

October 2013: Christians in the World

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8 Power Roles in the Church

October 30, 2013

The church is the body of Christ, and as such Christ has all power and authority. However Jesus uses Christians as the work of the body. It would be wonderful if our local church bodies were full of efficient organs, all working together as God intended. However, we bring into the hallowed halls our human frailties, egos and expectations.

The human parts of us tend to gather around one or more of the power roles described by Thom Rainer, President and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources. See if you can identify yourself in any of these eight roles. Some of the power roles are effective, while others slow the growth of God's agenda.

- 1. Family owned and operated.** Thousands of churches are dominated by a family and its extensions. I once served in a church where half of the deacons had the same last name. It is not unusual that the church was founded by a member of the family. And the family tends to stick together when they want things to go their way.
- 2. Work-around warriors.** This group forms when there is a power or ministry void. Its formation is typically an indication of lack of confidence in the current leadership. They align themselves to get a job done they feel is not taking place otherwise. But the group rarely disbands after the perceived need or task is accomplished. They become an ongoing power group.
- 3. Benevolent dictators.** These individuals or groups garner their power in the church from a variety of possibilities. But they really don't want the power for themselves. Their desire is to use their influence for the good of the church as they can best discern.
- 4. Formal alliances.** Often the power group in the church is the group who has formal authority in the church. They may be elders, members of the finance committee, deacons, or some other body of authority in the church.
- 5. Money managers.** Because they have a position related to money in the church, this group sometimes uses their financial power to gain greater power in the church. The group may be called a finance committee, a stewardship committee, or a budget committee. But their authority to call the financial shots can result in significant other sources of power in the church.
- 6. Past-is-present protectors.** The goal of this group is clear: fiercely defend the status quo. The group typically has a clear leader and numbers of eager followers. I recently heard one pastor talk about the problems he encountered when he changed the time of the worship service from 10:55 to 11:00. This group's motto is "don't mess with the way we've always done it."
- 7. Ministry militia.** This power group is known for its fierce devotion to a particular ministry in the church. Anything done to diminish the value of that ministry or to bring change that will impact that ministry will be met with stiff opposition.
- 8. Network systems.** There are one or more people in the church that have uncanny networking skills. They intentionally connect to many people in the church. So when the leadership of the

church wants to make a change, this group is critical for success because they are connected to so many other members.

Are you working effectively for God's kingdom, or are you caught up power's trap? Make sure your work is pointed toward the goal of serving God.

Comments for this blog are closed. E-mail your thoughts to Regina at reginasmelter@gmail.com. She's looking forward to hearing from you.

7 Types of Power & How Christians Can Use Them

October 21, 2013

Everyone has power. Everyone. And, I don't believe that power is a bad thing. The issue becomes what kind of power a person has and how someone uses that power. Here are some of the common types of power found in the workplace (<http://www.hrbartender.com/2010/training/7-types-of-power-in-the-workplace/>):

- 1) Coercive power is associated with people who are in a position to punish others. People fear the consequences of not doing what has been asked of them.
- 2) Connection power is based upon who you know. This person knows, and has the ear of, other powerful people within the organization.
- 3) Expert power comes from a person's expertise (duh!). This is commonly a person with an acclaimed skill or accomplishment.
- 4) A person who has access to valuable or important information possesses informational power.
- 5) Legitimate power comes from the position a person holds. This is related to a person's title and job responsibilities. You might also hear this referred to as positional power.
- 6) People who are well-liked and respected can have referent power.
- 7) Reward power is based upon a person's ability to bestow rewards. Those rewards might come in the form of job assignments, schedules, pay or benefits.

The two biggest mistakes Christians make is to (1) use power they don't have and (2) use the wrong kind of power to achieve results.

Examine your life's many roles. How can you become more effective by taking ownership of the power God has provided for you based on your role or expertise. To not use it is to throw your effectiveness away, and none of us can afford to do that.

Take the week to explore your use of power, not in a vain or self-glorifying way, but in a way to maximize your effectiveness for God.

The following links offer some good information on power:

<http://quickbase.intuit.com/blog/2011/08/26/the-5-types-of-power-in-leadership/>

Next week I will post on the types of power in the local congregation and how to use them.

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Top Tips for Changing Chaos to Bliss at Home

October 14, 2013

How do you transform your house from one of organizational chaos to one where order is king? Here are a few tips from Sandra Felton, The Organizer Lady® and the guru of organization herself. She stresses that **you must be COMMITTED**. Change is hard, and unless you want to really want to de-clutter your home, the time will be wasted. So if you are committed, here are the steps:

- * Envision what you want your home to look like, and how you want your possessions to function. This is your goal. Keep it close to your heart.
- * Grab three containers of good size. You probably have them saved somewhere. Label the containers toss, give away, and keep.
- * Go through your house one room at a time. Keep the kitchen for last. In the drawer in the stand in the living room you run across your son's permission to attend the first grade field trip. He's now in sixth grade. Toss. Then you find the pair of tweezers you couldn't find. Give away. You replaced the tweezers years ago. And you discover three kitchen spoons. Yes, three. You remember shoving them in there as you quickly tidied the house for company. Save. Go from room to room until you have hit them all. Next, handle the overflowing three containers.
- * As soon as you can take the "toss" container to the dump.
- * Give the second "give away" container to Goodwill, or charity of your of choice.
- * Take the third container and put the contents where they are supposed to be. Place like objects together in a container if possible and label each container.

