

A Reflection on Decision-making from the Inspiration of Zigarelli's Decision-tree

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Introduction

For the past ten years, I served in Christian organizations. One question I always ponder: Is there any biblical principle or perspective that guides Christians to make decisions in serving para-church organizations (hereafter called PC-O)? This question not only arouses my interest, but I have made it as my thesis paper. It is part of another milestone for my future exploration. Is there any on-going study or research about a theology of management or anything such as Christian Management for PC-O?

In recent years, there have been quite a number of Christian scholars and business experts who have written books and articles discussing definitions, applications, historical and cultural changes related to marketplace theology, Christian characteristics in the workplace, or church administration and leadership. But there are few books and articles related to my question above. I hope there will be more in-depth discussion (not case studies) on elements, significances and principles from a theological perspective and Christian perspective in the future. Meanwhile, I shall try to do some reflection to start up my journey.

“Decision-making” gives an impression that it is related to the subject of management. However, decision-making is not monopolized by a manager or leader for their organization. All people have opportunity and freedom and the right to make decisions. How do Christians (including managers, leaders, co-workers, theologians, etc) do their decision-making for their PC-O? Sometimes decision-making is personal, while sometimes it is determined by an organizational body, or a group. What are the key considerations and perspectives in the decision-making process for a PC-O?

When I read Professor Michael Zigarelli's article, I was inspired. The decision-tree in his article gives insight. I hope my reflection and inspiration will stimulate more PC-O co-workers and theologians to contribute their thoughts and research.

Michael Zigarelli wrote the introduction to ‘the Christian Leader's Guide to Making Decisions’, “Christian leaders should make decisions the same way that any Christian should make them...: seek God's Will and then do it. God is sovereign. God reveals His will to us. And it's our role to follow Him in humility... sometimes, though our spirit is willing, our ears are weak... though our spirit is willing, our hearts are hard... there are other obstacles to godly decision-making as well, but as an antidote for these primary ones – our ear and heart conditions – we Christians in leadership positions can use a time-honored tool called a “decision tree”.¹ His word really encourages to me to share my ideas.

In part I, I would like to introduce the scope of decision-making and Zigarelli's decision-tree. Then, I will consolidate the key considerations and perspectives into reflections and inspirations after reading Zigarelli's decision tree in part II. In part III, I shall try to explore a Christian perspective from my reflections and inspirations in the decision-making process.

Part I: Decision-making and Decision-tree

Decision-making

‘Decision’ is an act, a process of deciding, a resolution, a judgment...² It is the process and action taken to solve, conclude, determine, and settle something or someone's mind after consideration, investigation

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¹ Michael Zigarelli, “The Christian Leader's Guide to Making Decisions” (Feb 24, 2005), www.christianitytoday.com/workplace/articles/issue11-makingdecisions.html

² Robert B. Costello, Ed., *Random House Webster's College Dictionary* (Random House, 1991), p.351.

or observation. As the decision has to be made final, the determination is to a time of cut off. Decision-making is to settle and make up one's mind.³

Peter F. Drucker, the leading American management 'guru' for several decades,⁴ defines decision theory as: "a body of analytical tools including logic, mathematical models (especially models that use probability theory) and diagrams to be used in decision making."⁵ He also comments: "a decision is a judgment... a choice between alternatives. It is rarely a choice between right and wrong. It is at best a choice between "almost right" and "probably wrong" – but... more often a choice between two courses of action neither of which is probably more nearly right than the other."⁶

'Decision' looks very scientific and rational from Drucker's theory. Some people who have managerial characteristics and mind, like the CEO, administrators, managers and leaders, may agree with this. If so, the understanding about 'Management by Objectives'⁷ (hereafter as MBO), Drucker's theory, is one of the considerations. When Drucker speaks about MBO,⁸ he leads us to see one part of a wider picture - a simple and logical viewpoint of how managers can know what they should be doing and with what kind of expectation,⁹ so that the decision-making has a focus.

Decision is the tool to achieve objectives in business, but I think Drucker does not mean to limit his ideas to business issues only.¹⁰ If a decision maker has an objective in mind, MBO is a choice to use in making decisions. Behind the theory, we should be alert to three considerations and three kinds of balance.¹¹ In the process of balancing and setting objectives, thousands of decisions are settled.

Some other management giants and Christian leaders contributed their ideas, too. Henri Fayol identifies the five basic facets of management: planning, organizing, coordinating, commanding and controlling. Herbert A. Simon adds decision-making¹² into the facets of management.

Ted Engstrom knows that some administrators interpret decision-making as a choice between different sets of values, which should take priority over the others, so as to come up with the best possible decision at that given time in that given situation.¹³ He gives a five-step¹⁴ approach, which is being applied in settling minor decision as well as making the largest ones. He recommends that decision-makers have day to day practice, so as to develop the faculty of making logical and objective

¹⁵ Ibid, p.820.

⁴ Patrick J. Boylan. "Lecture Notes and Background Papers: Introduction to the theoretical and philosophical basis of modern management" (May 1, 2004), <http://www.city.ac.uk/artspol/theorymgmt.html>

⁵ Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (Harper's College Press, 1977), p.561.

⁶ Peter F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker* (Harper Collin, 2001), p.251.

⁷ In his book *The Practice of Management*, Drucker did not merely write, Management by Objectives; he said "Management by Objectives and Self Control." Drucker used the latter term, because he asserted "It makes it possible for a manager to control his own performance. Self-control means stronger motivation; a desire to do the best rather than just enough to get by." "Positive Approach - Part -2 - Management By Objectives (MBO), The Team Approach to Participatory Management" (Mar 29, 2005), <http://www.geocities.com/kstability/projects/inquiry/positive2.html>

⁸ MBO can be defined as the system and philosophy that integrates all managing techniques and all human contributions into a unified organization to achieve a common purpose and individual fulfillment. Ibid.

