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O'Neill, John J.
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THE

ESSENTIALS

OF

PLANNING

A Personal View

JOHN J. O'NEILL

THE ESSENTIALS OF PLANNING

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by

JOHN J. O'NEILL

Secretary for Planning

National Conference of Catholic Bishops

and

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This project was undertaken in response to an increasing number of suggestions and other indications that a publication of this nature might have considerable informational and operational value for individuals involved in planning for Church institutions at both the national and diocesan levels.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) is a canonical entity operating in accordance with the Conciliar Decree, *Christus Dominus*. Its purpose is to foster the Church's mission to mankind by providing the Bishops of this country with an opportunity to exchange views and insights of prudence and experience and to exercise in a joint manner their pastoral office. (cfr. *Christus Dominus*, #38)

The United States Catholic Conference (USCC) is a civil entity of the American Catholic Bishops assisting them in their service to the Church in this country by uniting the People of God where voluntary, collective action on a broad diocesan level is needed. The USCC provides an organizational structure and the resources needed to insure coordination, cooperation, and assistance in the public, educational, and social concerns of the Church at the national, regional, state, inter-diocesan and, as appropriate, diocesan levels.

Preface

This study is being published in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the appointment of its author as the first Secretary for Planning for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the United States Catholic Conference, an appointment which signalled the initiation of formalized planning for both Conferences.

The intent is not to provide yet another general planning textbook or specific procedures manual. It is rather to set forth what the writer views as the key concepts of planning as a discipline and the basic elements of planning as a process, and to illustrate these by providing (in the appendix) an informal and relatively detailed description of the most recent operational model in which they have been incorporated and tested.

The study makes no claim to breaking new ground, although it is hoped that it may represent a fresh approach to some of the matters treated. It relies primarily upon the records and experience of the past five years as well as upon the recollections of twenty prior years of planning experience in both industry and government, rather than upon any extensive new research.

This limitation, which arises out of a realistic assessment of the availability of time and other related resources, may actually prove advantageous since what appears to be called for in the present context is a concise and straightforward working document rather than a complex and extended technical treatise.

There may be a further advantage if the writer is correct in his view that there is a persistent and growing tendency among professional planners to complicate, or at least to obscure, what is essentially a very simple and unmysterious subject.

With reference to the total process this tendency most frequently takes the form of excessive resort to complex technical jargon. With reference to individual elements of the process it most frequently takes the form of isolating a particular step and surrounding it with a particular mystique.

When confronted with evidence of this tendency the writer has often found it salutary to reiterate the characterization of this field

by one of his own distinguished mentors as *common sense made difficult*.

If the present study has succeeded in avoiding this pitfall without lapsing into the equally serious but far less common error of over-simplification, it should be well on its way to achieving the purposes for which it was undertaken.

Although this publication is a Conference project, neither the study itself nor the appended process description should be viewed as official NCCB/USCC documents. Full responsibility for the content of both as well as for any errors or other deficiencies rests solely with the author: thus the designation as a personal view.

At the same time, grateful acknowledgment is made of the contributions of many members of the two Conferences and many staff associates. The number of individuals involved precludes a specific listing. It does seem appropriate however to single out for special recognition Miss Edie Frost, who is responsible not only for editing and producing the present manuscript, but also for performing essential services in connection with all of the documents as well as the operational model upon which the entire study is based.

April 15, 1975

THE ESSENTIALS OF PLANNING

A Personal View

Introduction

Planning, if its full potential is to be realized, must be viewed not only as a specific annual exercise or process but also as a general ongoing organizational method or discipline: an organizational state of mind.

The long-term effectiveness of the planning function is to be measured not only in terms of the smoothness or effectiveness of the formal process, but also and more importantly in the extent to which the totality of the organization—personnel, function, and structure—is permeated by the open and orderly approach to the future which planning is designed and intended to foster.

The impact of truly effective planning can normally be expected to extend well beyond the limits of the formal process, and even well beyond the sphere in which the planning office itself ordinarily functions.

For example, the initiation of a program-oriented planning system frequently leads to a relatively radical restructuring of the total organization within the first three to five years. This should not be seen as surprising since a structure which has not been kept abreast or ahead of function is likely to be one of the most immediately recognizable impediments to program effectiveness.

