

Let's do this!

At WHF, we celebrate innovation. We expect God to move in fresh and surprising ways. This is not a museum for “old wineskins!” At the same time, we need to think carefully about how we manage our limited resources (like volunteer time and money). While it may be true that we can do *anything*, we almost certainly cannot do *everything*.

This chart is a tool for clarifying expectations around any idea or project.

(1) SCOPE – To whom does this idea “belong?”	(2) TIME – Who has time and energy to shepherd this project to fruition?	(3) MONEY – Can we devote financial resources to bringing this project to fruition?
<p>(1a) Is this project the vision of a single person or small group? Does it make sense for this person or group to carry the responsibility and authority for moving their idea forward?</p> <p>(1b) If this project is the vision of a single person or group, do they need some specific support from meeting as a whole? What do they need? Who will provide it? Will this support be ongoing, or a one-time event? <i>Proceed to the next column.</i></p> <p>(1c) Is this project or idea something that needs to be embraced by the meeting as a whole? Is this something that needs to be our collective responsibility? <i>Proceed to the next column.</i></p>	<p>(2a) Has this opportunity attracted a new group of volunteers who feel passionate about devoting some time and energy to the project? How will this group get organized? With what existing group will they facilitate for accountability and support?</p> <p>(2b) Is there an existing group of volunteers who feel led to devote their time and energy to the project? Does this group need to relinquish some other responsibility in order to make room for the new project?</p> <p>(2c) Does it make sense for a released minister to take responsibility for this project? Can the project proceed slowly (“as time allows”), or does the minister need to relinquish other responsibilities in order to make this project a priority?</p> <p>(2d) Can one person or group bring this project to fruition, or does the whole meeting need to take action? Do we have reason to believe the meeting is willing to do its part at this time?</p> <p>(2e) If no person or group is found to take responsibility for this project, can it “season” for a time? How will we know when it is time to reexamine the idea (or to abandon it)?</p> <p>(2f) If no person or group is found to take responsibility for this project, should we hire someone? <i>Proceed to the next column...</i></p>	<p>(3a) Does the current budget provide us with the necessary funds for bringing this project to fruition? What person or group has authority over that budget line item? Are they on board?</p> <p>(3b) Can we raise funds outside the budget to bring the project to fruition? How would this fundraising effort impact other existing commitments to raise funds? Will we make a general appeal for donations, or will we organize fund-raising events? Who will oversee the fund-raising process? <i>Return to the previous column.</i></p> <p>(3c) Are we willing to take on debt in order to proceed? How much debt is appropriate?</p> <p>(3d) Do we want to accumulate funds over time? This would probably mean the project or idea would be postponed, but the fundraising could begin with an eye to the future. Who will oversee this process? <i>Return to the previous column.</i></p>

Application:

Using this tool, we would (for example) start by asking whether or not the children's program is the responsibility of the whole meeting, or the concern of a smaller group. If the meeting has a responsibility, then what group or person will devote time to that responsibility? Will it cost money? If so, by what mechanism do we provide money to support the children's program?

We would essentially repeat the SAME process for potluck clean-up. Is this a responsibility of the meeting? Who will devote time to that responsibility? Etc.

We would use the same process if someone comes to the meeting with a *new* idea. If someone is eager to start a coffee house ministry or a quilting ministry, we know to ask: "Is this the responsibility of the whole meeting?"

Another Matter:

At some point, I wonder if we need to talk about the concentric layers of involvement at WHF. This subject might be divisive – especially if some of us perceive the conversation is a code word for "hierarchy." At this point, you're probably wondering, "What is he talking about?" Okay...

At the center of our church, there is a **committed core** of people– the folks who regularly attend worship, support the meeting financially, volunteer their time on a regular basis, etc. The same could be said of any church, by the way.

There is another group of people who aren't quite as invested as the first group, but they are in **regular low orbit** around the core. They are familiar faces. They do stuff from time to time.

In **outer orbit** are the people on the periphery of our community. They attend infrequently (remember the visitor a few weeks ago who said she hadn't been to meeting for a year, then offered a list of prayer requests?!). Perhaps these people attend relatively often, but then depart immediately after meeting and never really connect with others.

Finally, there are **first time visitors**.

Recognizing the different layers of involvement is an important step toward understanding how much "volunteer energy" we really have at our disposal. If we need volunteers, it is far more likely that someone from the **committed core** will step forward than a first time visitor or someone on the periphery of the community. This raises two questions for me: "How do we help people move from an 'outer' layer toward the core?" And: "How do we identify core people?"

How do we help people move from an 'outer layer' to the core? Hopefully it goes without saying that we would never want to "push" someone toward the core. Nor would we want to disrespect those who feel comfortable toward the periphery. But we should probably have clearly marked "access points" for those who **want** to move toward the core. What sort of path can we offer to visitors or those on periphery? If we succeed, what structure is needed to support a growing core?

How do we identify core people? Again, hopefully it goes without saying that we aren't trying to distinguish good guys from bad guys. But – especially after hearing that some people have been *burdened* by appeals for help (in the nursery, with retreat) – how do we narrow down who gets asked for help? Does it make sense to ask people to make an annual commitment to being a shareholder? That would be one way of making sure we are asking the right people for help. It would also mean we have a clearer picture of who we can expect to devote time and energy to the stuff that supports the health of the meeting (which, in turn, means we have a better idea of whether or not we can add or expand programs). If we do have them, what would be our expectations of a shareholder?

I hope we can have this discussion some time.

Peace, Mike