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# Introduction/Foreword

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**Y**OU WON'T FIND “everything rises and falls on leadership” in the Bible. Yet its truth is affirmed by the scriptures. God, the only perfect leader, reveals His glory by equipping imperfect men and women to lead His people. Jesus was grieved by those who were leaderless - “sheep without a shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36) The New Testament envisions every church blessed with healthy, functional leadership structures. “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care ... not lording it over those entrusted to you but being examples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:2-3)

What system of governance is ideal? While we have glimpses of how the early church organized for ministry, God’s Word does not spell out a single “sacred” way to structure the Body of Christ to fulfill its mission. Instead, we see a remarkably adaptable and dynamic approach. The church follows the Lord’s lead in responding to changing opportunities and obstacles. It resembles an organism more than an organization. This flexible, contextual strategy is exemplified by the “Jerusalem Council” as it designed a structure to facilitate fellowship among believers. “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements ...” (Acts 15:28)

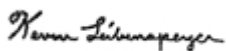
It is our desire to replicate this style of church governance. We’ve moved from “rule-centered” leadership to a “principle-centered” approach. Believing that each local church is uniquely called to develop effective outreach in its setting, we release them to select their system of governance accordingly. By anchoring this choice to core qualities of our denominational identity and key scriptural values, we maintain our overall unity, while allowing freedom for healthy and necessary diversity at the congregational level.

*This governance manual, “Building A Leadership Team,” is designed to help your church develop a functional leadership structure. Churches are not required to change their existing governance format. They should periodically assess the impact of their leadership system. A ministry that has stalled or is struggling to break through a “growth barrier” may benefit from reorganizing. This manual suggests some “healthy” options to choose from.*

On the other hand, reorganization without a purpose or goal is of little benefit. Change for the sake of change only may not be healthy. Adopting a new structure isn’t a “cure all.” The leadership model you choose has the potential to help or hinder the ministry but is no substitute for skill, hard work, training, and prayer. Having the right people in place, committed to leading for the right reasons is more important than the system.

Blessings as you start this important journey. Like Solomon be in prayer throughout the process. “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people ... for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (1 Kings 3:9)

Serving Him together,



Kevin Leibensperger  
Bishop



SECTION

1



# Principle Based Governance Structure



## Using This Manual

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**T**HE GOVERNANCE MANUAL is designed to be a practical workbook that our congregations can use as a guide to design and implement a principles-based structure for ministry consistent with parameters laid out in the EC Discipline. It is not a detailed template of a new ready-made organizational system for you to adopt. It is intended to be a “hands on” tool outlining an effective pathway towards a better way of deploying your congregation for ministry.

The sections of the manual are laid out in a deliberate sequence that outlines the stages you will want to follow in completing this process. It starts with an explanation of the scriptural basis and leadership philosophy underlying the concept of building a governance structure around a framework of principles.

It next moves to the step of evaluation, addressing the question “why.” Is a change in governance desirable, and if so, why? Where does your church want to be able to go with its ministry that makes a new structure necessary? As in all good planning it’s wise to start with the end in mind at the beginning.

The journey then moves to the “what” question. What are the basic types of structure our churches may want to consider? By considering the flexible “menu” of governance options, you will be guided in selecting a starting point for your ministry design which you can adapt and customize to your own particular setting.

Section 4 speaks to the matter of “how to.” How does a congregation lay out an itinerary and timetable to move from one governing structure to another? Once again your unique journey may follow a different route, but a basic road map is provided to help you navigate from start to finish successfully.

Additional resources that augment and enrich the steps of the process are included in the final section. It is envisioned that more tools and references will be added to this chapter in future editions of the governance manual. This is not a journey to be made in haste. You will want to spend sufficient time working through each “way point” in the outline.

Please remember that this printed material isn’t the only guide you have in the process. You are encouraged to enlist the counsel of your Conference Minister or to invite input from other churches that have found a better way to “govern.”

# The EC Discipline “Principle Based Leadership” Section 300 to 320

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## 300 CHAPTER I – DENOMINATIONAL IDENTITY

### 301 EVANGELICAL

Believing the Bible to be the authoritative, inspired and infallible word of God, we affirm that people are saved by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ. Compelled by this good news, and commissioned to make disciples of Jesus Christ, each local church prayerfully and strategically carries out this commission to its own community and beyond. (Matthew 28:18-19, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:9, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 3:16).

### 302 CONGREGATIONAL

Empowered to be unique, and owning the responsibility to be healthy, local churches intentionally, actively and collectively pursue God’s mission. Each church will operate effectively by developing a principle-centered organizational structure within its local context. Each congregation will employ its gifts and callings to the glory of God. (Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:11-16).