This point is not made to add to the “organizational nervousness” which almost inevitably accompanies the introduction of formal planning. It should be seen as an argument for planning, not as an argument against it. It is indeed a reflection of the broad challenge of planning as a discipline: the challenge to part with yesterday’s accidentals (and even its legitimate preoccupations) in order to deal more effectively with today’s essentials, and to identify those of tomorrow.

Focus

In order to reduce the likelihood of misunderstanding, it is important to note that the particular focus of the present work

is on program planning: the identification of the objectives to which the organization is to be formally committed, and the development of a specific action agenda designed to meet these objectives in the most effective manner consistent with present and anticipated resource availability.

This definition of focus is emphasized since the term “planning” can be used to refer to a wide range of activities, a situation which appears to be particularly widespread in the Church at the diocesan level.

The term “pastoral planning” is a case in point. Based upon published materials and individual inquiries received at the national level there appears to be no generally accepted definition: the term continues to be used to refer to a broad spectrum of activities ranging from program planning (in the sense referred to above) to the identification of meaningful assignments for diocesan priests and other individuals. It is only when the term is confined to the first of these meanings that the material in the present study can be viewed as generally applicable.

A second relatively common usage is that coupling the term with “development” to describe general fund-raising activities. Although this usage is also excluded from the present study, a number of the basic principles can doubtless be effectively applied in designing fund-raising programs.

Essential Conditions

The conditions which are essential to planning can be defined in many ways. This particular listing reflects the view that personnel rather than procedures hold the ultimate key: it is with individuals that the planning function stands or falls. From this perspective the conditions essential at all levels of the organization include:

- Commitment
- Competence
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Compassion

Commitment is particularly important at the highest levels. While this is doubtless true with regard to all dimensions of

management, it is normally a more critical issue in the case of formal planning. The reason for this is that planning continues to be viewed in many quarters as essentially optional. This position is particularly persistent in organizations which have functioned over a long period without recourse to formal planning. For this reason there is a significant element of risk that without the clear and direct support of executive management the planning function will continue to be regarded as optional by many potential participants, even after a planning office has been activated. The truth of this observation is attested to by the fact that in all too many instances the planning office exists as little more than a status symbol or a token commitment to the planning discipline.

Competence is required not only among those directly responsible for the planning function but also among all who will ultimately be called upon to participate in the related formal and informal processes. Indeed, it is recognition of this requirement for competence at all levels which accounts for so much of the "organizational nervousness" referred to above as commonly accompanying introduction of the planning function. What is most often involved is the realization that an all but inevitable side-effect of planning is the gradual elimination of all of the "hiding places" within the organization.

Communication can play an important supportive role, particularly in organizations with no previous experience of formal planning. Complete openness is essential not only to the achievement of the required understanding of the total discipline but also to its acceptance: to the early allaying of the suspicions, fears, and conflicts which tend to arise with the first experience of planning, and at times even with the mere announcement that its introduction is contemplated.

Cooperation is simply another word for mutual involvement. Effective planning is not normally achieved by an organizationally and operationally isolated planning office. In point of fact, widespread involvement is so critical to long-run effectiveness that a strong case can be made (though for obvious reasons it seldom is) for operating the planning office with severely limited staffing levels in order to "force" as much as possible of the planning function out into the planning units themselves to ensure broadly based understanding and participation.

Compassion simply belongs to planning, as it does to any dimension of life in which individuals are placed in situations involving potential misunderstanding or conflict.

Underlying Assumptions

Organizational planning as a discipline and as a process is frequently defined in terms of the major assumptions upon which it is based. Following this approach it can be said that organizational planning assumes that it is possible to:

- Express the fundamental purpose of an organization in a straight-forward and concise statement of essential mission.
- Translate this statement of essential mission into a series of general long-range organizational goals.
- Set forth an agenda for the achievement of these long-range goals in the form of more specific short-range program objectives.
- Convert these short-range program objectives into a definitive plan of action stated in terms of individual programs or specific activities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented plan of action by measuring operational results against the predetermined mission and objectives.

Major Elements of the Process

The following definitional listing of the major substantive and procedural elements of the planning process relates specifically to the introduction of a formal planning process into an already existing organization. With only slight and fairly obvious modifications it can of course be made to serve equally well in the case of an entirely new organization.

- Development of a precise statement of the essential mission and long-range general objectives of the organization as a whole.
- Preparation of a forecast of the future social, political, religious, economic, and cultural environment within which the essential mission and general objectives of the organization are to be pursued.
- Development of statements of essential mission and short-range program objectives for each major component of the organi-

zation, within the framework of the more general statements for the organization as a whole.