⁹ "Business performance ... requires that each job be directed towards the objectives of the whole business. And in particular each manager's job must be focused on the success of the whole. The performance that is expected of each manager must be derived from the performance goals of the business; his results must be measured by the contribution they make to the success of the enterprise." David West, "The Essential Drucker (Review)" (Mar 29, 2005), <http://www.theworkingmanager.com/bookreview/detail.asp?BookReviewNo=24>

¹⁰ Drucker has commented, "Decision-making is not a mechanical job. It is risk-taking and a challenge to judgment. The 'right answer' (which usually cannot be found anyway) is not central. Central is understanding of the problem. Decision-making is not an intellectual exercise. It mobilizes the vision, energies and resources of the organization for effective action." Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*, p.389.

¹¹ Ibid, pp.95-115.

¹² 吳蘭玉編：《管之以理：基督徒行政管理》（協傳培訓中心，2002），頁3。

¹³ Ted W. Engstrom, *Your Gift of Administration: How to discover and use it* (OMF Literature, 1983), p.73.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.74.

decisions, to speed up the time and effort in doing it. Skill and wisdom in decision-making will be earned. The steps are:

1. Identify the problem;
2. Put it down in the clearest language possible;
3. Examine it painstakingly; get all the facts you can;
4. List the possible choices open to you and what each choice will lead to; and
5. Then make your decision on the basis of the facts scrutinized by the values you believe in.

The similarity between Engstrom's and Drucker's ideas is that decision-making closely relates to the problem at hand. The important distinction is in the process of formulating and implementing a plan of action to eliminate a difficulty or a problem. Simply making a decision does not necessarily solve the problem, and the problem-solving process usually involves making decisions.¹⁵

Another similarity is that the decision-maker has to consider alternatives when making a decision. However, in reality this is not always possible. Decision-making is rarely based on complete information and perfect foresight because of many factors, such as lack of time and resources, creativity, etc.¹⁶ Other considerations are personal prejudice(s), the influences of personal background, favoritism, dislikes, character, motives, priorities, belief and mission, tradition, resources, responsibility and values, etc. Decisions may relate to moral factors, either consciously or subconsciously, too.

In sum, decision-making is a process. It can be trained by the thinking faculty through methods, steps and focus. Progress usually finds problems and alternatives, but we cannot neglect the personal skill and perspective of the decision-maker.

Zigarelli's Decision-Tree

Since decision-making is not a strict mechanical job, there is variance in each decision-making event because of different perspectives and mentality. In Charlie Chaplin's film, he revealed that people are easily attracted to visible characteristics, steps and mechanical skills, and make them into habits. However, one disadvantage is that thoughtfulness and value will fade out and be forgotten consciously when habits are built up, though they are important and sustain the process and skills behind the scene. The process of decision-making is not only steps and skills; the heart and mind of the decision-maker is important. For instance, how can we continue obeying Jesus' teachings without going astray, without becoming routine and legalistic in decision-making if we make His teachings into steps and skills?

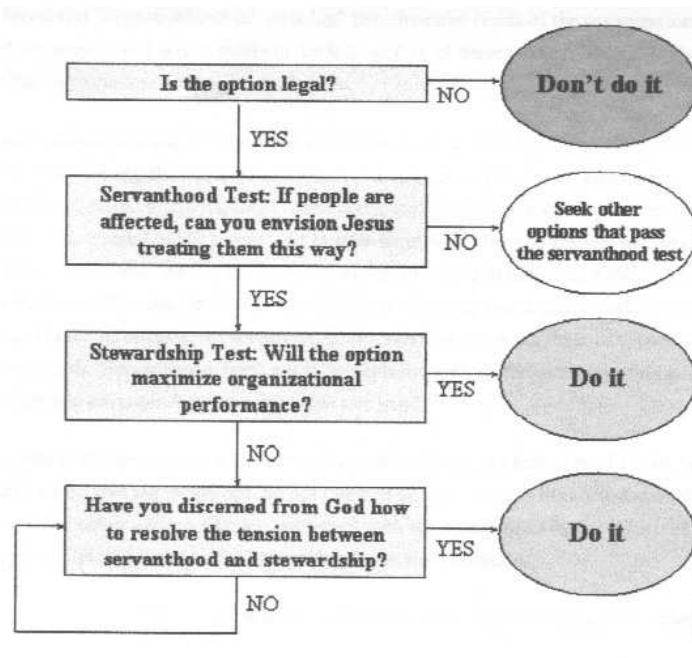
Zigarelli thought that the two major complications are caused by the "self-talk shaped by years of secular management training, bad habits and assimilation to the corporate culture". Although the spirit of godly people is willing to do God's Will, the critical analysis part of the decision-making process is missing – a misstep which largely is independent of God's counsel. It is because 'overconfidence begets oversight', often causing people to elect not to pursue, but through pride to ignore divine direction.¹⁷ Zigarelli feels the struggles between the Christian world and the business world (the two realms).

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¹⁵ Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (SP Publication, 1983), p.108.

¹⁶ Donald C. Mosley, Paul H Pietri, Leon C. Megginson, *Management: Leadership in Action, 5th edition*. (Harper Collins College Publisher, 1996), p.185.

¹⁷ Michael Zigarelli (Feb 24, 2005).

Table 1 - Decision-Tree¹⁸

Zigarelli introduces a time-honored tool - decision-tree (Table 1). The decision-tree is a graphic tool for evaluating available alternatives. When a situation requires a decision, the tool functions as follows: look at known available alternatives (*questions in Table 1*) step by step, then evaluate the possible outcomes (*no or yes in Table 1*), and select the alternatives that promise the most favorable outcome (*answer in circle in Table 1*).¹⁹

Zigarelli designed these questions on purpose for this presentation to let the readers focus on non-negotiable scriptural principles. Professor Zigarelli recommended that the readers devise their own set of questions and continue to combat overconfidence and self-reliance in decision-making.²⁰ His idea is to use questions as road indicators, so the reader can follow the hints when making a decision.

