

# **Structure and Administration—God’s Servants in Carrying Out the Mission of His Church**

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The reason for the assignment of this particular essay at this particular time is not difficult to discover. We need only to go back to the 1985 convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Saginaw. This convention adopted most of the recommendations contained in the 67 page report of the ad hoc Administration Survey Commission. The report of the Administration Survey Commission, in turn, was in response to a resolution of the 1981 Synod convention which, in part, resolved “that the Synod’s praesidium be instructed to appoint a study commission to examine thoroughly the administrative structure of the Synod on both the district and synodical levels” and that this study commission “develop appropriate recommendations for consideration and action by the Synod.”

The resulting report and subsequent adoption of it by the 1985 convention will have an affect on our Synod’s way of carrying out its work, both on the synodical and district levels. This is what has occasioned the request for a district convention essay on the subject of structure and administration. As pastors, teachers and lay leaders you are naturally interested in the work of the Synod. You will want to keep abreast of and understand the reason for any changes in its method of operation. This essay has as one of its purposes to keep you fully informed.

But we want to do more than that. We are going to seek to view structure and administration from a proper, that is, a scriptural, perspective. We have formulated the title of this essay with some care, “Structure and Administration – God’s Servants in Carrying Out the Mission of His Church.” We are seeking thereby to show that structure and administration are important, but at the same to emphasize that they are important only when they fulfill their proper purpose.

With that by way of introduction, we are ready for a brief overview of what follows. After establishing from the Scriptures that God himself is a God of order and structure, but that he does not prescribe to his Church a specific order or structure, we will then look at order and structure as it serves the mission of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and at the changes in structure which will, under God’s blessing, enable our church body to carry out its mission even more effectively. We will close with a look at the place of administrators in the life and work of the Synod.

First, then, we take note of the fact that

## **GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER AND STRUCTURE**

In the fourteenth chapter of First Corinthians the Apostle Paul admonishes the congregation at Corinth to observe proper decorum and order in its worship services. The authority to which he appeals is none other than God himself. “God,” says Paul, “is not a God of disorder” (v 33). As the Corinthians keep this in mind, they will want to see to it that they worship “in a fitting and orderly way” (v 40). The words translated as “disorder” and “orderly” both come from the same Greek root word, a word having the idea of arranging in an orderly fashion. One form of this word, for example, was used of soldiers marching in rank, one behind the other. God is a not a God of disorder; he is a God of order.

That God is a God of order and structure can be

**Seen in Creation and the Universe in Which We Live**

It is clear to anyone with open eyes that the universe is a masterpiece of structure, of order, of organization. Only because this is so has science been able to make such startling advances. Science operates under the assumption that there are certain unvarying, orderly “laws” governing the universe, orderly laws which have not been called into existence by any parliaments of men, orderly laws which no human institution of government can repeal. Only because there are such observable, constant, never-varying laws can mankind send rockets to the moon and beyond. With the Psalmist we marvel over our Lord when we think of the heavens, the work of his fingers, and of the moon and stars which he set in their proper places (Ps 8:3).

One can go back to the beginning of all of this and see already there that our God is a God of order and structure. The record of the six days of creation shows order, symmetry, harmony. Day follows day in logical sequence, the creative word of each day not only calling into existence the new creation of that day but setting the stage for a further divine “Let there be” on the day following.

Secondly, that God is a God of order and structure can be

### **Seen in the Way He Ordered the Life of His Chosen People**

Consider the orderly patterns of living and worship he established for Israel. “Six days you shall labor and do all your work,” he told Israel, “but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God” (Ex 20:9,10). With these words God was not only establishing a pattern for Israel’s worship life but for its day-to-day life. There was supposed to be a certain order, a definite flow -- six days work, one day rest -- that was to give structure to their daily existence.

God added even more structure to Israel’s worship life. He told them where to worship. They were to come up to the tabernacle, later the temple, to bring their sacrifices to the Lord. He told them when to worship. Not only did he give them the Sabbath law, but he also established certain holy days for special worship. He told them how to worship. The specifications for the various sacrifices they were to bring fill up the twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus and more. The Lord established for his people an ordered, carefully structured existence that touched upon virtually every aspect of their lives.