- Completion of an inventory of the ongoing and anticipated activities of each major organizational component, including information on the origin of and rationale for such activities.
- Consolidation of these activities into major categories or programs on the basis of commonalities of content or process.
- Development of detailed program agendas or proposals relating the results of the inventory and subsequent consolidation to the statements of essential mission and program objectives.
- Assignment of priorities to individual programs or groups of programs.
- Allocation of available human, physical, and financial resources on the basis of established priorities and individual program needs.
- Provision for ongoing internal review through a formal system for the measurement of program performance in relation to predetermined criteria.
- Consolidation of results at appropriate points in the process, including as a minimum the assignment of priorities, the allocation of resources, and the provision for ongoing review.

As already noted, an operational model incorporating all of these elements is described informally and in considerable detail in the appendix.

Assignment of Program Priorities

An essential element in the rationale for organizational planning is that all long-range goals and short-range objectives cannot be simultaneously achieved, and that as a consequence individual program priorities must be systematically determined and pursued.

The assignment of program priorities is generally recognized as among the more complex and difficult dimensions of the total planning process. A major reason for this is that it is seldom possible to devise completely objective guidelines for what must often be a largely subjective exercise. More often than not the most that can be done is to identify certain techniques which may serve to facilitate the process under specific circumstances.

One such technique which is frequently overlooked as a result of the tendency to think exclusively in terms of "program priorities" is that of assigning priorities to individual facets of the essential mission as these are elaborated in the goals and objectives, and then assigning individual program priorities on the basis of the relative urgency of the goals and objectives each program is intended to achieve.

Another useful technique is that of assigning priorities to groups of programs rather than one-by-one. This technique should normally be employed only after failure of the effort to assign individual program priorities. Three separate categories should normally be defined as the minimum for a useful and meaningful exercise.

Finally, it is useful to remember that the relative amount of staff time or other resources expended on a given program is not in itself a reliable index of priority. The inverse of this relationship is frequently an unavoidable fact of organizational life.

Measurement of Program Effectiveness

One of the principal keys to the long-range effectiveness of planning (and to the meaningful survival of the organization) is provision for formal performance evaluation: the systematic measurement of program effectiveness through the application of predetermined criteria.

Too often there is little or no provision for such an evaluation system in the post-implementation stage. It is simply assumed that a good plan will work well; or that relevant subject matter guarantees an effective program; or that the budget review process can be relied upon to perform the necessary measurement; or that one year's problems will be automatically resolved in the following year's plans.

In these and other essentially passive approaches (or non-approaches) to performance measurement there are doubtless elements of truth. However, the weight of experience argues forcibly that reliance on any one of these approaches, or even several of them in combination, is not a satisfactory long-run substitute for the inclusion of formal systematic measurement of program effectiveness as an integral element of the total planning process.

The identification of specific evaluative criteria is basic to any such systematic approach. While such criteria necessarily vary

from organization to organization and even from program to program, it is possible to set forth certain fundamental considerations and to identify certain types of criteria which can normally be expected to apply on an across-the-board basis.

Effectiveness in achieving the established goals and objectives is the ultimate yardstick against which individual programs must be measured. Certain other broad general measurements can also normally be applied as a part of overall program evaluation. Among these are consistency with the essential mission and existing priorities of the organization as a whole, internal consistency with other programs of the organization, and comparative effectiveness in relation to parallel programs of other organizations.

More specific criteria normally evolve out of the intrinsic nature of each individual program. For this reason it is not possible to provide an exhaustive listing; the range normally extends across a broad spectrum, from precise and specific quantitative criteria to such qualitative measurements as professional judgment (preferably by consensus) or past experience with similar programs.

The following are examples of commonly accepted evaluative criteria or techniques: external or independent internal audits; cost-benefit studies; specific budget performance; number of individuals or groups serviced; constituency response (as measured by formal surveys or unsolicited evaluations); paid memberships; paid attendance (at workshops, seminars, and the like); paid circulation rates (or rates based on individual requests); support from foundations or other independent agencies; adherence to predetermined time schedules and other quantitative targets. In connection with specific quantitative measurements, it is often more useful to rely on trends than on individual figures.

The ultimate purpose to be served through the employment of such criteria is identical with that of the total performance evaluation exercise: to provide the best possible basis for determining which programs should be continued, broadened, modified, or redirected; which should be curtailed, gradually phased out, or immediately terminated; and which new ones should be undertaken.

