

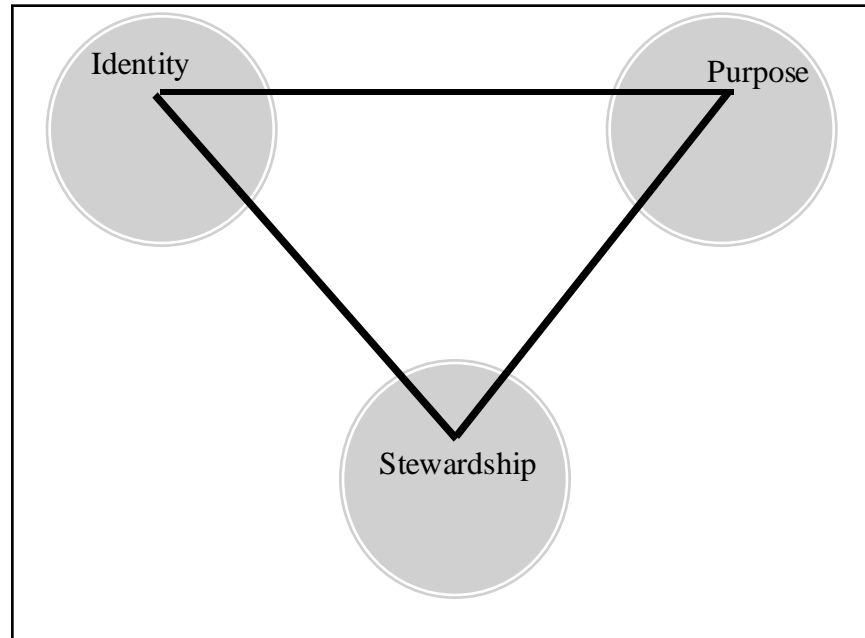
Threefold Model of Organizational Life

Testimonies and Queries for Seeing Things Whole

INTRODUCTION:

We have found that one helpful way of representing organizational life is as a relationship of three areas —each of which symbolizes a cluster of stakeholders, core values, and ways of exercising power that are characteristically present within institutions.

Each of these areas has its own unique set of preoccupations, and a field of influence within which these preoccupations seem to dominate. There are predictable and legitimate tensions among these areas, and at times these tensions can operate destructively within the life of the organization. Clearly they form part of the dynamism of institutional life.



A challenge in organizational life, as in all of life, is to see things whole. In a healthy organization, these areas function not as separate fiefdoms, but as a commonwealth of collaborative service.

Through the eyes of faith, however, seeing things whole means more than simply integrating the existing self-interests of each of these areas for the betterment of the institution. It means regarding the entire organization within a broader context of the needs of the world around it. From a faith perspective, the work of seeing things whole compels us to strain to understand what it means for any given organization to take its rightful place in a created order groaning toward wholeness or Shalom.

The next three pages offer summary overviews to these areas — the areas of Identity, Purpose, and Stewardship. In each instance the area is defined briefly, and its *principle stakeholders* identified.

Also identified for each area are a *Testimony* and an accompanying set of *Queries*. This notion comes from the Quaker tradition, which in an effort to help their own fellowships to "stand under the Light" have developed this discourse as a way of framing core convictions and the pressing questions which flow out them.

Finally, implicit within each of the three areas is the possibility of a more destructive or perverted expression to which that area is prone. Consequently, for each area we have indicated the possible contours of its *shadow* expression.

Identity

Typical Stakeholders:

The Work force (i.e., staff, employees)

Definition:

The area of Identity is preoccupied with:

- *how the organization structures the character and quality of its life.*
- *creating an environment that reflects its core values,*
- *drawing the members of its work force toward their fullest potential.*

This would include how an organization designs its work spaces; how it recruits, hires, evaluates, rewards, and dismisses its employees; how it disseminates information; how it distributes power and assigns accountability; how it models investment in and commitment to its core values.

Testimonies:

We believe that the organization's Identity is rooted in the truth that organizations, like persons, are:

- uniquely gifted
- called to exercise those gifts in the service of others
- accountable to God for how well they serve and steward their resources.

Possible Shadow:

- a preoccupation with being ritually or politically correct.
- caring for people in ways that reflect a lack of commitment to the mission and vision of the organization or lack of concern for its long-term viability.

Faithfulness in Identity is enhanced when:

- this identity is consciously shaped by the organization's most deeply held values.
- when its private and public life are congruent and consistent with these values.
- when it willingly confesses or acknowledges where it has fallen short.

- when the members of its work force personally resonate with these values, consciously embrace them, and find fulfillment in them.

Queries:

1. Are we clear about the values which shape our life together in this organization and which form our service to others?
2. Are the talents of all staff identified and utilized?
3. Is the organization a safe environment for risk-taking that encourages staff development and commitment?
4. Are staff members clear about their personal vision and values, the organization's vision and values, and how the two are connected?
5. Is the organization known for its honesty and integrity?
6. Are achievements celebrated and failures used as an opportunity to learn and grow?
7. Is compensation internally equitable and externally competitive?
8. Is there a spirit of collegiality in which individuals are committed to each other's growth and to the organization achieving its full potential?
9. Does the organization provide sabbatical for reflection on personal and organizational wholeness?