Part II: Consolidating Ideas through Reflection and Inspiration

Reflection

From Zigarelli's last question, the terms and tensions of servanthood and stewardship are put in the spotlight, which really inspired me. Firstly, it is true that servanthood and stewardship have tensions nowadays. Secondly, I do not think the tension between servanthood and stewardship is stronger than the tension between the application of business management mentality and biblical approach mentality to a PC-O in decision-making. Thirdly, I would like to rephrase the two terms in my presentation. Servanthood and stewardship are personal characteristics in serving, related to the Christian Spirituality of the decision-maker. And "discernment" and "the Will of God" are the elements related to these personal characteristics. Servanthood and stewardship can also be comprehended in a group sense – in an organizational context pointing toward the mentality and concept of Christian management. My reflection and inspiration in this writing are limited to the above two terms and stay within the scope of para-church organizations.

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¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Donald C. Mosley, Paul H Pietri, Leon C. Megginson, (1996), p.183.

²⁰ Michael Zigarelli (Feb 24, 2005).

1. The Decision-Making Process

Zigarelli's decision-tree has some practical issues that also caught my attention. The issues relate to two major complications: though our spirit is willing, our ears are weak; though our spirit is willing, our hearts are hard; so, how does one balance servanthood and stewardship (care for individual stakeholder needs and an unbalanced, steward-dominated approach); how to choose a better option, etc.

Charles Stanley's thinking is a good catalyst to broaden Zigarelli's decision-tree and helps us to understand the issues better. Stanley does not draw a decision tree but he has seven practical ways (A-G) which are similar to the considerations of Zigarelli regarding the decision-making process. These ways are not steps, so I think Table 2 is a better graphical presentation to show the relationship between the ways. From the consideration of these ways, people's responsibility and faculty can be trained.

I would like to add 'H' to the circle. H is **Flexibility**. This is a good way to learn let go and be humble, trust that God is in control because He is the Creator, the Almighty and the Master. It is a great help in balancing the tension between servanthood and stewardship.

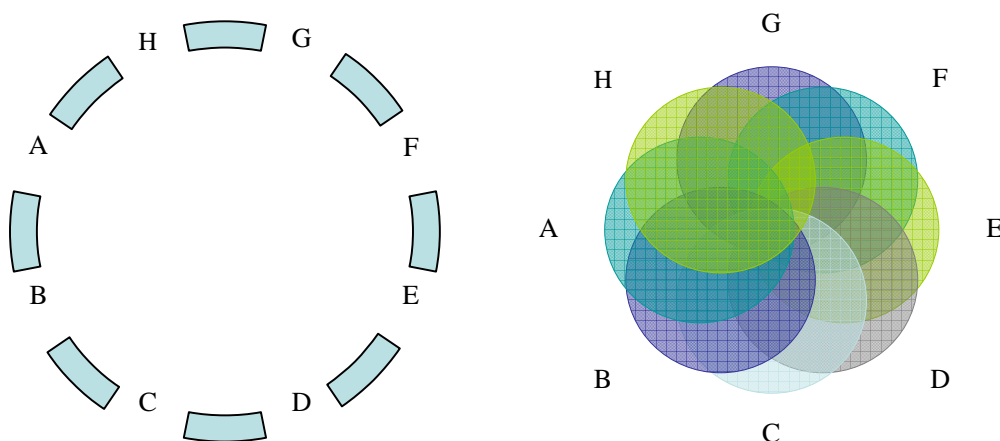


Table 2 – A practical circle to show the relationship

	Stanley's seven ways ²¹	Zigarelli's article ²²
A	Get all the facts because facts are tangible means, this starts the decision-making process.	
B	Facts alone are not enough, use discernment to sift through the data , which may be numbers, statistics, analyses, questions, investigations and reports in visible form, while discernment looks beneath the surface and the visible forms.	"Marinate every step of our decision-making in... discernment."
C	Search through the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. For example in Acts 17:11, the Thessalonians keep on reading Paul's teaching.	"recognize and reject any faithful misinterpretations of scripture we may have been formerly embraced"
D	Seek counsel , even from friends and	"consistent with a Christian worldview", "to

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²¹ Charles Stanley, "The Workplace, Priority Profiles for Today's Workplace, 1989" (Feb 24, 2005), www.intouch.org/myintouch/explorinng/bible_sats/work_place/decision_making_161923.htm

²² Michael Zigarelli (Feb 24, 2005).

	professionals. This seeking does not abdicate our own responsibility; it still waits for our personal judgment. The personal judgment itself is a decision or choice with discernment (Prov 11:12-15).	reflect more deeply, to gather more advice”
E	Seek the counsel of God – His Will matches with His attributes – we were created to glorify Him in every area of life, through deliberate prayer and conformity. Like the teaching in Isa 11:3b-5, it is always good to have His principles in mind.	“humble, patient, and rational discernment of God’s sovereign will, letting Him lead our leadership”
F	Put it into prayer , it brings the matter before God’s throne, an action of participation in the decision-making process. No prayer means ignoring His Control and denying His share of our life.	“marinate every step of our decision-making in prayer”
G	Have faith and courage to make a decision and take action , prepare for willingness to accept changes and risks in carrying out the decision, like Paul’s mission journey.	“If the answer is ‘yes’, move forward in faith. If ‘no’, don’t move”

2. Human factors

In a PC-O, there are full-time staff and part-time (most of the time voluntary) board members. The influential decisions are usually made by the board members and executed by the staff. The board members’ decisions may be the result of a thoughtful process even if they do not include the operational staff. The tensions and imbalances of servanthood and stewardship are crossed-over, involving two parties of a PC-O. There are authority, expectational and operational tensions among them.

A clear structure is helpful to identify the authority and boundaries. To unify the two parties into one body is not easy, but it is worth trying, since both parties are called by God to serve together, and both bear the same yoke. They both carry the servanthood and stewardship.

Even when the above problems are eliminated, there is always hesitation, in case the wrong decision is made, because the gifts the various leaders have. On the other hand, people often have too little faith to trust the power and attributes of God, such as: do we accept that God is able to use our errors in a positive way? Does God fulfill His plan, like in the story of Samson in the book of Judges, in our days? Do we submit to the controlling power of God – surrendering, but still being responsive as in 1 Sam 23:1-13?²³ All these are challenges and struggles for Christians. I think these should be admitted honestly.