This clear and continuing relationship between performance evaluation and forward program decisions is among the more

effective demonstrations of planning as an ongoing cyclical process rather than as a once-a-year event.

Planning and Decision-Making

Within the fixed and often relatively narrow limits established by formal management action, the planning process may be viewed as a decision-making exercise. However, in the broader organizational context it should be seen as a facilitator rather than as an ultimate actor.

Except in the final review stages involving executive management and ownership, it is the role of the planning process to present options rather than to foreclose them. Where the planning process is not seen in this light it is likely to become a source of organizational conflict rather than a key to operational freedom, a prison rather than a tool.

In this connection it is essential to focus on the cyclical nature of planning in order to ensure that decisions made within or facilitated by the planning process are viewed in their proper light: as beginnings rather than as conclusions.

The dynamism of an organization ultimately depends upon this ability to view the decisions of today as the starting-points of tomorrow. Planning must be seen as "relating to temples building, and not to temples built."

Where planning is thus seen at all levels of the organization, where it is recognized as something more than an interesting exercise and something less than a stifling and arbitrary process, it can come into its own as one of the best of all practicable answers to the desire for "shared responsibility": meaningful participation in the decision-making process.

Viewed realistically, it is likely that the specific moment of decision, the formal decision-making act, will continue to "belong" in most instances to executive management, if only for practical reasons of timing and logistics.

This final formal act is, however, but one small step (not always the most significant) in an extended process. More often than not the decision is actually arrived at in the course of the process rather than at the end: the act with which the process ends tends to be little more than the formal ratification of an informal decision reached much earlier in the process.

For this reason, those who relate meaningful shared responsibility exclusively to participation in the final formal act may often find that they have been chasing a will-o'-the-wisp, just as members of management who limit their participation to the same final act are those most likely to find that their formal role has fallen far short of their original expectations.

This is not to say that the process in and of itself somehow diminishes or dilutes the legitimate role of executive management and ownership. If this were the case, there would doubtless be an almost immediate exercise of the undoubted prerogative of turning off the process.

Rather, it is to say that maximum feasible involvement in the process from beginning to end, or more accurately continuing participation in the ongoing planning cycle, is the key to shared responsibility at all levels. Where this situation obtains the likelihood is that organizational history will with very few exceptions be a record of "mutual decisions mutually arrived at": the very few arbitrary decisions will more often than not reflect the failure of participants at all levels of the system to offer meaningful options.

Relationship to the Financial Function

A major purpose of planning is to ensure the most effective possible employment of available resources. For this reason it is essential to provide for the necessary ongoing relationship between the planning and financial functions.

In some instances this is achieved structurally by assigning the two disciplines to a single office. Where separate offices are involved it is usually advisable to supplement informal arrangements with a fall-back position involving formal guarantees, along the lines of those provided for in the two-office model described in the appendix.

The relationship needs to be particularly close in the areas of budget development and the subsequent review of budget performance. Again, reference to the specific arrangements set forth in the appendix appears more appropriate than the development of a parallel set of illustrations.

It is particularly important in this context to realize that planning is not necessarily, nor even primarily, expansion oriented. In

fact, a case can be made that formal planning has more to offer in periods of financial stringency than in times of relatively unlimited resource availability.

Under both sets of circumstances, a key to successful planning is the identification of no longer needed programs. This is particularly urgent in organizations which have operated over a long period without recourse to formal planning.

Programs, like structures, tend to take on a life of their own. It is almost always more difficult for an organization to terminate long established programs than to initiate new ones.

The implications of this fact are self-evident. Continuation of a no longer needed program, even in the best of times, represents irresponsible stewardship of resources. In less favorable times it may actually threaten organizational survival.

Thus planning must look to the past as well as to the future. It must do more than facilitate the development of new programs. It must also provide for the systematic reevaluation of existing ones. This begins with a review of the original motivation for each program in question. What purpose was it designed to achieve? Is that purpose still consistent with the mission of the total organization? Is the program still achieving it? Are there other ways in which it might be achieved more effectively?

Here again, as so often, the stress needs to be on planning as an ongoing cyclical function rather than as an annually recurring event: initial decision, action, evaluation, new decision. The decision to implement a given program must be viewed as but the first of a series of decisions with regard to that program, a decision which should be renewed annually, even in the case of programs with a predetermined life-span.

