increase the number of happy and enduring marriages.
- ❖ Our focus is to take the Gospel to the people who would never come to our building, and our goal is to launch three new off-campus faith communities every year.
- ❖ Our call is to help parents become more effective in the intellectual, emotional, and social development of their children from birth through high school.
- ❖ Our special role is to serve as a model of multigenerational, multicultural, and reconciling congregation in a fragmented society.
- ❖ Our goal is to plant two new missions every year, one in the United States, and one on another continent.
- ❖ Our call is to transform believers into disciples of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Our specialty is our ministry with young single adults and with childless couples.
- ❖ Our goal is that the first fifty cents out of every dollar in the offering goes to missions.

The more precisely and clearly articulated that statement, the easier it is to respond to these two questions.

- ❖ How will what you are proposing under grid and help us to fulfill that distinctive role we have agreed is our special calling?
- ❖ How do we measure our faithfulness and our progress in fulfilling that special calling?

MEANS TO AN END QUESTIONS

If and when widespread agreement has been reached on these questions, the responses can offer useful contest for examining several means to an end concerns.

1. How Big?

Do you believe the planning for the future at Trinity Church should be based on the assumption that in 2007 this congregation will be averaging 850 at worship, or 1,000, or 350 to 500, or 600 - 700, or 1,400, or 1,800, or 2,400?

Widespread agreement on the answer to that question will make it much easier to answer all of the other questions.

2. How much space?

If either (a) more space for off-street parking is acquired or (b) the schedule is spread out over the weekend, this site probably could accommodate an average worship attendance of 1,200 to 1,400 in 2007.

If the goal is to become a congregation averaging more than 1400 at worship, that probably means either (a) relocation of the meeting place to a much larger parcel or (b) becoming a two-site parish with one staff, one budget, one governing body, and two meeting places.

The obvious needs today are for (a) a room that will accommodate a variety of types of worship experiences and seat at least 175(maybe 300?), (b) a multipurpose gymnasium-type room (that also could be used for worship?), (c) five to ten acres for outdoor recreation, (d) four to eight first floor meeting rooms that also could be used as classrooms, and (e) at least 200 to 500 additional off-street parking spaces.

One alternative would be to acquire additional land here. A second would be to relocate. A third would be to plan to plateau in size. A fourth would be to purchase 20 to 400 hundred acres as a second site.

A long time problem is the 1956 design was for a European congregation and the sanctuary-narthex space is completely out of scale. There does not appear to be a simple and low cost solution to that problem.

If the weekend schedule is expanded to five or six (or eight to ten if this becomes a two site church), worship experience every weekend, do you believe the folds at Trinity can live with that problem? An average worship attendance of 800 at five weekend worship services at this site plus an average of 1,600 at the second site could be a possibility.

3. Landlord or ministry?

Do you believe that an increasing proportion of the use of this building should be by community groups and community service programs such as the current weekday nursery school? Or do you believe that nearly every scheduled event here should be a ministry of Trinity Church?

4. Where do we intervene?

In broad general terms congregations seeking to reach people without an active church affiliation focus either on reaching people (a) at a particular stage of their faith journey or (b) at a specific point in their life cycle. Which will be the dominant emphasis here? Do you believe Trinity Church should be organized around the life cycle of the individual, or around responding to the various stages of a person's religious pilgrimage? (This question should be answered before defining the special and distinctive call to Trinity and **MUST** be answered before making the decisions on staffing.)

5. Simplicity or complexity?

How complicated should the schedule be at Trinity Church? Should it optimize choices for people, or should it be designed to maximize participation in common worship experiences?

Worship is the best example to use in discussing this issue. Should Trinity offer five or six different worship experiences every weekend, each with its own bulletin and own adult vocal group, or should Trinity continue to offer one Saturday evening service plus two traditional and one non-traditional service on Sunday morning? Should our pastor preach 18 weekends a year, another 14 weekends a year, a third 12 weekends a year, and one perhaps 8 to 15 weekends a year?

(This observer's recommendation would be for Pastor John Lestock to preach twice on 40 weekends a year, a second pastor to preach twice 40 weekend a year, a third pastor to preach at the 6PM Sunday service plus other times, and for Pastor Peterson to preach at one of the two Saturday evening services in the chapel on 40 weekends a year. That could be the easiest way to increase the frequency of worship attendance by today's members.)

A second example is do you believe Trinity Church should depend on three or four income streams for the financial base or on twelve to fifteen income streams?

6. Doers or trainers?

Do you believe the primary role of paid staff should be to do ministry, or do you believe the primary role of paid staff should be to identify, enlist, challenge, train, work with,

support, and nurture volunteers who will teach, make hospital calls, serve as mentors to children and youth, serve on a worship leader team, pray, help to design new ministries, preach, call, lead, sing, plan, ask questions, evangelize, promote social justice, feed the hungry, help to shelter the homeless, visit those in jail, and listen?

7. Staffing for a new era.

The most complicated issue before the folks in Trinity Church is a result of the fact this parish is in the early stages of building a new staff.

Do you believe that staff should replicate 1993, or should it be a new design? What are the criteria to be used in designing a new staff configuration? If widespread agreement can be achieved in responding to most of the nineteen questions raised earlier, that should make it much easier to design a new staff configuration for a new century.

From this outsider's perspective, consideration also should be given to these specific issues.

A. Should Pastor Lestocks' title be changed from "Coordinating Pastor" to an expectation of a more initiating leadership role? The term "Coordinating Pastor" suggests a reacting or oversight role, not that of a visionary leader.

Second, from this outsider's perspective, consideration should be given to asking Pastor Lestock to be the regular preacher on at least 40 weekends a year at the same two services. The larger the congregation, the greater the degree of continuity is in the staff.