Purpose

Typical Stakeholders:

"Customers" or clients, suppliers, competitors, and the host communities represented by their governing bodies.

Definition:

The area of Purpose is preoccupied with the kind and quality of products or services which the organization provides and how well these serve its "customers" and meet the needs of the larger society.

This would include clarity about the organization's vision and mission and how it projects itself publicly through different media; how it structures the processes of making or producing a "good" that is needed and valued by others; how it markets or sells this good; and how it serves the client or customer in the use of the "good". Also included here would be the way in which the

organization rolls up its sleeves and involves itself in the life of the community around it. In summary, this office is focused on how the organization justifies its existence to the larger society.

Testimonies:

We believe that an organization's Purpose is an expression of its commitment to serve the well-being of others and its conviction that there is a vocation to which it is called and accountable.

Faithfulness in Purpose is enhanced when:

- the mission to which it is committed offers a serious response to the real needs of the world.

Possible Shadow:

- inflating itself in disregard of the other two areas, so that it champions the vision to the exclusion of any discernible concern for the well-being of the staff and the viability of the organization.
- it issues false prophecies which affirm the dominant culture's blindness and narcissism.

empowered in the faithful exercise of their own gifts and vocation.

- the organization continually reviews its mission, open to the possibility that it ought to be modified so as to better incarnate its values in a changing world.

- its vision of service is clear and compelling.
- its vision incarnates its core values and calls forth the best efforts of its staff.
- the organization seeks to make itself accountable to the public for the exercise of its mission.
- its understanding of service leaves those who are served better informed, less dependent, and more

Queries:

1. Are we clear about our vision so that it provides energy and focus to our action?
2. Do we openly share information with staff and others in ways that empower them to act and encourages collaboration and partnership?
3. Is the empowerment of our customers and suppliers a deeply held value?
4. Do we welcome criticism and seek to grow from our mistakes?
5. Do we continually strive to improve our products or services?
6. Do we regularly assess our impact on the well-being of the wider community and adjust our performance accordingly?
7. Is the product or service we provide valued by our staff as a resource we would choose to have or share?

Stewardship

Typical Stakeholders:

Management, Investors, Trustees.

Definition:

The area of Stewardship is preoccupied with how the organization utilizes its resources (human, financial, and material) so as to sustain its viability and balance the legitimate needs of each of its stakeholders and the wider community.

This would include how the organization secures the essential resources for its mission; the efficient management of these in service of the overall purpose and core values of the organization; careful monitoring of the resources with a commitment to their sustained viability; the balancing of interests among the various stakeholders within the life of the organization; the resolving of disputes that may arise among these stakeholders; and the mobilizing of resources in a way that enables the organization to achieve short-term objectives while, at the same time, helping to shape a sustainable future for itself and the larger community to which it belongs.

Testimonies:

We believe that an organization's concern for Stewardship is a recognition of the sacred trust it holds in governing well its gathered life and using well the many resources that fall within its field of influence.

Faithfulness in Stewardship is enhanced when:

- the management and utilization of material and community resources is carried out in ways that express confidence in the long-term sustainable future of all involved.
- leadership and governance within the organization are exercised in ways that facilitate inclusive and empowering decision-making.
- decisions are made so as to seek a balancing of the contending interests and just resolution of disputes.
- there is a commitment to creating and modifying structures and systems that enable fulfillment of the mission and sustain the capacity of the organization to serve into the future.

Possible Shadow:

- becoming tyrannical in its exercise of power in unjust governance—lording it over others in the organization.
- the pursuit of profitability as an end in itself and at all costs.

Queries:

1. Does our stewardship of the resources at our disposal reflect our understanding of them as a precious and sustainable trust for future generations?
2. Do we ensure that everyone is heard on issues in which they have a stake and empowered to exercise and be accountable for the exercise of power around these issues?
3. Do the interests and concerns of the other two areas receive equal weight and creative balance in making organizational decisions?
4. Are risks carefully weighed in relationship to our core values including the examination of both short and long-term considerations?
5. Do we operate in ways that honor the human and natural communities which host us?
6. Do the structures and systems we develop enhance our ability to serve our various stakeholders?
7. Do these structures and systems facilitate the building and sustaining of human community within our gathered life?

Nine Strategic Lenses for Seeing Things Whole

Each of the three offices within the organization finds strategic expression in three ways. The Office of Identity expresses itself through the lenses of *Celebrating*, *Hosting*, and *Modeling*. The Office of Purpose is expressed through the lenses of *Teaching*, *Critiquing*, and *Envisioning*. And the Office of Stewardship expresses itself through the strategic lenses of *Building*, *Governing*, and *Managing*.