The sorting-out process belongs to the planning function. The necessity for it most frequently arises out of the financial context. Thus the critical necessity for the mutual involvement of these two disciplines in what must be viewed in this context as one planning-financial process.

Use of Professional Consultants

It may be useful to include a word about the employment of professional consultants on a fee basis, since this is a question which frequently arises in connection with various aspects of the

planning function. The view here is that consultants are most likely to be helpful in instances in which they are employed to address themselves to precise and specific questions which have been identified by those retaining them.

Retaining consultants to address themselves to more general questions often proves more expensive than anticipated and produces mixed results at best. The likelihood of such an outcome is greatest in instances in which the consultants themselves have identified the specific questions to be addressed.

More expensive: In addition to possible cost overruns, there is a very real problem of hidden costs. In conducting studies which are too general or ill-defined, the demands of consultants on in-house staff time are likely to be excessive, to the extent that ongoing work may be delayed or otherwise affected. A morale factor may also be involved since a general approach tends to raise questions regarding possible hidden agendas. In addition there seems to be a persistent tendency to understate or completely overlook the future cost of present recommendations. These problems are normally less severe when the questions are precise and the scope of the study predetermined.

Mixed results: When the questions addressed by consultants are too general their answers are likely to follow suit. Unfortunately, many consultants are engaged in trying to find questions to fit their answers, rather than vice versa. Thus, particularly in more general studies, there is a relatively high risk of receiving an objectively valid answer which simply does not fit the question which should have been asked. Risks of this nature are even greater where there are major misconceptions on the part of the consultants with reference to the fundamental nature of the particular organization, or unrealistic assumptions as to future resource availability.

Another area which often needs a closer look is the proposed financial arrangement. It is essential to question proposals which tend to be too vague to be relied upon, too generous to be realistic, or too reassuring in their confidence that foundations or other independent agencies can be expected to underwrite a major share of the expenditures involved.

With specific reference to planning for the Church at the diocesan level, there are a number of options which can usefully

be explored prior to the retention of professional consultants on a formal fee basis:

- Use of information on the experience of other dioceses of comparable size and complexity, including unsuccessful experience, which is often equally instructive.
- Enlistment of the voluntary assistance of planning professionals active in the Church or civil community, many of whom are likely to be more than willing to assist the Church in the particular area of their professional competence.
- Reference to standard planning literature on a selected basis.

Planning Office Size

Finally, it may be helpful to offer a number of observations relative to the optimum size for a planning office since this question also has a tendency to recur periodically in most organizations.

It is obviously not possible to set forth any hard and fast guidelines, given the wide range of structures through which the Church (to adhere to the present context) functions at the national, regional and local levels.

Ultimately of course the size of the planning office should be determined by application of the norm for all organizational components: the scope of the assigned task in relation to available resources.

In the specific case of planning there is, however, at least one particularly important option which has a significant bearing upon office size: the actual locus of the detailed work of planning.

The importance of this option is frequently overlooked, particularly in the all too common approach capsulized as follows in a proposal submitted at the diocesan level by a professional consulting firm: "but a larger office would be able to do a better job."

The contrary view here is that as much as possible of the planning function should be "farmed out" by the planning office to the activities for which the proposals are actually being developed. This is perhaps the most effective way, and at times the only way, to ensure the full and active participation of these

operational activities in the total planning process, and in the "organizational state of mind" of which the process is a part.

Because the particular base from which this study has been prepared represents an appropriate case in point, it may be permissible to end this study as it began, on a personal note.

Many professional colleagues have been surprised and not a few have been dismayed to learn that even after five years this particular office continues to function with a total staff of two.

Within the Conferences, however, it appears to be the view of those responsible for making such judgments that the task of the office (in both its planning and organizational dimensions) has been and continues to be effectively carried out. The corresponding view within the office is that the deliberate size limitation has contributed significantly to whatever may actually have been achieved.

The size factor is believed to have had this intended effect by making it clearly impossible for the planning office to function in any other capacity than that of the instrumentality through which the operational units were (necessarily under the circumstances) to become fully and actively involved in every important dimension of planning.

It is further believed in the light of actual experience that a larger office might long since have ceased to exist (or at least to function effectively), submerged under the sheer weight of its own accumulation of unused processes and unimplemented plans.

It is doubtful whether anyone beyond the immediate staff—"we two"—fully realizes just how much planning has been done during the past five years, or just how little of it has been done within the planning office itself.

