

PRACTICAL WARNINGS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

INTRODUCTION



Every now and again, you come across a sign like this: . It means “dead end.” When you see these signs, and others like them, they don’t have any negative mental connotations. Instead, you are grateful for the fact that someone has put up a sign that will save you time and frustration. Today I would like to give you some “warning signs” for your spiritual ministry. Some say “Stop,” others say “Yield,” and still others say “Dead End.” These signs are given to keep you on the right road, to help you learn from the successes and failures of those who have gone before you. Because Jesus’ ministry priority was discipleship we will use discipling as our main example. But the principles are applicable to every team, business or spiritual alike.

1. BEWARE OF LOSING YOUR TESTIMONY (AND YOUR OWN)!

Proverbs says that a good name is more to be desired than gold or silver. Often we are too concerned about where the finances are going to come from, and not concerned enough about our reputation. The control of finances is in God’s hands; the control of our reputation is mostly in ours. Your Training Ministry can be known for keeping its commitments, for promoting unity, for emphasizing family relationships, for having a Godly, trust-worthy team.

Quality is inherent in testimony. If there is quality, there is a good testimony, so quality control is a major task of an administrator. Quality does not go up by itself, quality does not even stay on the same level, and quality goes down unless you continue to work on it. Quality is the monkey of the administrator (see TB2).

The battle is to make high-level courses and leadership training your focus. There is a constant demand for lower level courses like Basic Christian Life, Experiencing God, ladies groups, and many others. Often these ministries mushroom. Often there is pressure from universities, seminaries, provincial church superintendents and others to meet this lower level need and leave the “real education” to the stationary institutions. But you must focus on training leaders or else there will be nothing for the future. Without leaders God’s work will stop.

Organization is another area where many reputations are lost. An extensive Mentoring ministry (physically located in the local churches) requires a lot of accurate planning and organization to coordinate books, lectures, courses, students, coaches, practical assignments and ministries. Be sure to have a capable team member to do this .

Finances have always been a major satanic tool to destroy Christian service. Many arguments and strife have resulted from this area. The temptations come in the shape of greed, pride, lack of honesty, self-service and a host of other non-Christian tendencies. Make sure you operate above the board. Have no secret dealings and no private dealings. Be spick-and-span clean financially. Have an annual financial audit. Don’t do anything financially that you feel you need to keep secret from others involved in your ministry, whether that is the team, pastors and deacons , church, or supporters. Be above reproach.

2. BEWARE OF SLIPPING RULES

Over time, rules that were once set in cement become like the pages of a history book: they show us what things used to be like. Instead of starting with good rules and then watching things get better, human nature is to start strong and gradually watch productivity deteriorate as it all becomes routine. The person who used to show up five minutes early for a ten o’clock meeting begins to show up at ten, and eventually at five past ten. The trainer who used to show up a half hour before his session begins showing up at the same time as the students. But doing less than our best is never okay with God. The Bible makes that clear.

Because group leaders work mostly independently, accountability is a great need. Accountability done with love and care for the person’s success is very motivating. People want to be successful. When you hold them accountable to standards, they can take pride in their work. You free them to show professionalism instead of being bound to their old incompetence.

Every Ministry has manuals, Handbooks, lectures, and course guides. (for NLC see Mentoring Ministry “A” to “Z”) They are designed to help you achieve maximum success. As a Mentoring Ministry Overseer, take time

twice a year to apply these tools directly to your own ministry. Evaluate your trainers to see if they are adequately preparing for their discussion seminars according to the Handbook. Are you following the guidelines for trainer preparation prior to leading a new course? The sin factor in this world makes all things deteriorate, so beware of slipping rules.

3. BEWARE OF HAPHAZARD SCHEDULES

Making a schedule and sticking to it takes discipline. It forces us to stop wasting time, achieve specific goals, and be sensitive to the schedules of others.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Learn to say no; it will be of more use to you than to be able to read Latin."