### 303 CONNECTIONAL

With the understanding that the local church cannot carry out the Great Commission alone, we surrender self-sufficiency and autonomy to join together in love. Embracing our common *Discipline* and our common purpose – to know Christ and make Him known – EC Churches will pray together, fellowship together, develop leaders together, evangelize together, plant churches together, perform acts of mercy together, pursue justice together, and celebrate God together. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Micah 6:8, Acts 2:42-47, James 1:27).

## 310 LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

### Preamble

It is our desire as a denomination to move from rule-centered leadership to principle-centered leadership in order to be more effective in becoming a movement of God. To that end we offer the following nine principles as definitive for the Evangelical Congregational Church. It is our denominational conviction that each of our local churches may operate in harmony with these principles and move forward with God’s grace. Principle-centered leadership sets people free to use their gifts and abilities as the Holy Spirit leads them. With this approach we hope to recapture some of the qualities of a movement of God that enhanced our effectiveness in the past. To that end we present these principles as the foundation upon which to build local church governing structures. While there may be a variety of local church governing structures, these principles should be found in each type of structure. A “Governance Manual” is available to assist local churches in developing functional structures.

### 311 Principle One: *Purpose, Mission, Core Values and Vision*

Healthy churches identify a purpose, mission, vision, and set of core values (PMVV) that are in harmony with the denomination’s PMVV.

- ◆ Purpose answers the “why” question. Why are we here? Why do we exist? It is the common ground on which the mission, core values and vision stand. Broader and less focused than the mis-

sion statement, the purpose statement will be an identifying link between a local church and the denomination, reflecting an unwavering commitment to evangelical theology and practice.

- ◆ Mission answers the “what” question. What are we supposed to be doing? What does God want our church to accomplish? The mission statement is a broad, brief, Biblical statement of what the church is supposed to do in the community and throughout the world. It must be closely tied to the unique cultural setting of the church.
- ◆ A core value answers the question, “Why do we do what we do?” Core values speak to what is most important in the life of the church. Constant, passionate and Biblical, core values represent the “soul” of the church’s ministry.
- ◆ Vision is the clear, challenging picture of what the future will look like as the purpose, mission and core values are lived out by the congregation. In practice, all churches should identify their PMVV before creating operational structures. We find an example of this principle in the Great Commandment of John 13 and the Great Commission of Matthew 28. Jesus gave His disciples a purpose and a mission before they organized as a church. This purpose and mission is clearly reflected in the life of the church as it is described in Acts 2 and 4. Purpose and mission must drive the ministry of the church.

Churches should align their structures to the identified PMVV and regularly assess how they are living up to the PMVV. The PMVV must be dynamic, rather than static. While the PMVV’s foundational Biblical truths will not change, the specific details related to purpose, mission, core values and vision, as well as the words used to convey them, will change.

### **312 Principle Two: *Prayer***

A healthy church is intentionally committed to discovering the heart of God through the discipline of prayer. Effective, fervent prayer of the righteous draws upon the power of God to move in His church. We enter the presence of God on behalf of our families, churches, communities, and world. Prayer allows us to hear the voice of God and to discern His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

A church committed to prayer is a church that:

- ◆ Comes together regularly for corporate times of prayer;
- ◆ Integrates prayer into the life and ministries of the church;
- ◆ Encourages prayer for pastors and leaders;
- ◆ Cultivates the prayer life of individual believers.

### **313 Principle Three: *Disciplemaking***

Healthy churches are disciplemaking churches. Disciplemaking is an intentional, lifelong process:

- ◆ Beginning when we pray for, care for and share Jesus Christ with people who are not yet His followers;
- ◆ Progressing as people choose to submit their lives to Jesus’ authority and receive His gift of salvation by repentance and faith;
- ◆ Continuing as His followers grow in love and devotion to Jesus and their commitment to making disciples.

A church committed to disciplemaking will provide opportunities for corporate prayer, evangelistic training, and community outreach. The church will also provide seekers with opportunities to investigate the claims of Christ, make a Biblically informed decision to follow Christ, and receive basic follow-up teaching on how

to live the Christian life. The church will continue to provide opportunities for the study and application of God's Word resulting in disciples who are committed to making disciples.

### **314 Principle Four: *Community***

A healthy church creates and cultivates a familial community of disciples marked by loving relationships. In this community, "if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:26)

A church committed to cultivating this kind of community will include (but not be limited to) such things as:

- ◆ Assimilating new people into the congregation;
- ◆ Creating opportunities for fellowship and ministry both across and along common lines (such as age and interest);
- ◆ Providing for the spiritual, social and material needs of all its people;
- ◆ Developing and maintaining healthy relationships by fostering an environment in which sin, conflict, discipline, reconciliation and repentance are addressed in a Biblical manner.

### **315 Principle Five: *Worship***

A healthy church gathers regularly for worship that exalts God and edifies people; worship that engages both the mind and heart, inspiring people to live more fully for Christ. God-exalting worship may include fervent prayer, joyful singing, affirmations of faith, scripture lessons, Biblical preaching, the celebration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and opportunities to respond to God's work through His Spirit.

