

## DM9742 – CONGREGATIONAL ANALYSIS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

**Analysis for Improving Performance***Richard A. Swanson*

Swanson argues, “Because the analysis phase defines, frames, and directs the remaining steps, it is considered the most critical.”<sup>1</sup> He also believes it is the “most poorly executed.”<sup>2</sup> He notes many performance improvement efforts are simply “driven by “feel-good” or “compliance” concerns rather than a concern about improving performance.”<sup>3</sup> He notes that these approaches tend to involve “superficial opinion surveys, resulting in choosing interventions based on popularity ratings”<sup>4</sup> instead of a more thorough analysis. In his book Swanson submits a three-fold analysis geared to actually improve performance: a substantive performance diagnosis, process specification, and expertise documentation.<sup>5</sup>

God the Holy Spirit works in a similar way in and for His Church. At Pentecost, Jesus delivered on His promise to send the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26). And the Spirit of fire and truth entered the church to purify, purge, and protect this holy organization. The Holy Spirit has the task of calling to light not only the problems; that is sin, but also the solution, that is God’s grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. John records, “When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup>about sin, because people do not believe in me” (John 16:8-9). And Jesus declares, “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me” (John 15:26).

**I. Performance Diagnosis**

Martin’s

, if lacking, creates disorder rather than peace.

**II. Process Specification**

Based on **Theological Reflections**

For Martin, an outstanding organization is able to prioritize problems, “identifying the most important problems and dealing with the root cause.”<sup>6</sup> In a similar way, God the Holy Spirit prioritizes the problems facing the church in both the physical and spiritual realms. Clearly,

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<sup>1</sup> Swanson, Richard, *Analysis for Improving Performance*, (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., San Francisco, 2007), 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

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Martin proposes solutions to problems facing organizations whose sole focus is in the physical realm. But, the Church lives in the physical realm, too, and uses the physical resources God provides in order to best promote the gospel to seek and save the lost. Ultimately, Martin notes the key to problem solving is not the methodology but the people. She states, “The discipline and engagement of people matters more than any element of a methodology.”<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, God also begins and ends in relationship to the people who make up His Church, dealing with each of us individually through our reconciliation with Him in Christ.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 25.