The founder of the Local Church Training work said that point number one was 'to be there.' Your coaches should never ever miss a discussion seminar that they are responsible for leading. Are your trainers following that axiom of being present 30 minutes before and 30 minutes after lesson time? Do they all have a detailed printed course schedule and is it shared in writing with all the participants? Are exams well planned and announced adequately in advance?

Do you the administrator maintain a healthy schedule? Can people depend upon your word? Is 'yes' yes and 'no' no? Are you on time or do you make them wait on you and waste their time?

A servant administrator is on time or early and as a ministering servant he patiently waits for others to arrive. You are the model and eventually your team will follow your example.

An administrator who arrives late stresses his own importance and egotistically focuses on himself by letting others wait on him and waste their time. Punctuality is not Godliness but it is certainly a Christian virtue.

4. BEWARE OF "KNOCKING" — CRITICIZING!

The most natural thing to do when you see someone doing something wrong is to criticize. Almost before you know it, a negative word has left your mouth. Not only is it the most natural thing to do, it is the easiest. But a good administrator is one who can step on someone's shoes without messing up his shine, who can give him a shot in the arm without letting him feel the needle.

We are all persons under command. You are in a chain of command that began with the organization's founders. Some are in the chain above you and others are below you. Criticizing is a common feature among team members. It ought not to be so! Criticizing did not originate with God. It is not a Christian virtue and you can be sure that it won't exist in heaven.

You are the 'second man' and you will get lots of criticism about your director or other colleagues. What will be your attitude? What sweet reply will you have ready to cover a mistake from your boss? How will you help a sour trainer who just 'happens to have' a bunch of really lousy students? When there is a sharp difference between you and the 'boss' will you be able to show deference and 'decrease' while you let him increase? You are the middleman between your visionary Mentoring Ministry organizer and the local pastors. Some of those pastors are uneducated, some are old, some are stubborn or sour and some just don't know how to do their ministry. Sounds to me like you already have a problem. Fortunately for you the Bible does talk about being a peacemaker, about honoring the elders of the flock, about the importance of deference and keeping unity.

To criticize someone else is to judge them and the Bible is very clear. Romans 2:1 says, "*You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*" Remember this when you are tempted to criticize someone else, whether they be above or below you. Don't "knock" others down. Use your tongue wisely, and help others to do the same.



5. BEWARE OF BEING DEFENSIVE

You will be criticized. All that will live Godly shall suffer...! With a church-based leadership-training ministry you are clearly swimming up the stream against many age-long church customs. Here are a few that may cause you problems:

- The method of one-man church leadership based upon ancient Catholic and Orthodox tradition is deep rooted. Biblical group-leadership based upon Eph. 4:11 and other passages is not commonly accepted.

- Training in isolated institutions away from real life and without practical experience has been another age-old tradition based upon secular education. Church based training is seen as being for children and women.
- Education — knowledge — has been a long-standing requirement for pastoral candidates rather than the strong New Testament emphasis on character — being.
- Short-term evangelism done by professionals has long been the norm. Lifestyle evangelism by all church members has been rarely practiced or seen.
- Mentoring and training a **group** of future generation church leaders is not in the job description of present day church pastors.

You will be misunderstood, criticized, ignored, neglected, refused and rejected on various occasions by various people--sometimes by the best of people, sometimes by your closest friends. It will make you angry and frustrated. What will your reaction be? Better study the scriptures about anger, a soft answer, silence, arguments, and be prepared.

Understand where these good people are coming from, ages of darkness and wrong traditions, and feel sorry for them. There is nothing like Godly sorrow to drive away your own frustrations. Nearly all arguments are satanically inspired. The New Testament emphasis is on unity. Don't become defensive and negative. Throughout the scriptures the proof of the pudding is fruitfulness, not defensive rhetoric. Rest in the truth of what you know is right. Let God defend you and your ministry.