It is recognized that this approach to planning office size may not be the accepted norm among a majority of those in the planning profession. It is hoped that one day it may be.

APPENDIX

THE NCCB/USCC PLANNING PROCESS AN INFORMAL SUMMARY

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Origin and Responsibility

The original source document for the existing NCCB/USCC forward planning function is a formal management study approved by the general membership. Although a number of relatively important procedural changes have subsequently been made, the fundamental rationale and basic process remain essentially as set forth in that study.

The Committee on Research, Plans and Programs has been assigned basic responsibility for the forward planning function with respect to NCCB Secretariats and all USCC activities.

Necessary staff assistance to the Committee is provided by the Office of the General Secretary, usually through the Secretary for Planning.

The Committee on Research, Plans and Programs

This Committee is comprised of the Conference President as Chairman, the immediate past President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, and the General Secretary.

With respect to the NCCB Secretariats the Committee functions as an instrumentality of the NCCB Administrative Committee; with respect to USCC activities the Committee functions as an instrumentality of the USCC Administrative Board.

The Committee is responsible for review and evaluation of the goals and objectives, plans and programs, and ongoing operational performance of NCCB Secretariats and all USCC activities.

With regard to specific programs at the staff level, a key concept is that the initiation of any new program, or the substantial modification of any existing program, requires the prior approval of the Committee.

While such Committee action is subject to review by the NCCB Administrative Committee or the USCC Administrative Board, and the general membership, it can nevertheless be said from the standpoint of day-to-day operation that specific responsibility in this area rests primarily with the Committee.

Other Conference Committees

Direct involvement by the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs is but one element in the overall participation in the NCCB/USCC planning function by the membership of both Conferences.

Separate committees function actively in every major area of concern. The NCCB operates primarily through its extensive committee structure (with the assistance of separate staff secretariats where required), while each major program area of the USCC has its own related committee.

In the case of the NCCB the individual committees are the primary source of the separate planning proposals, while the USCC committees perform a key role in the development and evaluation of staff proposals.

The Secretary for Planning

The Office of Research, Plans and Programs was formally activated on April 15, 1970, with the appointment of its first director, subsequently designated as the Secretary for Planning.

In addition to providing staff assistance to the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, the Secretary for Planning has primary responsibility for developing, implementing, and monitoring the internal planning process. More specifically, this responsibility includes:

- Elaborating the overall process and related instructional and procedural materials.
- Evaluating individual planning proposals submitted by NCCB/USCC activities.
- Identifying questions and issues relative to these proposals and their implementation.
- Preparing agenda documentation for review meetings of the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, and maintaining appropriate records of Committee deliberations and decisions.

- Assisting the General Secretary in communicating Committee decisions and in monitoring their implementation.
- Evaluating the structures and systems through which approved plans and programs are implemented.

The First Step: An Essential Pre-Condition

The first formal step toward full implementation of the planning system was the development by the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs (with staff assistance from the Secretary for Planning) of a formal definition of the nature, role, and purpose of the USCC, including its relationship to the NCCB and to individual dioceses and regional and state conferences.

Completion of this statement in June 1970 (together with its ratification by the general membership in November 1970) represents what may with some justification be regarded as the single most important step in the implementation of the overall planning system, since the statement provides the essential framework or context within which all other planning activities must be carried out, and is one of the principal yardsticks against which these activities must ultimately be measured.

A general measure of the importance of such a definitional statement is that its development is frequently considered not as an integral part of the planning process, but rather as a necessary "pre-condition" without which there can be no meaningful process.

A more specific measure in the present context is that the approved USCC "Statement of Goals" has been included in the official NCCB/USCC handbook of statutes and bylaws.

Major Elements of the Process

Following the definitional process described in the preceding section, the first specific procedural step was the development by the Secretary for Planning of a detailed internal planning process.

Since this process incorporates substantive and procedural elements identical with those set forth under the same heading in the accompanying study, the duplicate listing has been deleted from this appendix.

The process was formally initiated in mid-1970 with requests to the NCCB and USCC program units for planning proposals for

1971, to be submitted according to guidelines contained in a detailed procedural package accompanying the requests.

Related Financial and Budgetary Matters

As in all organizations in which there are separate offices for planning and finance, there is a need for an ongoing relationship between the two, particularly in the areas of budget development and the evaluation of budget performance.