Thirdly, that God is a God of order and structure can be

### **Seen in the Coming and the Ministry of Jesus**

God did not send his Son into the world at just any time. “When the time had fully come,” Paul writes to the Galatians, “God sent his Son” (Gal 4:4). That fullness of time was just the right time. It was God’s time, a time when the combination of the prevailing Greek culture and the Roman military might made it possible for the Good News of the Savior to be freely spread in the Greek language from nation to nation. Contrast that with our own day, a day in which the borders of so many countries, including some to which Paul traveled, are closed to bearers of the Gospel, a day in which to preach the Gospel in the many places Paul preached one would have to know not one, but several different languages.

Jesus, like his Father, also demonstrated the value of structure and order. When it came time to feed the 5,000, he first organized the people into groups. The action of Jesus, what he did, as he miraculously fed the multitudes, was more important than how he carried this out. But the structure he established facilitated what he intended to do, to make sure that all the people received food to satisfy their hunger.

It is especially in the way Jesus trained his apostles that we see in what an orderly way he carried out his work. Mark tells us, “He appointed twelve -- designating them apostles -- that he might send them out to preach” (Mk 3:14). The order is significant. Having called the twelve, Jesus first saw to it that they would be with him, at his side day in and day out. Then, after they had been with him for a time, learning from him, he would send them out with the Gospel. There was nothing haphazard about the way Jesus trained his apostles, as Robert E. Coleman so nicely brings out in his little book, “The Master Plan of Evangelism,” in which he discerns and describes eight guiding principles of the Master’s plan for equipping those men who would be

going out as his ambassadors -- selection, association, consecration, impartation, demonstration, delegation, supervision, reproduction.

Fourthly, that God is a God of order and structure can be

### **Seen in the Structure of the New Testament Church**

Though congregations at the time of the apostles were rather loosely structured, this does not mean that they were without order and organization. There were certain offices in the church with certain responsibilities. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "He [Christ] gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (4:11). There were leaders in the church with the title of *episcopoi*, or overseers (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7) and *presbyteroi*, or elders (Acts 16:4; 1 Tim 5:1; Tit 1:5). Others served in a supporting role as *diakonoi*, or deacons (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8ff). When Paul told the Corinthians that God is not a God of disorder, he was repeating a truth that the Scriptures clearly indicate throughout. God is a God of order and structure. But at the same time

### **GOD DOES NOT PRESCRIBE TO HIS CHURCH A SPECIFIC ORDER OR STRUCTURE**

This is the mistake some in today's evangelical world are making. They note the description of the structure of New Testament churches and conclude that this is a prescription of God for his churches of all times. About ten years ago Bob Smith, an associate pastor of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California, wrote a book with the title, "When All Else Fails, Read the Directions." The book was a spirited defense of organizing and structuring churches today according to the New Testament pattern. This, he maintained, is the only pattern that follows God's directions. There is a difference, though, between what is merely descriptive in the Bible, e.g., how the churches in the New Testament were structured, and what is prescriptive, e.g., the Ten Commandments.

The Gospel is its own architect. As it is preached and through the Holy Spirit people are gathered together around it into congregations, the Gospel will create its own forms. But it will create forms. Structure, organization of some kind is inevitable as soon as two or three gather together in Jesus' name on an ongoing basis.

Though the Scriptures do not prescribe for us the exact forms, or structure, the church is to assume, there are certain scriptural principles which can guide churches and church bodies as they seek to structure themselves in the best possible way to carry out their work.

First of all, it is important to remember that

### **Function Precedes Form**

Another way of putting it: Mission precedes method. One has to know what he is doing before he determines how to do it. In San Francisco's Exploratorium, a mini-museum of science and industry, there is a very elaborate contraption with a multitude of gears and pulleys, channels and tracks, bells and whistles. When you set it into operation, there is an impressive amount of movement and noise. But the bottom line is: What does it do? The answer: It does nothing. It is all form, all structure, but it has no function, no purpose for existence.

Churches and church bodies can be like that useless piece of machinery also if they do not ask the first questions first. The first questions are not, How should we structure ourselves? What form should we take? How many administrators do we need? The first questions are, What are we here for? What is our mission? What is our function? As George W. Peters puts it in *A Theology of Church Growth*, "Structure without function is like a corpse" (p 167). It cannot accomplish anything of real worth.