3. The Two Realms

Actually, behind the decision-making process, challenges and struggles, the two realms are a reality. It is because the two realms have different ultimate concerns – for the business field it is to complete the task / objective, while the Christian field will consider it to be doing the Will of God. As far as we know, if the ultimate concern is not the same, does it affect the process of decision-making? Is it suitable to import methodology from the business field into the Christian field without also importing their business mentality? Do seminary trained co-workers and business-trained co-workers know how to identify with each other and integrate together?

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²³ Charles Stanley (Feb 24, 2005).

The Christian world is different from the values of the business world²⁴ in terms of vision, mission, objectives and goals. For example, the five facets of management and the other characteristics of decision-making are seldom taught in seminary, although these five facets are commonly applied in the business world. The business world concentrates on success and failure, prosperity or austerity²⁵ in making firm and wise decisions. Other items are also involved, like the value and the use of money, positioning the strategic plans, dismissing staff, etc. Since these facets are not taught in seminary, what kind of management do seminarians learn and later apply in ministry or in a PC-O situation if they do not have any administration gifts?

The necessity of identifying biblical principles in decision-making is a must. Charles Stanley said that “although all decisions must be made in the light of God’s sovereignty and control of the future, the Scriptures do provide us with some solid biblical principles upon which we can make sound determinations.”²⁶

The Scripture principle is not a substitute for the Holy Spirit. It works only because the Holy Spirit guides us to see through Scripture. We rely on the truth when we read the Scriptures in earnest prayer. Without the Spirit’s action, the Bible’s pages would lay still, moving your life no more than a dictionary or encyclopedia.²⁷ With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the renewal of the co-workers brings fine tuning of ways and skills with deeper thoughtfulness and conceptual abilities. It is a good method to re-practice servanthood and stewardship at PC-O by reviewing the old ways of decision-making and fixing our eyes on Jesus, who, like God, sees things differently (2 Sam 16:7; Matt 6:33).

4. Discernment

Discernment is a solution to the two complications and the tensions of servanthood and stewardship. Debra K Farrington wrote in the book, ‘Hearing with the Heart’ that “Discerning and acting on God’s Will does not mean you’ll never have difficult days or feel lousy sometimes. But choosing to live an alignment with God makes you more joyful, compassionate, and peaceful, even on bad days.”²⁸

“Discernment will never work if it ignores its data. The Christian’s data is divine revelation”²⁹ Then, how could the believers know whether or not the revelation was true? Would there be any false spirit or human spirit? In 1 Cor 12:10, God has given the gift of “distinguishing of spirits.”³⁰ This spirit should be able to face verification, testing, questioning, supporting each other in the venture, so that people know the divine plan and make the decision to follow His plan.³¹

Discernment is a spiritual gift, which is given in more than one way to different individuals but it belongs to the gifted person through God . He gives them ‘spiritual eyes’ to see things from above. It is a gift of Christian Spirituality as His followers to help in their growth and in knowing His heart. The gifted person is always expecting the Holy Spirit, requires checking, rechecking and cross-checking, holds others accountable, allow others to act and does not fight against them, learns to surrender, and lives with the ‘sense of peace’.³²

Discernment goes with discipline: discernment requires knowledge and judgment, discipline helps one’s will power and moral courage – the intention to please God rather than please man, the willingness to do the right thing even when it is inconvenient, scary, difficult or costly, to notice the risk & crisis, and

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²⁴ Business world is used in a general sense. It is not necessary to have the commercial function. It implies the business type of leadership, management, corporate culture, etc.

²⁵ Charles Stanley (Feb 24, 2005).

²⁶ “What is Spiritual Discernment” (Feb 24, 2005), www.spirithome.com/discern2.html#tradition

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ “Quotes” (Feb 24, 2005), www.spirithome.com/discern2.htm#tradition

²⁹ Peter Kreeft, *Making Choices: practical wisdom for everyday moral decisions* (Servant Books, 1990), p.195.

³⁰ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1989), p.276.

³¹ Luke T. Johnson, *Decisions Making in the Church: a biblical model*, (Fortress Press, 1983), 107.

³² “What is Spiritual Discernment” (Feb 24, 2005).

be ready to take responsibility³³ in making decisions at PC-O. As to the practice of discernment at a PC-O office, it guides both the staff and member boards into better servanthood and stewardship.³⁴

Discernment or the gift of the discerning spirit is not the only focus, but also the Will of God, because the discernment has to point at God and His Will. Otherwise, we are doing selfish things for our own purpose in making decisions.

5. The Will of God

Zigarelli says 'seek God's Will and then do it' when making a decision,³⁵ referring to "the sovereign counsel of God in which He acts",³⁶ At conversion, the believer becomes a new creation that enables him to love God with all his heart, mind and will.³⁷ Paul has emphasized, 'believe in your heart,' which denotes the will.³⁸ Aquinas said "we accept the teaching with our mind only after we accept the teacher with our will. We believe Christ's teachings only because we first of all believe him."³⁹

Our faith towards our Almighty God builds the mentality: "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight" (Prov 3:5-6). It is because *God* will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; *God* will counsel you with *His* eye upon you" (Ps 32:8).⁴⁰

The process of knowing the Will of God is, first, not to lean on human understanding, then speak out all things in prayer for wisdom from above. This means using our human (earthly) wisdom less. One of the biblical examples is in Acts 10-11. We do not find Peter's prayer to include "WWJD - what would Jesus do / what would God want me to do". Peter acted out what Jesus had taught him before. Peter demonstrated "what you do to the littlest one, you do to me" in his decision-making. He listened to the still, small voice, tested the spirit (1 John 4:1), followed the dreams and guidance (Matt 2:12-13), and the desire of his heart (Jas 4:8).⁴¹ He humbly and honestly faced unknown factors & uncertain information, with which he did not have experience, and went against the norm in his Jewish society. He kept himself doing God's Will. His obedience to God's Will shows a lifting up of the Will of God, which is a form of respect for God and shows his Christian spirituality. Keeping the Will of God sustains Peter's servanthood and stewardship. Some tension did exist but it is not a big deal.