In the present instance, this involves day-to-day contact between the two offices and, in addition, a significant amount of staff work by the Secretary for Planning on behalf of the NCCB/USCC Committee on Budget and Finance, which, like the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, is an instrumentality of the NCCB Administrative Committee and the USCC Administrative Board. To further ensure the necessary coordination of the two disciplines, two Conference officers (the Treasurer and the General Secretary) serve as members of both of these key committees.

In addition, the Secretary for Planning serves as a member of the in-house staff budget committee in its review of budget proposals prior to their submission to the Committee on Budget and Finance.

Related Organizational and Procedural Matters

The responsibility of the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, and thus of the Secretary for Planning, extends to the review of the specific organizational structures and related procedures through which approved plans and programs are carried out. This arrangement reflects the fact that these matters are closely related to program planning and implementation in the specific NCCB/USCC context.

The Process Itself: A Narrative Description

In early June of each year the Secretary for Planning forwards to the various NCCB and USCC planning units a procedural package containing general instructions for the preparation of planning proposals for the following year. An outline of the required content of these individual proposals is provided in the final section of this appendix.

The completed proposals are submitted to the Secretary for Planning in mid-July, after such preliminary review as may be considered appropriate within the individual program areas.

These proposals are then subjected to an intensive review by the Secretary for Planning in the light of: (a) the mission and objectives of the Conferences as a whole; (b) the proposals for the current and previous years; (c) the recorded decisions of the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs; and (d) the existing policy of the two Conferences and the context within which this policy was developed. (In order to obtain the necessary background for this final policy dimension, the Secretary for Planning attends all meetings of the general membership, the NCCB Administrative Committee, the USCC Administrative Board, and the USCC departmental committees.)

On the basis of this review, the Secretary for Planning prepares a documentation package for mailing to the members of the Committee approximately one month in advance of the regular annual review meeting of the Committee, which is usually conducted in the latter part of September.

This advance documentation package normally includes: (a) the planning proposals themselves, or abridgments thereof; (b) a separate summary analysis of the results of the review of each proposal; (c) similar information on special action items which are not encompassed in the individual planning proposals; and (d) a covering analytical memorandum summarizing the major issues to be addressed by the Committee in its pre-meeting review of the proposals.

After this package has been forwarded to the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, the internal review process continues along two major lines: (a) discussion of the USCC planning proposals by the appropriate departmental committees; and (b) analysis of the financial implications of the planning proposals, individually and as a group.

With reference to the first of these, review of all regular and special USCC planning proposals is assigned to the departmental committees by the USCC bylaws, and a major segment of one committee meeting each year is normally set aside for this purpose. Action by these committees normally takes the form of resolutions addressed to the USCC Administrative Board. The

Secretary for Planning serves in a resource capacity in connection with these committee reviews.

In the case of NCCB, in view of the different statutory relationship between the various committees and their secretariats, the process is somewhat different. Each initial planning document is normally a "joint venture" of the individual committee and its secretariat and "disputed questions" are normally resolved at the episcopal rather than the staff level.

The financial dimension of the review is normally carried out after the mailing of the advance documentation package. This practice relates to the overall timing of the budgetary cycle, which in turn is dictated by the nature of the budgetary process itself.

While it is possible at least in the preliminary stages to review the planning proposals without reference to their specific financial implications, the budgetary process is necessarily more detailed and precise, even in its earliest stages. This is true because in a sense no individual budget proposal is firm until all are firm—a proposition which is not true except in a most general way of the individual planning proposals.

For this reason, the budget review process provides for a formal internal review of the individual proposals before they are finalized for presentation to the Committee on Budget and Finance. This review is conducted by a staff budget review committee, and one of the key resource materials is the documentation package concurrently under review by the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs.

The primary functions of this staff budget review committee are to: (a) conduct a line-item review of each individual budget proposal; (b) conduct special reviews of selected individual expense categories; (c) conduct a separate review of individual income forecasts; and (d) develop an "alternative budget" which is in balance, as mandated by the general membership of the two Conferences.

The relationship of the planning proposals to this task is clear: it is the planning proposals which provide the essential raw material for the financial decisions, based upon their potential impact upon general Conference priorities and individual Conference programs.

The Secretary for Planning attends the formal annual review meeting of the Committee on Budget and Finance, in order to provide information on questions relating to the programs encompassed in the various budget proposals.

The Committee on Research, Plans and Programs, using the advance documentation package, the summarized results of the internal reviews discussed above, and specific material referred by the Committee on Budget and Finance, then conducts its own formal review of the planning proposals.