B. If this congregation expects to grow beyond 850 to 900 in average worship attendance, consideration should be given to creating the position of Senior Associate Pastor. That position should be filled by a person who is an excellent preacher, who will serve as one of the five people on the staff leadership team consisting of the Senior Minister, Administrative Assistant, the Senior Associates Pastor, the Christian Education Director, and ???

This is essential if the decision is made to become a two-site parish!

C. Consideration should be given to redefining the role of the Youth Pastor position to Minister of Families Ministries if that turns out to be consistent with the definition of Trinity's special call. This could also include a redefinition of Judith Peterson's responsibilities and of Jenny Sorenson's place in a new staff configuration.

D. From this outsider's perspective, Pastor Mary Peterson's role should be seen as a specialist, not as a generalist. Should Pastor Peterson return to school to earn a

doctorate in the field in which she would teach? Should she continue on staff here and specialize in organizing and leading three-to-five intensive Bible study groups, each meeting for 120 to 150 minutes once a week, plus two or three groups meeting weekly around the theme of spiritual formation? These could be supplemented by a regular Saturday evening worship service in the chapel designed by a team of representatives from those five or six or seven study groups and led by Pastor Peterson. The other slice of that could overlap the above with Pastor Peterson building a prayer network at Trinity. That package, plus a few other pastoral duties could be Pastor Peterson's role in a new staff configuration.

The key issue is not the content of her role, but rather the need to define in precise and clear terms Pastor Peterson's place in a new staff configuration.

E. Finally, all of these decisions should be made before deciding whether to create (a) a new position of Minister of Music or (b) a new position of Minister of Worship or (c) a new position of Minister of Spiritual Life or (d) seven-to-twelve part-time specialized positions, each paying somewhere between \$1,200 and \$10,000 annually. For example, if the decision is made to create a new ministry with parents of very young children, that should include a part-time staff person with competence in music with very young children.

8. Where is the money?

As was pointed out earlier, the level of financial support by the membership is relatively low at Trinity Church. One response would be to move in the direction of becoming a high expectation parish. An easier alternative is to increase the number and variety of income streams. (See appendix for details.)

9. What about the foundation?

Is an endowment fund or a foundation an asset or a liability? That depends on how it is managed.

If the income from investments is used to "bail out" the operating budget or to cover deficits due to a low level of financial support by the members, the foundation can be a powerful tool to undermine the health and vitality of a congregation. It is difficult to build a healthy church committed to living off the dead.

A healthier approach is for a full "arms length" separation between the finance commission of the parish and the trustees of the foundation. No one can serve concurrently on both. The foundation offers matching grants to challenge the congregation to undertake new ministries and for mission needs. The annual report of the foundation is completely separate from the financial reporting of the parish. Unless otherwise designated, all bequests go to the foundation. Occasionally the foundation responds to a congregational

need, but only with a matching grant. "Will the foundation give us \$100,000 to pay off that debt?" "No, but we will match with one dollar every two dollars given by members to pay off that debt."

A reasonable goal would be \$5 million in the Trinity Foundation by 2025.

10. What about the governance?

The very large congregation usually is either (a) staff led or (b) governed by a council of 7-10 members who serve as a combination of a long range planning committee and a policy making board. Ideally the senior pastor is a voting member, the council includes two or three "chess players" who keep asking, "If we do that, what are the probable future consequences?" and none of the members serve on any other board, committee, or commission. The council members share one common criterion for decision-making. "Is that consistent with what we believe the Lord is calling this church to be and to be doing?" The design is based on the assumption that the congregation has sufficient volunteer leaders that no one has to "double up" and fill two major roles concurrently.

The commission system was designed for smaller congregations on the assumption (a) that parish had a shortage of competent volunteer leadership, (b) that many adults enjoyed the gifts, skills, and competence to both chair a commission and to serve as a policy maker for the whole parish, (c) that council members would and should evaluate each issue by three questions: "How will that affect my commission?" "How will that affect me and my family?" "Is that consistent with our local traditions?" and (d) that a tradition-driven approach to ministry is superior to a future-driven or a mission-driven approach.

A frequent consequence was the decision to have two people co-chair a commission in order to divide up the work load. One result of that was the creation of a church council too large to be an effective policy-making body. A compromise has been to schedule council meetings 3 or 4 times a year and delegate the real power to an executive committee of five-to-seven persons. An alternative is to act like a very large church and create a smaller church council.

What do you believe should be done at Trinity Church?

11. The electronic world has arrived!

Sooner or later Trinity Church should take advantage of contemporary resources in gathering, storing, analyzing, and utilizing information. This is not an urgent issue, but it is a way to better inform the decision-making processes.

12. What next?

Who will answer the questions raised in this memorandum?

One possibility would be to create an ad hoc task force consisting of John Lestock, Judith Peterson, and/or Louisa Fure (this could be a great experience for a seminary intern), plus four or five lay volunteers. This ad hoc task force could present specific recommendations on each question to a Future Committee and/or to the Church Council.

From this outsider's perspective, it appears a relatively high level of contentment with the status quo exists within this parish. There are good reasons for this contentment. The disruptive events of the past are in the past. This congregation has an attractive building at an excellent location. It enjoys an earned reputation for an excellent youth ministry. There are no indebtedness and no urgent financial problems. The transition from the Mandsager era to the Lestock era appears to be a relatively smooth succession.

Whether the suggested ad hoc task force brings its recommendations to the Church Council or to a single function Futures Committee, that body may be faced with two questions. How much change is acceptable here? How fast can we act in making changes here?

Respectfully Submitted

Lyle E. Schaller