We start, then, with function. Following his resurrection our Lord not just once but five times clearly set forth the function, the purpose, the mission of his church. Each of the Gospels ends with such a statement of the church's function and the book of Acts begins with one. "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19,20). "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mk 16:15). "Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47). "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you .... If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven" (Jn 20:21,23). "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Now, knowing what to do, the believers of the early church could decide how to go about doing it. Function precedes form. A second principle:

### **Function Is More Important Than Form**

Not that form, or structure, is unimportant. As Peters put it, "An organism of function (e.g., a church body) without structure is like a paraplegic -- unable to coordinate and to move in an orderly manner" (p 167). The function itself, however, that is, what an organism such as a church body is to be doing, always remains more important than the form, that is, how the organism goes about doing what it is supposed to be doing.

We could use this essay as an illustration of this principle. What is said, that is, the content of these pages is more important than how the content is structured. Content is more important than form. Yet there is a close connection between the two, isn't there? If the essayist had paid no attention to form, to structure, you would have difficulty figuring out what he is trying to get across. Recognizing this fact, the essayist has sought to organize his material into a logical flow of thought through which the audience can as clearly as possible ascertain what he is seeking to say. A logical flow of thought, though, a finely constructed outline, means nothing if one has nothing significant to say. The "what" always remains more important than the "how."

The prophet Micah applies this truth to one's practice of religion. He writes: "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:6-8). The problem with Israel was that it had reversed the proper order. The form, the outward sacrifices, had become more important than the function, true worship of God from the heart.

The Pharisees of Jesus' day followed suit. They felt compelled to defend the structure of the Jewish worship of the day, but had lost sight of its purpose. For them, too, form had become more important than function.

This same inversion, putting form before function, is one of the big errors involved in the formation of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The vast majority of time is being spent on form, structure, while the most important questions, What are we here for? What does God want his church to do? remain unanswered. It is true, as Peters writes, that "structuralism continuously seeks to enthrone itself and dominate functionalism" (p 170). Against that the church needs always to be on guard.

Thirdly,

### **Function Is Served By Form**

Structure is meant to serve mission and not vice versa. When one has determined from the Scriptures what the Lord wants his church to do, then one seeks to establish forms, structure, that will enable it to carry out his commission.

The account in Acts 6 is a good example of this principle at work. You will recall the incident. In their love for one another the early Christians were seeking to satisfy each other's physical as well as spiritual needs.

So they set up a food pantry through which the poor, especially the widows who had no means of support, could receive food on a daily basis. A problem arose, however, since there were two different groups of widows, the Greek-speaking ones, who had not been born in Palestine but now had come to live there, and the Aramaic-speaking widows, who probably were natives of Palestine. The Greek-speaking widows complained that they were being discriminated against, that they “were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food” (v 1).

Note now how function was served by form. The apostles said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables” (v 2). They knew what the function of the church was. The church was to proclaim the soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Waiting on tables was getting in the way of this mission. So the apostles recommended that godly men be chosen to superintend this work. “We,” they said, “will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (v 4).

What they were doing by this action was setting up a structure, a form, that would serve the function of the church. It worked. This brief account closes with the words, “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (v 7). Function is served by form and not vice versa.

There is a fourth guiding principle:

### **Function Is Changeless; Form Needs To Be Flexible**

We saw an example of that above. At first the apostles themselves, it appears, tended to the physical needs of the widows. Circumstances arose, though, which demanded a change in this form, in this way of doing things, so that the changeless function of preaching and teaching the Word would not be hindered.

A recent issue of “Christianity Today” (Jan 17, 1986) contained a series of articles under the heading, “Into the Next Century: Trends Facing the Church,” which underscored the need to remember that though the function of the church is changeless, its forms need to be flexible.

For example, the article, “The Graying of America,” stated that by the end of the twentieth century the largest percentage of the population of the United States will be older adults. “Whereas 12 workers supported one retiree on social security in the 1940s, soon one worker will be supporting 12 retirees” (p 8-I). As this occurs, churches may find it advantageous to restructure themselves, some to a greater, some to a lesser degree, both to serve and to be served by this growing number of older members. The mission will be the same; but the method, due to changing circumstances, may vary somewhat.