6. Application

Christians should conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:27). How do we practice the 'discerning gift', build up good relationships with the gift providers, set our life values and discipline ourselves on this gift, and with a longing heart, so as to develop our mind and to carry out His Will? Discernment is to help us to know the Will of God; the Will of God guides us to have good discernment.

³³ Josephine Institute of Ethics, "Groundwork for making effective decision" (Feb 24, 2005), www.josephinoinstitute.org/MED/MED-3groundwork.htm

³⁴ The three factors are: 1. To discern by objective law alone is legalism; God's objective moral law, revealed in Scripture (and, for Catholics, the church's authoritative interpretation of it); 2. To discern by situations alone is to drift into relativism; the situation God providentially arranges for you; and 3. To discern by private conscience alone is to drift into subjectivism; the testimony of your own conscience, especially the inner peace that is a mark of the Spirit's presence. Peter Kreeft, *Making Choices: practical wisdom for everyday moral decisions* (Servant Books, 1990), p.203.

³⁵ Michael Zigarelli (Feb 24, 2005).

³⁶ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1989), p.106.

³⁷ Ibid, p.307.

³⁸ Ibid, p.332.

³⁹ Lawrence and Diana Osborn, *Decisions, Decisions, Decisions: finding the will of God in a complex world* (IVP, 1996), p.193.

⁴⁰ Gary Friesen and J. Robin Mayson, *Decision Making and the Will of God: A biblical alternative to the traditional view* (Multnomah Press, 1980), pp.97-100.

⁴¹ Lawrence and Diana Osborn (1996), pp.73-84.

Rush has a precise checklist, which has a scriptural focus. This can be developed like Zigarelli's decision-tree as a tool:

1. Am I committed to doing God's Will in this situation (Rom 12:1-2)?
2. Are the desires of my heart to pursue this particular course (Ps 37:4)?
3. Does God provide the power and resources to accomplish the desire (Phil 2:13)?
4. Does God give me peace to continue working on the project and to make the necessary decisions to achieve it (Isa 26:3)?

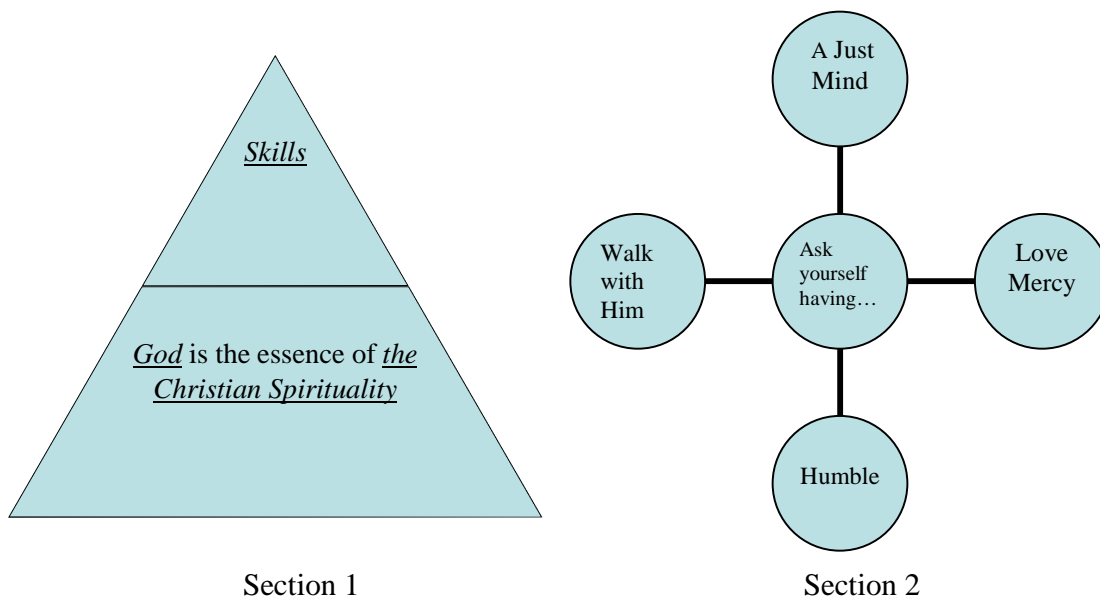
With the improved questions, the decision-making process is similar to Engstrom's:

1. Correctly diagnose the issue or problem.
2. Gather and analyze the facts from the Bible: what does the Bible say on this matter, what does God tell me when I pray, am I committed to doing the Will of God, what are my interests and desires in this situation, what counsel do I get from people in this situation, what do conditions and circumstances indicate in this situation?
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Evaluate alternatives pro and con.
5. Select from among the positive alternatives.⁴²

Reference should be made to all these steps in the decision-making process in a PC-O. Some key considerations are stated. However, I think the perspective and personal and organizational Christian Spirituality should be strengthened, but not by these steps. It is because discernment and the Will of God will not be sustained by our experiences nor by our might, but by His Spirit.

Inspiration

From the study of Zigarelli's decision tree, I have come up with two charts, which may help to understand the process of decision-making and the base of my six reflection points. I hope the two charts can assist the building of a Christian perspective, and strengthen the mental faculty and intellectual ability related to our Christian faith.



The decision-making process (refer to Section 1) is divided into two parts like an iceberg. Usually, people see the top "skills" (which I have mentioned under 'reflection', other skills will not be deliberated

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⁴² Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (SP Publications, 1983), pp.102-106.

here). The hidden parts, “God,” cannot be recognized or visualized. God is the core, the foundation of Christian Perspective and the essence of Christian Spirituality. Christian spirituality is to maintain servanthood and stewardship, as Zigarelli mentioned.

Micah 6:8, the idea of creation, and some other Bible verses come to my mind when I meditate on God and He as a decision-maker in the decision-making process. God is the Creator and He has orderly sequences and decisions as stated in Genesis 1-2. In His creation, we see His orderliness and fruitful provision to all nations. Each creation decision shows His wisdom and love for what He created.