6. BEWARE OF NEGLECTING STUDENTS SPIRITUAL TRAINING



Know, Be, Do! It is easy to focus on academics. It is relatively easy to push people into doing something. But throughout the NT epistles the emphasis was on character development. Character development basically does not take place unless it is modeled and personally communicated by a real live person. Hence the **vital** importance of the role of a group's discussion leader.

Yes, there are tools; the Student Care Guide, Coach's Handbook and Management Training, but it remains one of the key ministries of the administrator to model and disciple his **disciples** and do it in such a way that they will pass it on. To maintain a strong emphasis on the **BE** part is a requirement. Without constant reinforcement it is easy for your DISCIPLES to just do academics. It isn't easy to hold other people accountable. It means we also have to keep on top spiritually. Keep this as a high priority. Reinforce it regularly. Check and make sure deacons and others are being actually mentored and disciplined.

7. BEWARE OF FINANCIAL ENTRAPMENT

Financial entrapment easily happens when we lose track of some key principles. Here are a few principles:

- "If your **expenses** exceed your **income**, the **maintenance** of your spiritual ministry will be your **downfall**."
- The rule is; get as much money as you can and spend as little as you absolutely have to.
- Make a budget, and **follow** that budget. Don't spend the money you will need in six months for salaries on an extra major purchase because you seem to have "so much" money!
- Purchase **only** what is necessary.
- Never, never, **never**, ever borrow.
- Total income should be expected to be 10% less than what is officially anticipated. Likewise, total expenses are often 10% above the planned budget. Make sure you allow a margin of safety in your planning.



Another area of entrapment can be designated giving. Designated giving means that the donor specifies how the money is to be used. This means that the donor feels he knows what is best for you and he may not trust the Discipleship Team to use his funds wisely. Reminder: you are not obligated to accept all gifts. Don't accept a gift for a project that is useless or not in line with your mentoring ministry just because it is money. Unsolicited financial or material help can be an entrapment. You receive a beautiful office free only to find that the utilities are sky high. You may get a car like a brand new Mercedes, which might be an offence to others.

And when you do accept a designated gift, be cautious and accurate as to how you spend it. Don't try to manipulate the funds and siphon them off to use them how you want to. If you accept it, use it for the purpose it was given, and report back to the donor exactly when and how.

8. BEWARE OF DIRECTOR'S DISENGAGEMENT FROM HIS VITAL MINISTRY

The Bible says; *"Thou shall not serve two masters."* Amazingly this seems to be a major obstacle to human intelligence. Usually the higher up the organizational ladder one goes the more he is tempted to get involved in a variety of things. Many have been asked to lead all provincial educational and church planting programs. It is a puzzle to me why a person with the great responsibility of preparing teams of future church leaders would want to be involved in a bunch of other, lesser activities. With you being a good 'second man' it is easy for the pastor to delegate more and more of his responsibilities to you. Eventually responsibilities are no longer delegated but just assigned. You need to have written job descriptions for each of you. Job descriptions should be mutually discussed annually and rewritten in preparation for the new year. As an administrator it is your responsibility to see to it that the director's job description includes his ministry with the local pastors and elders.



9. BEWARE OF DRIFTING FROM YOUR TARGET CENTER

Your ministry is **growing church leaders who continually practice the 2 pronged Great Commission as a lifestyle**. Are you growing them? How many have you grown? What are their ministries? Are they reproducing your example and growing other new church planters and pastors? Do you have pastors or deacons that are your spiritual grand- and great grandchildren?



The evil one would rather see a thousand weak church members than one fervent ardent new pastor or church planter. The sinful tendency among mankind is always downward. From training groups of deacons we fall into training camp workers, Sunday school teachers and women's group leaders. Instead of training planters of new churches we coddle those who will add a few new members to their present congregation. It is not that these other workers should not be trained, but that is not your target. **You** are to train Local Church Leadership Trainers who are capable of training these other workers.