In another article, “The Coloring of America,” the observation is made that “quite contrary to the concern in the late 1950s and early 1960s to blend us all into the larger cauldron of American stew, the succeeding decades have underscored the point that a true democracy does not demand absorption of differences and distinctives” (p 10-I). There is a growing ethnic pride in our country. This, too, might well call for different forms, e.g., specialized ministries to Hispanics and other ethnic groups, while the function of the church remains the same: to be faithful to the Great Commission of our Savior.

Other articles spoke of the weakening of the influence of religion on American life; of the growing number of women in the workforce (In 1950 18.4% of mothers with children under 18 worked outside the home; in 1980 that percentage had jumped to 54.1%); of the “tilt toward the relational” in our society (“Younger Americans everywhere seem to be searching for camaraderie and mutual support,” p 22-I). Each of these trends demands a response and possibly a change on the part of churches. But what should change? Not the function. That remains. The function is what Christ has told his church to do. But the forms, how the church carries out its work, they need to remain flexible to meet the changing situations of the times.

With these principles in mind we can look now to

## **ORDER AND STRUCTURE AS IT SERVES THE MISSION OF THE WELS**

In keeping with what we have developed in the foregoing, it stands to reason that first we must look at

## **The Function of the WELS**

We need to ask the question, What are we here for? That question has been given an answer in the official Statement of Objectives of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a statement that is clearly in harmony with Christ's purpose for his Church. The following are the stated objectives of our church body:

1. To share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people.
2. To uphold the Truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions.
3. To provide a preaching and teaching ministry qualified to proclaim the Word of God faithfully, effectively, universally in accord with the Lutheran Confessions.
4. To assist in counseling and equipping all members of the Synod for ever greater service to the Lord, to each other and to the world.
5. To assist all members of the Synod in being active in deeds of love toward our fellowmen in need.
6. To foster confessional unity of faith among Christians throughout the world.

If we are satisfied that these objectives are truly scriptural, that they describe the function Christ wants his church on earth to fulfill, that they are the unvarying content of the church's work, then we can move on to ask, How can we as a church body best carry out these functions? This leads us to give thought to

## **The Form of the WELS**

Form follows function; form is of less importance than function; form serves function; form can change with the time, while function never changes. Nevertheless this does not diminish the key role that form plays. Structure is necessary for the church to function properly. The goal is a structure which enhances rather than inhibits the church's mission.

One way to accomplish this is to seek to group like functions. For example, objective #1 of the WELS is "to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people." This is primarily an outreach objective. It would be wise, then, to structure the Synod in such a way as would assist those boards and committees that have outreach as their primary work to be able to work together in unity and singleness of purpose.

Objective #3 is "to provide a preaching and teaching ministry qualified to proclaim the Word of God faithfully, effectively, universally in accord with the Lutheran Confessions." This objective has to do with education, particularly the education of those who will go out in our name and preach and teach the Word. Again, wisdom dictates that we bring together under one umbrella those boards and committees that have as their primary business the preparation of young men and women for the preaching and teaching ministries.

The concern of such grouping of like functions is a two-fold one: One, that all the bases are covered, i.e., that no objective is slighted or forgotten; and two, that needless overlaps are avoided, even though there will always be a certain amount of overlap. For example, objective #2, "to uphold the Truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions," will certainly be the concern of all charged to carry out one or more of the other objectives of the Synod.

Yet at the same time it would be wise that this objective be made the special charge of one particular group lest it fail to be given the prominence it deserves.

This principle of grouping like functions was one of the key principles that governed the Administration Survey Commission as it carried out its work of examining thoroughly the administrative structure of the Synod on both the district and synodical levels. Another primary principle, remembering that forms are flexible, was to study all the forms or structures, e.g., the boards, commissions, committees, of the Synod and to ask such questions as: Are they necessary? Are they helping the Synod to fulfill its scriptural functions? Should they be enlarged? diminished? consolidated? dissolved? Should their makeup be changed? The results of this study were what the Synod acted upon in the summer of 1985.

We look now at some of the more significant

## **Changes in the Form of the WELS**

On the synodical level the most significant change, it appears, is a restructuring of the divisions of the Synod that they might more fully be a grouping of like functions in an attempt to fulfill the six-fold objectives of the Synod.