The *fear of the Lord* is not only the beginning of understanding and Wisdom, but also the lessening of our dependence on our own earthly wisdom, value and worries (Prov 9:10; Matt 11:28). For example, King David respected God and His anointed one when he faced King Saul's assassination. David has a clear mind to *know and think God's Will*. It is not an intellectual exercise, it's a mentality. It helps us to maintain the vision and mission the Lord has given.

God is the foundation and original source of any Christian perspective and Christian Spirituality. He has instructed His people to follow His decree and *agree with His heart* (Matt 6:33) including His divine law, the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment and the Love Commandment. We should keep up our mind to *seek for His Kingdom, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and will all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second (commandment) is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* (Mark 12:2-31). It is a trust in His provision and faith and love for His plan.

God invites us to have a close relationship with Him, and dwell in His love (Eph 3:17-21). Love, hope and faith towards God show our Christian character along with the developed essence of Christian spirituality.

Section 2 is based upon Micah 6:8. When we have the essence, I think Micah 6:8 is able to mold the mentality/perspective. It leads the change of value and develops the faculty of thinking, and puts together servanthood and stewardship. With an inward foundation that is strengthened, discernment and the Will of God will want to be considered in taking decision-making seriously, but it is not good to be too legalistic. After self-examination, the 'skills' are used to develop a decision. Of course, it may take days, weeks or months. During this period of time, more information and details may increase or become clearer. The guidance from the Holy Spirit will lead, and find the possible right time to make the decision. Let us look at Micah 6:8.

1. ***To act justly/have a righteousness mind*** is more than only judgment according to government or law. It is the character of a person - accountability, honor, less bias or favoritism towards people and behavior in decision-making.
2. ***To love mercy*** is a balance for righteousness. Love is the greatest among hope and faith in Paul's writing. Jesus has demonstrated His love on the cross and showed mercy towards the needy, the poor, the sinners and all nations. This love is His teaching in Isaiah 11:3b-5, Mark 12:29-31 and Luke 6:27-36 concerning executing decisions.
3. ***To walk humbly*** is a balance for to act justly and love mercy. It is easy to become arrogant based on our actions of self-righteousness, so we need to be merciful and humble. We have to remember that pride loves to take away and own the honor of God. Most of the time humbleness helps to solve culture and conflict problems.
4. ***To Walk with your God*** has to do with reading the Bible and praying daily. It is the time to maintain ourselves in calm and to cast all the burdens to our Heavenly Father, the provider and the redeemer. People easily become anxious, depressed and angry in their work. This period of time always refreshes our mind – we are mortal and sinners. It is important for the building of Christian Spirituality.

Part III: Christian Perspective

What are the positions of servanthood and stewardship in a PC-O and how does it work and how is it applied in daily operation? How does the Christian perspective face the business stream and how does it

maintain a better stewardship? Among Christians, there are advantages like in seeking the counsel of each other, praying together, reading the Scriptures together and sharing inspirations (Matt 18:20). These are methods to keep up the Christian Spirituality of an individual and the organizational body of a PC-O. However, discernment and human determination are two realms which are foundational issues to be discussed.

Individual - Discernment and Human Determination

In any decision-making process, we ought to have the preparation for the recognition of the difficulties as mentioned in Zigarelli's article and the tree (tension). Some of the difficulties are tactical and some are conceptual.⁴³ One of the difficulties is between discernment and human determination, both facing the tactical and conceptual factors.

The conceptual difficulties have to do with the understanding and interpretation of the doctrine of belief in, and the religious experience of God. Since these are considered personal understandings, the Holy Spirit is the one Who can give verification.

Even though a believer has followed the suggested phases step by step, the Lord may not respond through our thoughts. Based on his experience, the prophet Isaiah said, "for [*the Lord declares*] my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa 55:8-9). There is no way to set boundaries on the gift of a discerning spirit, His guidance, His way, his timing, etc. The Lord gives Isaiah the instruction to "maintain justice and do what is right...blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast...and keeps his hand from doing any evil." (Isa. 56:1-2)

I think the most important thing is the "center" of our mind. Who is the centre of the ultimate concern of the PC-O co-workers? Do we accept that God is able to use our error in a positive way? Do we surrender to the controlling power to God's hands, though still being responsive? How much do we believe: if when we follow the process and the planning, commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed (Prov 16:3)? Or a man plans his course but the Lord determines his steps (Prov 16:9)? How do we understand our decision-making as His decision and being under His control?

Prayer is the only way. God knows our needs and limitations, and loves to give instruction (Deut 30). Our responsibility is to be honest and patiently to obey, listen and discern. Honesty is one of the key elements to help us examine ourselves – maintain justice, do what is right, keep away from doing evil, etc. Trusting each other is based upon honesty, too.

Whenever the focus switches from God to 'Self', difficulties or problems come, because of the tension between human determination and waiting for discernment, and committing error and losing face. The switching may happen because we have the "freedom of choice", but our freedom may not follow God's instruction. A typical example is the fall of man in Genesis 3.

Personal emotions are influential elements affecting human determination. However, emotions can be seen as positive or negative. Emotions can be an indication of dangerous defense mechanisms. When we understand more about emotions in general and our own emotions in particular, it helps us to face our weaknesses, and prepares us to repent from 'Self' to God.

Other than emotions, knowing personalities makes the tensions of knowing discernment and human determination easier to be resolved. Personalities are usually divided into extroverted-introverted, sensing-intuitive, thinking-feeling and judging-perceiving.⁴⁴ We can target the obstacles that keep us from surrendering to God, so personalities play an important role in shaping our whole approach to decision-making. The influence includes affecting the choice of alternatives and collecting data, etc.

Some others elements affecting the 'Self' include traditions, cultural backgrounds, preferences, character, comfort zones, etc. Self-confidence binds the comfort zone, so that sometimes flexibility is

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⁴³ Luke T. Johnson, *Decisions Making in the Church: a biblical model* (Fortress Press, 1983), p.101.