10. BEWARE OF NOT BUILDING YOUR TEAM

The great tendency among executives is to look at output. How big are the production figures? Are they bigger than last year? Are we growing? Do we get good reports, and are things functioning smoothly?

But Christian Leadership Training is like a pyramid. The closer you get to the top, the smaller the circle of friends who really care. It gets real lonesome up there at the top. It is hard and it takes a deep, loving relationship to confront a friend, colleague or coworker about an attitude problem they might have. It takes, fasting, weeping, brokenness on your part to come along side and lift up the broken-hearted, discouraged, or troubled deacon or provincial church superintendent. Yes, you need to be thinking about building up those who are above you as well as those under you — inquire about a lecture entitled 'Being the Second Man' (BT13).

Do you have fun activities that draw all your trainers together? Do you have special individual 'love times' with each coach and his wife or family? Don't forget to do something special for the far away coach whose schedule does not permit him or his wife to participate very much--he needs it the most. Perhaps reimburse all costs and provide an extra bonus to make it possible for his wife to come to a special ladies event. Make sure you know the heart of your people. They are not just workers, they are your responsibility. Keep building your team!

11. BEWARE OF WAITING UNTIL THINGS GET WORSE

It is so easy to ignore the little problems. But often these little problems grow if we don't take care of them immediately, and something that would have been quick and easy to deal with suddenly has gone out of control. For example, you may hear gossip about one of your trainers. Go to him and talk to him about it immediately. If it isn't true then you can make that known firmly to those who were spreading rumors. And if it is true, then you can deal with it immediately instead of letting a situation build that could ruin the reputation of your ministry.



So often we think if we just wait a problem will go away. Some problems do, but if you know it has a potential to grow worse and there is an action you can take, take it immediately. Pray and ask God to give you discernment in these different situations to know if it has the potential of a serious problem or not. But don't just turn a blind eye and hope it will all go away.

12. BEWARE OF DEALING WITH ACTIONS MORE THAN ATTITUDES

What a common tendency it is to judge actions and not deal with attitudes. It is harder to focus on attitudes. It is even more difficult to warn a good team member of latent wrong attitudes. You discern that they are developing such an attitude but they are still blind to. An action is an eventual outcome of a long-standing attitude. The action per se may be stopped but the wrong attitude still existing will produce another wrong action. Working with attitudes is harder than dealing with actions. It is nipping problems in the bud. It takes true discernment. It requires a relationship of love and trust. It requires true deep humility and mourning on your part over the shortcomings of others. Study how Jesus mentored his 12 disciples. Very many passages show Jesus dealing with their attitudes while they were still unaware of it.

If you look in the epistles you will see that most of the problems in the church started with a wrong attitude. Pride and selfishness are good examples. When you see a worker who tries to get the best job and doesn't want to work in the harder areas, you are dealing with a wrong attitude, and until you can help him see that, you will continue to have problems with him. He needs to have an attitude of servanthood, of selflessness.

So be careful when you have to correct someone. Try to discern what the attitude was behind the action. Give that person some Scripture verses to read or memorize that can help them in this area. You will build them up if they respond to your correction, and you will have fewer problems to deal with in the future.

13. BEWARE OF ANNOUNCING DRASTIC CHANGES WITHOUT PROPER PREPARATION

We refer you to the timeline. A timeline visually illustrates how much time is involved in passing on concepts to others. Think of passing on concepts as passing an item down a stairway — one step at a time. Concepts are passed on from a visionary chief to his associate, from the associate to assistants and from assistants to the whole team. It is passed from the team to 2nd and 3rd generation Disciples and from those disciples to pastors. Later it is passed from pastors to other church deacons and from deacons to all members. Then eventually it is passed from all members into the community.

It takes a lot of lead-time to prepare each set of people. There are miscommunications, misunderstandings and resistance to new ideas. To understand, assimilate, use and model a new concept takes 3 months for each people segment. To implement 4 large changes sequentially in one academic year would be a major accomplishment. Lead-time and people preparation before introducing a change is the key to smooth, well-accepted and appreciated work of the administrator.