In each of these formal NCCB/USCC Committee reviews, the question of "hearings" with individual staff members or committee chairmen in relation to individual budget or planning proposals is decided on an ad hoc basis. Initially, such hearings were held by each Committee in connection with each proposal. However, it was subsequently decided that such hearings were necessary only in connection with major unresolved issues. This modified approach makes it possible for the Committees to carry out the kind of in-depth review of critical issues which was simply not feasible within a reasonable timeframe when each individual budget and planning proposal was discussed with the staff members by whom it had been prepared.

The specific actions of the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs are recorded by the Secretary for Planning. These actions are then summarized by the Secretary for transmittal to the general membership of both Conferences for ratification in the November general meetings. The formal transmittal vehicle is the report of the Chairman of the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs to the general membership.

In addition, the decisions of the Committee are transmitted to the appropriate members of the NCCB/USCC staff, with a notation that all such decisions are subject to ratification (and thus to possible modification) by the general membership.

The November review and the dissemination of its results completes the "documentary phase" of the planning process, a phase which began with the early June request of the Secretary for Planning to the various planning units to undertake the development of planning proposals for the following year.

However, the more general process goes on, and the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs has found it necessary,

each year, to hold one or more interim meetings to review program effectiveness, to resolve new questions which have arisen, or to consider related organizational matters.

Thus the total process is by nature a continuum rather than an annually recurring event, with the primary emphasis shifting back and forth between the formal documentary aspect and the less formal but equally important elements of program implementation and performance evaluation.

Content of Individual Planning Proposals

The content of the individual proposals can normally be expected to vary from year to year to meet the varying needs of the general membership or those of executive management. However, the following material from existing procedures can be expected to remain relatively constant, as it has in each year since the initiation of the NCCB/USCC process.

Date

Each separate planning document should carry the date of its finalization in the upper-right-hand corner of the first page.

Heading

The heading of each separate planning document will consist of three lines, as follows:

**(Conference: NCCB or USCC)
(Department, Office, or Secretariat)
Planning Proposal for (Year)**

Sections

Each separate planning document will consist of four major sections, and an optional fifth, as follows:

A. Essential Mission

A concise general statement (normally in one or two paragraphs) of the basic purpose of the organizational component covered by the document.

B. Major Objectives

An elaboration of this purpose in the form of a listing of the more specific objectives which have been established to ensure its accomplishment.

C. Program Summary and Priority Rating

A summary listing of all individual programs in the order of their priority, accompanied by an indication of the particular

objectives each is intended to achieve. This can be done by cross-referencing each program to the numbered objectives.

D. Individual Program Descriptions

Relatively brief summary descriptions of the content of each of the individual programs, including specific criteria to be applied in measuring performance against objectives, and an indication of the relationship to similar Church programs at the regional, state, or diocesan levels.

E. Other Activities

A simple listing of significant additional functions or activities which have not been included in the programs listed above (e.g., service on internal committees, or on the boards of related organizations).

Appendices

Each separate planning document will contain three appendices, and an optional fourth, as follows:

Appendix One: Program Changes

For each new program listed and briefly described in the body of the proposal this appendix should provide a more extended description, a statement of the rationale for undertaking the program, and an analysis of the potential impact on existing programs or staffing.

Appendix Two: Individual Personnel Assignments

This appendix should include a summary of present personnel strength, including the specific program assignments of each individual, and the same information in relation to any proposed changes.

Appendix Three: Three-Year Outlook

This appendix should provide a brief summary of external factors (such as possible changes in the Church, in society in general, or in the constituencies served) which are likely to affect the nature, scope, timing, or general effectiveness of future programming efforts.

Essentially, this section is intended to cover these specific questions: What is the expected nature of changes in the environment in which programs will be carried out? What new service requirements or opportunities are likely to arise from these changes? What are the principal internal strengths and weaknesses in relation to these requirements or opportunities?

In addition, each proposal should include additional information which is seen as having potential value to the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs in its efforts to ensure optimum longer-range use of the limited resources of the two Conferences.

Appendix Four: Other Supplemental Data

This optional appendix is intended to provide visibility for any additional supporting material an activity wishes to submit, which is not specifically requested in the basic package or the preceding appendices. In most instances, because of limitations on the size of the total package, it is unlikely that material in this appendix will be forwarded to the Committee on Research, Plans and Programs prior to the formal review meeting. It will, however, be made available as reference data during the meeting to the extent that this appears necessary.

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