In fulfillment of objective #1, “to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people,” there are two divisions, the Division of Home Missions and the Division of World Missions. Though both of these divisions have a common objective, they were not amalgamated in recognition of the fact that the forms needed to carry out this function vary greatly from home to world missions. But because these divisions do share a common objective, a Mission Coordinating Committee was created which mandates at least an annual meeting of representatives of these two divisions. This Mission Coordinating Committee is charged to “evaluate the mission programs of the Synod on the basis of their contribution to the Synod’s biblical mandate to carry out the work of missions; be responsible for coordinating a long-range plan for the mission program of the Synod; and provide a forum for coordinating the promotion of the synodical mission effort.” The committee has held its first meeting. From the minutes it appears that it is off to a good start.

In an effort to fulfill objective #3 of the Synod, “to provide a preaching and teaching ministry qualified to proclaim the Word of God faithfully, effectively, universally in accord with the Lutheran Confessions,” there is the Division of Worker Training. Formerly called the Commission on Higher Education, the new name more clearly spells out what function this part of the synodical structure is called to carry out. It consists primarily of the chairmen of the boards of control and the presidents of the various worker training institutions of the Synod.

Objectives #4 and #5 are “to assist in counseling and equipping all members of the Synod for ever greater service to the Lord, to each other and to the world; and to assist all members of the Synod in being active in deeds of love toward our fellowmen in need.” Both of these objectives have to do with equipping God’s people for service (Eph 4:12), a primary work of the local congregation. The newly created Division of Parish services has the purpose of “offering services and materials to the congregations of the Synod which will help them in their ministries of nurture, outreach, worship and service.” Following the principle of grouping like functions, all boards or commissions that have service to the parish as their primary function have been placed into this division. They are seven in number: The Board for Parish Education, the Special Ministries Board, the Board for Evangelism, the Commission on Worship, the Commission on Youth Ministry, the Stewardship Board, and the Northwestern Publishing House Board of Directors.

Objective #2 of the Synod, “to uphold the Truth of God as fully revealed in the inspired, inerrant, infallible Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Lutheran Confessions,” and objective #6, “to foster confessional unity of faith among Christians throughout the world,” are prime responsibilities of the fifth division of the Synod, the Division of Administration. The Conference of Presidents, which is a part of this division, has the responsibility for seeing that objective #2 is upheld in our Synod; and to the Commission on Inter-Church Relations is given the mandate to carry out objective #6.

Other significant synodical-level changes include the creation of the new Commission for Communication and Financial Support, which is to assist the Conference of Presidents in its constitutional

mandate to fund the budget of the Synod, a budget which enables the Synod to carry out its biblical objectives. As the appended chart indicates, there are also district Commissions for Communication and Financial Support, plus a “communicator” in each congregation. Since all these commission members are appointed, they have already begun to function.

Another synodical change that affects the districts is the fact that, with but few exceptions, synodical boards no longer consist of one man from every district (exceptions are the Mission Board and Board of Trustees), but are rather elected at large with the provision that, in so far as is practicable, board membership be drawn from diverse geographical regions of the Synod. Practically speaking, this enables the Synod to make use of more laymen and teachers on synodical boards, which was a recommendation of the Administration Survey Commission. In the past, synodical boards consisting of the chairmen of district boards have been overwhelmingly pastor-dominated boards. For example, the Commission on Evangelism, which encourages lay evangelism, consisted of fifteen pastors -- the twelve district evangelism chairmen and a three-pastor executive committee. The new elected Board for Evangelism consists of four pastors, two laymen and one teacher.

Another change that is bound to have a long-range affect upon the Synod is the stipulation that no board, commission or committee member, whether serving on the district or synodical level, may serve for more than two consecutive six-year terms. Board chairmen will be elected for four-year terms and may serve no more than three consecutive terms. This limitation of terms (no more than twelve consecutive years) will make it possible for many more members of the Synod to serve within the districts and the Synod and should also stimulate new ideas and fresh approaches to the work of the Synod. This is in keeping with the principle that while the biblical functions of a church body shouldn't change, its forms, the way it does its work, should be flexible and change to meet the needs of the day.