Making easy, proper, changes requires that the ministry organizer has clearly outlined long-term written objectives. It requires that you, the administrator, have clearly outlined and written down biannual strategies and quarterly plans.

Drastic changes are often the result of shortsighted and unfocussed executives. Know where you want to go and how you are going to get there. Take your people with you. Share what you expect at the end of the year, where you want them to be 6 months from now, and what precisely will happen during the next quarter.

14. BEWARE OF FLESH EFFORT

You are the man to make things happen on a biweekly basis in your main church and perhaps other churches, with deacons and among your team. And it is easy to rest in your own strength to make it happen, especially when you are a capable manager and organizer. But if you do these things in your own strength, you will find that you don't have the spiritual fruit you were hoping for or expecting.

Spiritual fruit and spiritual productivity come from your **own** relationship with the Holy Spirit. It begins with having received special enabling by the Holy Spirit for this special task of being an administrator. Beware if you are in this position simply because someone invited you or there were other conducive circumstances.

Being a trainer of men, a trainer of pastors, you can do in your own strength. Being a trainer of a spiritually effective and reproducing group / team of church leaders requires an act of the Holy Spirit's empowerment and continuous outflow. It just is not possible for it to be done as a mere normal human service. There must be a continuous supernatural flow of the Holy Spirit Himself. If your relationship with God the Holy Spirit is right you

become a type of channel or a pipe for the Holy Spirit to flow through to others. Note the lecture on “Christians as a Pipe Line”(Bi4).

CONCLUSION

In Scripture we read about physical anointing and laying on of hands--the torch of God being passed from one human to another. Do you have a torch to pass on? Are you anointed by the Holy Spirit? Do you have the Flame of God upon you? My brother, beware of flesh effort. Brother, you just cannot do it alone; you **need** the Holy Spirit. Yours is a sacred position.

Perhaps you want to take some sacred time right now, go outside to a park and fall on your knees in the snow. Stay there until you have settled some issues in your life. Take this lecture with you and ask God “What kind of a man am I?” Don’t let yourself be denied! Don’t come back until you have ‘The Flame of God’ upon you. You should now take one hour to meet your God. Amen. Thank you. Thank you Jesus.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege upon completion of your practical assignment to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

- Starting with warning #1 do a check-up on yourself. Each week choose a different warning to focus on. If you find that you and your ministry team are fine in that area, immediately move on to the next warning. When you find one that you need to work on, focus on improving in that area during the next week. Use the checklist below to show your progress through the warnings.



Warning	Problem	Resolved
1. BEWARE OF LOSING YOUR TC’S TESTIMONY (AND YOUR OWN)!		
2. BEWARE OF SLIPPING RULES		
3. BEWARE OF HAPHAZARD SCHEDULES		
4. BEWARE OF “KNOCKING” — CRITICIZING!		
5. BEWARE OF BEING DEFENSIVE		
6. BEWARE OF NEGLECTING STUDENTS’ SPIRITUAL TRAINING		
7. BEWARE OF FINANCIAL ENTRAPMENT		
8. BEWARE OF DIRECTOR’S DISENGAGEMENT FROM HIS VITAL MINISTRY		
9. BEWARE OF DRIFTING FROM YOUR TARGET CENTER		
10. BEWARE OF NOT BUILDING YOUR TC TEAM		
11. BEWARE OF WAITING UNTIL THINGS GET WORSE		
12. BEWARE OF DEALING WITH ACTIONS MORE THAN ATTITUDES		
13. BEWARE OF ANNOUNCING DRASTIC CHANGES WITHOUT PROPER PREPARATION		
14. BEWARE OF FLESH EFFORT		

For each warning write yes or no under **Problem**. If it is not a problem move to the next warning. If it is a problem then begin to work on it and if possible resolve the issue. Under **Resolved** write the date that you finished working out the issue. Remember to praise God for His help.