⁴⁴ Lawrence and Diana Osborn (1996), pp. 63-65.

missing in decision-making. It also shows the struggle between self-confidence and trusting God, so as to let God decide the process and outcome. When the mind is full of worries and the above elements, peace is lacking and discernment cannot work itself out. Decisions then will be most often made by 'Self' experience – human determination.

Burkett reminds us of the influences of human-determination in making decision,⁴⁵ so he gives some suggestions:

1. When in doubt, say no
2. Keep a "year at a glance" calendar
3. Prioritize the Day
4. Don't make booking too far ahead (not more than 24 months)
5. Use a written form if a decision is made. It helps to keep your word.

Accountability is helpful to reduce the human determination over the gift of discernment. Accountability requires us to be pure in heart. Accountability is not only about taking care of others, but also about making sure one's own life is right before he tries to take care of others. We need the element of accountability in church life and in serving PC-O also with reference to the decision-making process, including: exhort (Heb 10:24-25), pray (James 5:16), love (Gal 5:13; Eph 4:2; 1 Pet 1:22), teach (Col 3:16), edify (Rom 14:19; 1 Thess 5:11) and admonish (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16) one another.⁴⁶

Paul is a good example. He handled changes of decision, in which he demonstrated an example of discernment and human determination. He experienced seeking God's will and ended up changing his plan. In the book of Romans, Paul planned to go to Spain and hoped to visit Rome. However, he changed and went to Jerusalem in the service of the saints. Paul was not making a decision without any reason. He provided the information from verse 15 to 28 of chapter 15. He was thinking of the good of the receiver but in the fruitful blessing in the family of God (v.29). His determination is not a human one but he is full of the heart for God in his mind and in his soul (v.30-33).

Organizational Body – the Integration of the Will of God and Objectives

When we look at the Christian Spirituality of an Organizational body in decision-making, the integration of the Will of God and objectives has to be considered. Does the Will of God equal the objectives in the business world? My answer is that they are not equal. Because God's thought and mind is higher than ours, we will never be able to manage or fully comprehend the Will of God. Objectives are most likely the vision and mission of a PC-O acquired from the Will of God at the time of its establishment. When the organization is formed, the reason for its existence, the organizational structure and daily operation have to develop from the vision and mission of the PC-O. One of the elements in maintaining the vision and mission can be seen in the process of decision-making on the part of the management. This means the integration will be affected by the ways of management.

Among a group of Christians, the difficulties are multiplied by the number of individuals (Selves) involved. If the PC-O structure is established and improved, it will help the governing and reduce the influences of personal emotions and personalities. However, the dependence on the structure will make the organization less flexible.

In the "Twenty Key Biblical Principles for Christian Management" it is stated that the manager's job is to make sure workers have the tools and information they need, and to help them when they find themselves in trouble.⁴⁷

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⁴⁵ Larry Burkett, *Business by the Book: The complete guide of biblical principles for the workplace*, an updated version (Thomas Nelson, 1998), pp.78-81.

⁴⁶ John F. MacArthur Jr., *The Master's plan for the Church* (Moody Bible Institute, 1991), pp.47-49.

⁴⁷ Mark and Patti Virkler, *Twenty Key Biblical Principles for Christian Management* (Peacemakers Ministries Ltd, 1989), p.37.

The teaching of “Priesthood of all believers” is a great concept to build up the Christian perspective as one kind of group Christian spirituality. As I have mentioned in part II, the full-time staff and part-time (voluntary) board members had their calling from God to serve at the same PC-O; they become united as one body. Their spiritual growth means the growth of the PC-O body. Individual Christian Spirituality will be seen in their services. “In making decisions of any sort, a group reveals itself as a group, and it does this by becoming itself as a group. Decision-making is a fundamental articulation of a group’s life...proclaims democratic lifestyle... Qualification for taking part in the decision-making process also tells us a great deal about the nature of the group... The fact that we vote to make decisions tells us that we are a democracy... this democracy is not absolute but relative.”⁴⁸

In Berkley’s book the *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration*,⁴⁹ management is the key to making things happen. The well-managed business turns a profit. The well-managed church (PC-O) is a place where ministry flows purposefully and freely – efficiently, without hindrance.

Robert D. Dale tells that the objectives of not-for-profits, such as churches and other Christian institutions, are frequently too diffuse to provide a sharp focus for management. Sometimes, the serving of second-level goals overwrites the serving of ultimate goals.⁵⁰ He expresses the difficulty in detecting problem(s), and in making and maintaining the “right” decision(s) in not-for-profits.

Sir John Harvey-Jones MBE, wrote his foreword for the book “Management and Ministry” for MODEM,⁵¹ and gave comments for MODEM Matter, saying that “the need for better management is ubiquitous. Churches [*organizations*] need to be well managed, perhaps even more than private sector profit-seeking organizations do... all the more reason for the highest standards for the management to ensure that the resources available are put to the most appropriate use.”⁵² Within the scope of better management, the possibility for better decision-making is prepared.

We have talked about the Will of God in part II. Let us take a closer look now at the objectives. MBO “is one means of moving from abstractions about leadership to actual leadership... one effective way of organizing group activity without ignoring the contribution from persons within the group. It is one way of assisting congregations in the difficult task of translating somewhat nebulous Christian goals and policies into accomplishable tasks... ministers probably already utilize a great many group techniques. They may already have a very wide base of decision-making... If so, the climate is appropriate for MBO, especially since the problem facing the minister as bishop is not a problem of trust, but rather of how to achieve participation and accountability at the same time.”⁵³ MBO and its concept is one of the tools for the well-established PC-O.

MBO actually is a ‘skill’ (refer to Section 1), it is one of the supports to complete the Will of God (‘the foundation’ of Section 1). MBO will never replace the Will of God. The positioning of MBO in PC-O is clearly defined. Whenever the Will of God changes, the MBO has to be changed, but not vice versa. God is in control. The integration can be seen.