Five changes on the district level warrant our consideration:

1. The district president, beginning with the 1987 Synod convention, will no longer be permitted constitutionally to serve as both a district president and a vice president or secretary of the Synod. This is to help make the district president's workload more manageable. The consensus in our Synod at the present time is that the district president's office should be a part-time one. In recognition that the work involved is often considerably more than part-time, the Synod has committed itself to doing what it can to alleviate the work-load of the district president and has called upon each district in its biennial convention to “carefully review the needs of its president.” The Synod has resolved to provide automatically to the district president a vicar, part-time secretarial help and basic office equipment. Upon recommendation of a district, in consultation with the district president's congregation and approval of the Conference of Presidents and the Coordinating Council, the district president may be provided with a graduate assistant instead of a vicar.

2. A District Board for Parish Services, whose purpose will parallel that of the Synod Board for Parish Services, will be elected. It will consist of seven members -- a chairman and six “coordinators,” one to oversee each of the following parish service functions: parish education, evangelism, special ministries, youth, worship, and stewardship. By convention resolution the district may create committees to serve under the leadership of any or all of the Board for Parish Services' coordinators. These committee members would be appointed by the district praesidium. Practically speaking, this means that the districts of our Synod will not have separate parish education, evangelism, special ministries, etc., committees unless the districts determine that they need to have them.

3. The chairman of the District Nominating Committee will be elected by the district from a slate proposed by the Nominating Committee and will also serve as the district's member on the Synod Nominating Committee. Because of the dual role of this position, the district needs to take great care in nominating and electing the man who will fill it.



4. Teachers are now eligible to serve on the District Mission Board. Heretofore that position was open only to pastors and laymen.

5. In the interest of streamlining district structure, two boards have been dissolved, the Board for Student Aid, whose function has been transferred to the financial aids offices of the various synodical schools, and the Board of Support, the function of this board to be assumed by the first vice president of the district. A special thanks is due to those who have served faithfully on these two boards over the years.

The changes adopted by the Synod are not drastic ones and are in keeping with the function and form principles outlined above.

Now, finally a brief look at

### **THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATORS**

In the Synod Administration Building in Milwaukee we now have more than a dozen called executive secretaries, associate executive secretaries or secretaries. Could not the Synod's money be spent more productively? Think of the souls that need to be won the world over, of the children and adults who need to be educated in the truths of God's Word, of the workers who need to be trained to go out into the harvest fields. Isn't that work more pressing, more urgent? Would not the cause of the church be furthered by sending these executives back into the field where the real work of the church is done?