Look around at the clutter-free environment! Now you have to maintain it. Sandra has two tips here:

- * Keeping your "goal" in mind, don't save more than you have space for. One of the big problems with Messies is over-saving.
- * Keeping your "goal" in mind (have I said this before?) put things away IMMEDIATELY after you have finished using them.

I have posted an interview with author Sandra Felton in my [Books and Those Who Write Them](#) section of my website. Mrs. Felton has published a number of books on office, home, and lifestyle organization. Her website is www.Messies.com.

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Why did God Create that Aggravating Person!?!

October 7, 2013

There are people that don't like me. Oh, I know (I say as I throw my hair over my shoulder in a smug grin), that's hard to believe. But it's true. I am not everyone's cup of tea (or cup of coffee in my case – see, I'm being difficult already). I did some digging online to see what I could find about difficult people and ran across a grad student's blog. She offered the best advice I have heard on the topic: I often tell people that I'm grateful that Jesus said, "Love one another," and not "Like one another," because although it may not seem like it, love, that is agape or Christian love, is the easier one between those two. Agape is charity, to help someone when they are in need and wish them well. That, I can do. Asking me to like every person I will encounter is asking a little bit too much. And the way the world works, sometimes we have to run into people that we don't like; sometimes we have to be around them through no fault or choices of our own (<http://thoughtcatalog.com/2013/a-survival-guide-for-dealing-with-people-you-dont-like>.)

My heart, although not perfect, is not so hard as to deny anyone basic needs. I remember one time an individual had hurt me badly. She had spread rumors based in lies, and I lost friends over this. I prayed earnestly about this situation. She had never been a friend, so there was no gap in our relationship, but the situation was literally eating me alive. I had to find a way to live, with her still on the planet. I prayed. And prayed. And prayed.

I wasn't sure God was hearing me, but one night I had a dream. I dreamed that she had been given a new car. In the non-dream world, she needed a new car desperately. I remember seeing the new car and feeling happiness for her. I awoke, and new the dream had been a message from God. I could not change what she had done, attempts at reconciliation had been unsuccessful, and it was my decision to allow hate to tear me apart, or turn my anger over to God. I chose to turn my anger over to God. Not instantly, but over time I learned to be able to give to her Agape love.

When my husband and I moved to South Carolina and started attending a new church, there was one church member that I had an instant dislike for. She had never even spoken to me, she sang in the choir, and for all practical purposes she seemed to be a nice person. But I could not shake my animosity toward her. Again, prayer was my answer (do you see a theme here?) and I asked God for enlightenment. Again, not immediately (God loves to torment me by making me wait), but over time I came to realize my instant animosity toward her was a reflection of someone I knew and disliked in Ohio. I had transferred this individual's personality to a complete stranger.

With this awareness, I gave her another chance. She is one of the most creative and giving women I have ever met. I told her once about my initial reaction to her, and we both shared a good laugh. Like the grad student said, I doubt we will ever like everyone, but we are commanded to love them.

For those of you who do not like me, this is what I want you to do: Be honest with yourself — pinpoint the triggers that might be complicating your feelings. Check your biases. Keep an open mind — your perspective may change. Pray. And then pray again and again until God's answer becomes apparent.

You may never like me, but if you see my car in a ditch somewhere, remember God commanded you to have Agape love toward me! Blessings to all of you this week. *May your life be filled with good friends and equally as many good challenges.*

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Christians Living in the World & Making the Impossible Possible

October 3, 2013

Last week I discussed those pesky neighbors (or coworkers) of yours, the Joneses. Through the process of looking at the Joneses, some of us have identified a need to make changes in our lives. I have always believed that goal setting is an important part of getting to where you want to be. So let's work on that this week.

In order to reach a goal, you have to know what the goal is. It must be something that is measurable and attainable. Pray about it. Is this what God wants you to do? If you feel you are within His will, let's keep going. Creating a good goal that is intended to direct your course of action must be developed carefully. One way of doing that is by using the acronym SMART.



S – Specific	I want to earn my living by writing.
M – Measurable	I want to earn \$100,000 a year by writing
A – Attainable	I want to earn \$100,000 a year by writing one week a month
R – Realistic	I want to earn \$20,000 a year by writing eleven months a year (note the major realistic revisions here)
T – Timely	I want to earn \$20,000 a year by writing eleven months a year within the next five years.

Now I have a goal that I can use to direct my activities for the next five years. Of course, in order to meet this goal I have to develop an action plan. There are many good examples of action plans for Christ centered lives available online. Some I found are:

www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/
www.focusonthefamily.com/.../setting_goals_to_fulfill_your_god-given
www.churchleaders.com/.../156540-10-steps-to-setting-life-goals.htm

I have given you my goal. Share yours with me!

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