For the further investigation of the two realms and their integration, Dr. Terry Gatfield gave a brief analysis of the relationship applied to MBO and the Will of God. He is using the term ‘Christian Management’ to differentiate from the management of the business world. Gatfield defines ‘Christian Management’ as “servant-leadership [that] has ramifications in Christian Management attitudes toward

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⁴⁸ Luke T. Johnson (1983), p.17.

⁴⁹ James D Berkley, ed. *Leadership Handbook of Management and Administration: Practical insight from a cross section of ministry leaders* (Christian Today, 1994), pp.309-311.

⁵⁰ Robert D. Dale, “Working with People,” in Bruce P. Powers ed., *Church Administration Handbook – A Revised and completely Updated Edition* (Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), p.58.

⁵¹ MODEM stands for ‘Managerial and Organizational Disciples for the Enhancement of Ministry’, but the organization also seeks to explore how management may be enriched by insights from theology and ministry. It is a national, ecumenical charity continuing along history of promoting dialogue between management and ministry, based at UK.

⁵² Sir John Harvey-Jones MBE, “Still trouble-shooting” in *MODEM Matters!* Issue no. 23 (April 2003):3.

⁵³ Thomas C. Campbell & Gary B. Reiersen, *The Gift of Administration: theological and bases for ministry* (Westminster Press, 1981), pp.92-94.

labor, profit and decision-making”.⁵⁴ In general, his opinion did not contradict Drucker or other scholars' principles. He actually affirms two typical world-views: the secular (*business*) world and the biblical (*Christian*) world. He makes his reader to admit positively and build up “decision-making” in Christian perspective. The following is an abstract from Gatfield's analysis.⁵⁵

	In the secular model of management	In the biblical model of management
Labor	Is a resource and an economic factor in production	Is the most important element and is of infinite value
The Primary goal	Is to maximize profits	Is to maximize the welfare of the staff, customers and stakeholders
The company	Exists for the benefit of the owners	Exists for the benefit of staff and society
Management	Dominating and ruling	Leading and facilitating
Plans and Operations	Be Secretive	Servant-hood directs to be transparent
Wealth	Is created for personal use	Is created for the common good
Decision-making	Predominantly top-down	Predominantly bottom-up
Accountable	To owners	To God

Conclusion

To go through the journey of reflection and inspiration from Zigarelli's decision-tree, is very fruitful. Since every Christian cannot escape from make decisions, the exploration of this topic is very helpful. However, our Creator God has created us in His image and not mine; will this exploration be a guide for your exploration? I hope this summary will give inspiration and stimulate reflection for your way of decision-making.

It is very easy to develop a pattern into a habit with which we feel comfortable. We may have established a way to make decisions without Him consciously or subconsciously, during routine work or extraordinary work, at critical moments or relaxing, whether full of resources or lacking adequate information, in a familiar environment or new culture.

Servanthood and stewardship are the major aspects and develop the journey toward learning. Both make tension, but make it more positively to get closer to God. Discernment, the Will of God, the inward examination of Christian perspective and Christian spirituality are not easy to learn. By His grace, God is with us and gives us guidance, including with our decisions and in the process of decision-making. More discussion and sharing are needed to build up a “Christian Management” for PC-O to admit the reality of the two realms.

Lastly, I would like to share the story of Jesus Christ and his crucifixion, because I find this is the typical example of decision-making and includes the significant elements.

Jesus Christ was very clear on his incarnation and dwelt among the people in this world. His identity, vision, mission, teaching, timing and ways were from the Heavenly Father who sent him. He had no doubt about doing His Father's Will. He took responsibility without complaining. Although the Will of God is top-down, the receiving of the Will of God became the will of Jesus Christ. When Jesus carried the Will of God, it was predominantly bottom-up. In the books of John and Luke, we can look carefully at Jesus' journey: the entrance to Jerusalem, the Upper Room discourse, the prayer on The Mount of Olives, the arrest, the questioning by the high priests and the crucifixion. Each point involves the discernment of knowing God's timing, etc. He continued to engage in decision-making – continuing to carry out the vision and mission he had. He was not just here to die for us – an objective. That is not the Will of God.

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⁵⁴ Terry Gatfield, “A Theology of Management: Who is in control?” in *Vocatio* Vol.4, no. 1 (July, 2000), p.17.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The Will of God is “for God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John3:16-17). His servanthood and stewardship are demonstrated in the interaction between Jesus and God the Father.

With the determination to finish the Will of God, he made up his mind to enter Jerusalem in God's time. This is a practice of the hidden part (Section 1) of the decision-making process. He did not give up seeking God's Will, God's Kingdom (John 17). He kept praying (John 17 & 18; Luke 22:39-46), acted justly to the soldiers (John 18:4-9), showed love and mercy to the soldiers (John 18:10-11; 19), and walked humbly in front of God the Father (Luke 22:39-46; 23:34-46). In his last words, he did not forget to fulfill what was stated in the Scriptures (John 19:28-30). He did not break the government's law or the divine law (John 18:19-24, 28-38; 19:6-16, 19-22; Luke 22:66-23:25). He kept always to the heart of God the Father and Father in Him, the Son (John 17:20-26).

When Jesus was having supper with the disciples, there were misunderstanding, betrayal and denial and some were controlled by their own will. Jesus faced the difficulties of various personalities, personal and group emotions, discernment and human determination. Jesus worked out his integration of decisions despite the many obstacles that occurred between his trials. The trials are from the preparation of the last supper, the washing of the disciples' feet, the prediction of betrayal and denial by his disciples, the cutting off and healing of the soldier's ear, the mocking of Jesus, the two other criminals, the final words to Mary and the beloved disciples, etc in the books of John and Luke. Jesus managed to achieve the completion of his task, the task of dying for human beings. However, he did not ignore the people around him, and each of them held an important role (at least to the authors of the Gospels they did) and needed to accomplish their task, too. If the decision of Jesus was just to die for us without leading us to repent and follow him, it is not salvation for all sinners. His resurrection is the Will of God (John 20 & 21; Luke 24), too.

The life and ministry of Jesus Christ demonstrated his way of decision-making, from which we can learn the fullness of Christian identity in facing the Will of God and the use of discernment in going through the mission that God the Father has given to him.