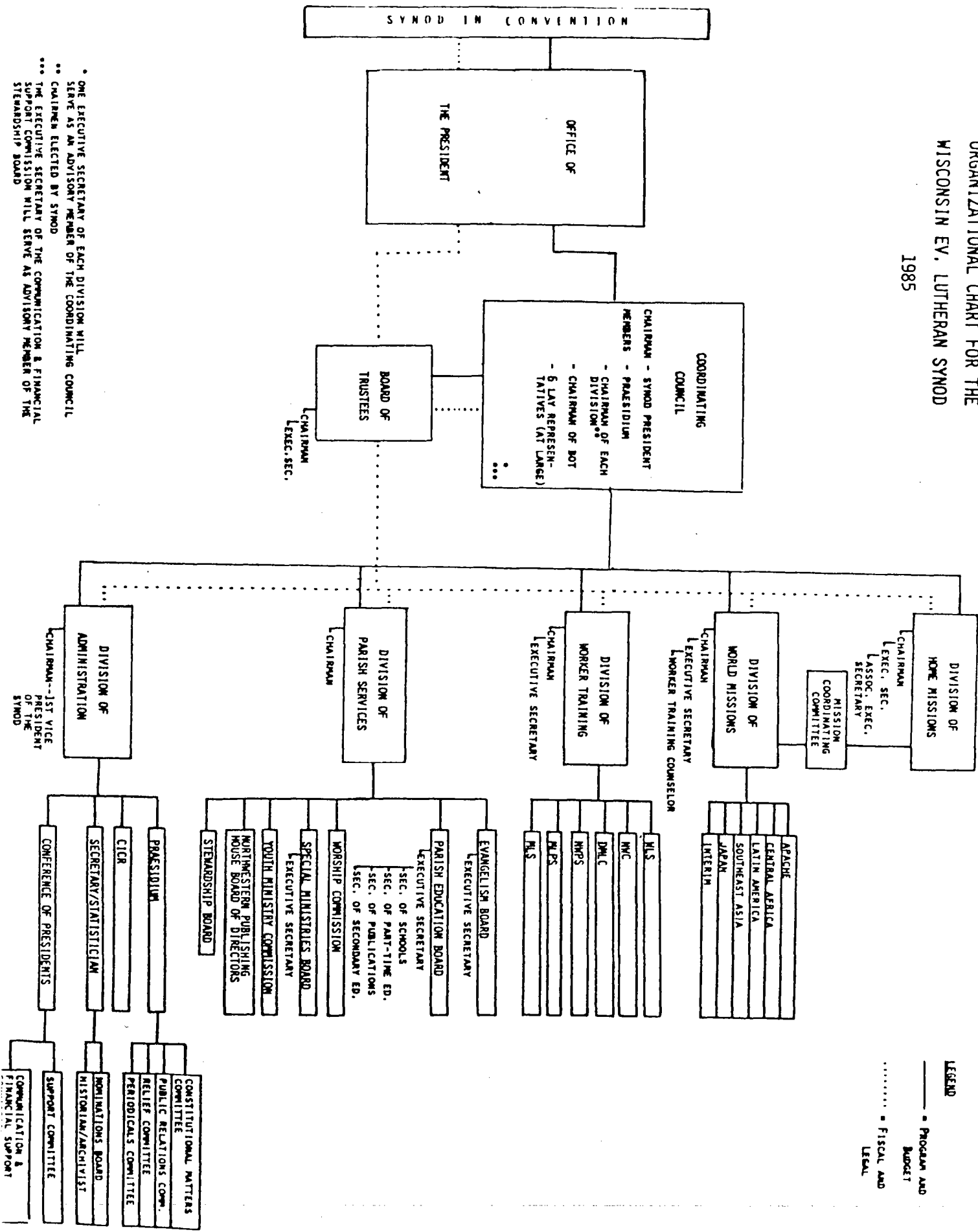
In response to questions such as these we need to bear in mind that administrators, too, are God's gift to his Church. First Corinthians 12 speaks of those "with gifts of administration" (v 28), a word which also means "helmsman." This is highly descriptive of what a faithful administrator will do. A helmsman, or ship's pilot, guides the ship on a course that the ship's owner has determined. He is to see to it that what someone else has decided, in this case the owner of the ship, is carried out. Likewise an administrator's task is to make sure that what others have determined, in our case, the Synod through a particular board, is accomplished. The administrator helps to assure that the scriptural functions of our Synod are carried out in "a fitting and orderly way."

Because of the sinful nature of man there is always, to be sure, the danger of "officialdom" where one oversteps the bounds of his office, where he no longer sees himself as a servant; but that is not inherent to the position. Should this occur the calling board has the responsibility and authority to step in and make sure that the executive secretary, who serves under it, execute his assigned tasks and conduct the affairs of his office correctly and properly.

When we think of the magnitude of Christ's agenda for his Church, a part of which is to be found in our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and then think of how the Lord is allowing us to use men with the gift of administration to help us to be more effective in accomplishing his agenda for us, it is the conviction of this essayist that this portion of our Synod's budget is money well spent. We're talking about structure here, of course, structure which a church body is free to change. But in administration and administrators we are talking about structure that serves to help carry out Christ's mission for his Church.

Christ, the Lord of the Church, has given to groupings of Christians, such as our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or individual congregations within the Synod, a wholesome amount of latitude in form and structure as we seek to carry out his work. As long as we are clear about the proper function of the church, as long as function always precedes form, as long as we don't forget that function is always more important than form, as long as the function of the church is served by its form and not vice versa, and as long as only the forms are flexible but not the function, we will be able to do our work in a manner that will be pleasing to our Lord. And his name will be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will be done in our midst.

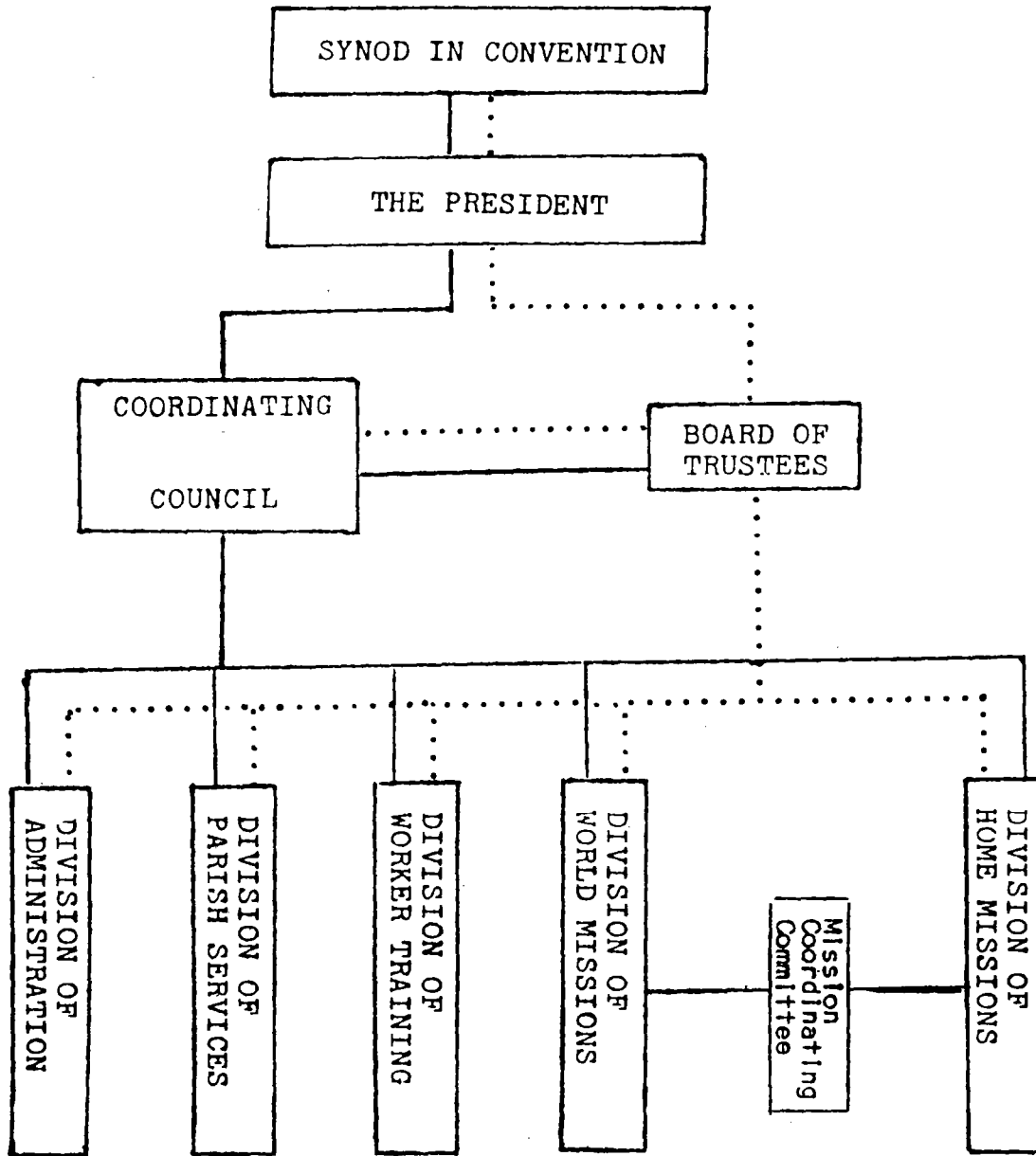
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE  
WISCONSIN EV. LUTHERAN SYNOD  
1985



\* ONE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF EACH DIVISION WILL SERVE AS AN ADVISORY MEMBER OF THE COORDINATING COUNCIL  
\*\* CHAIRMAN ELECTED BY SYNOD  
\*\*\* THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNICATION & FINANCIAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE WILL SERVE AS ADVISORY MEMBER OF THE STEWARDSHIP BOARD

LEGEND  
 — Program and Budget  
 ..... = Fiscal Aid  
 Legal

Chart showing Organizational Relationships for the Coordinating Council (Program and Budget) and the Board of Trustees (Financial and Legal)



————— Program and budget  
..... Financial and Legal

Chart of Synod-Related Affairs of the District Presidents Relative to Funding of the Synodical Budget