A church committed to God-exalting worship will provide:

- ◆ Well planned, inspiring weekly worship services;
- ◆ The observance of the Lord's Supper at least quarterly;
- ◆ Occasional special worship services such as Christmas Eve, Good Friday, etc.

### **316 Principle Six: *Gift-Oriented Ministry***

Healthy churches empower disciples for ministry and mission. In order "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12), the church helps people identify their spiritual gifts and employ them in the life of the congregation, in the community and in the world. The church also takes the initiative in identifying and developing members in the local body for leadership.

A church committed to effective placement of people for ministry will provide clear job descriptions, practical training, and personal coaching to its volunteers. The church will also provide for expressions of appreciation and recognition for its volunteers.

### **317 Principle Seven: *Pastoral Relationship***

A healthy church willingly, trustingly and respectfully submits to appropriate authority. Pastors, in turn, act as servant-leaders by employing authority for the good of the fellowship.

A church committed to a healthy relationship with its pastor(s) is a church that:

- ◆ Models and demonstrates respect for those in authority, enabling the work of the pastor to be a joy and not a burden;
- ◆ Honors the pastor by offering him compensation that reflects his value to the fellowship and his labor on their behalf;

- ◆ Maintains a Pastoral Relations Committee committed to the best interests of their pastor(s) as well as the health of the congregation.

### **318 Principle Eight: *Stewardship***

A healthy church is a good steward of its financial and material resources. Buildings and budgets are viewed as God-given tools to pursue the Great Commission. The opportunity to give money generously to the local church and to denominational activities is viewed as an act of joyful obedience on the part of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

A church committed to good stewardship is a church that:

- ◆ Teaches Biblical financial principles and calls its people to financial faithfulness and integrity;
- ◆ Provides a system of financial accountability that accurately receipts, records, and reports contributions;
- ◆ Fully discloses its financial state through regular reports and annual audits;
- ◆ Provides for and maintains buildings, grounds, and material resources necessary to accomplish the church's mission.

### **319 Principle Nine: *Global Ministries***

A healthy church places a high priority on proclaiming the Gospel and demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ to a hurting world beyond its immediate neighborhood. This outward focus compels the church to cross cultures and to cross borders in an effort to fulfill the Great Commission to the ends of the earth.

A church committed to global ministry is a church that:

- ◆ Prays for the peoples of the world and the global church;
- ◆ Cultivates relationships with missionaries and mission fields resulting in spiritual, emotional, physical and material support;
- ◆ Ministers to the poor, powerless and persecuted;
- ◆ Nurtures a global vision.

## **320 ESSENTIAL STRUCTURES**

### **Preamble**

In order to maintain a healthy and effective connection with our denominational identity (Paragraph 300) several structures will be essential in the life of a local Evangelical Congregational Church. These are membership, affiliation, congregational meetings and Local Conference.

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Please refer to the *2008 EC Discipline*, which can be viewed at [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com), for more information on this item. The following paragraphs are only partial excerpts of more complete statements.

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## **321 MEMBERSHIP**

### **321.1 Definition**

The membership of a local congregation consists of those persons whose names are recorded in the official Church Record Book. (See 321.1 Membership.)

## **321.2 Eligibility**

Persons may be added to the roll upon profession of faith or by receiving a letter of transfer from another church. Only persons who have expressed a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord shall be considered for membership.

## **322 RESPONSIBILITY OF AFFILIATION**

**322.1** A congregation that is affiliated with the Evangelical Congregational Church or to which pastors are assigned by the Evangelical Congregational Church shall at all times be subject to the *Discipline*, and the articles of incorporation and/or by-laws of such congregation shall at all times be subordinate to the Constitution and laws of the state of incorporation or organization and to the *Discipline*.

## **323 CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

### **323.1 Purpose of the Annual Meeting**

There shall be held in each church an annual congregational meeting to review the work of the year, consider local opportunities and needs, and elect leaders and officers required by the Discipline or by the by-laws of the congregation. It shall hear reports concerning the work, present status, and future program of the Church and of its organizations and societies, shall make recommendations to the Official Board/Ministry Council, and shall transact such business as may come before it.

### **323.2 Call of the Annual Meeting**

The annual congregational meeting shall be provided for and called by the Official Board/Ministry Council. Notice of such meeting shall be given by announcing the time and date thereof on two Sundays in the regular services of the congregation held within thirty (30) days immediately prior to said meeting.

## **330 THE LOCAL CONFERENCE**

There shall be a Local Conference in each congregation/charge, which shall meet at least once during the Conference year.

### **331 Purpose and Membership**

The Local Conference is the highest judicial or legislative body with respect to the duties set forth in 404. The membership of the Local Conference shall be composed of the membership of the Official Board/Ministry Council (in case of a multiple-church charge, the membership of the Official Boards/Ministry Councils) plus all itinerant and licensed ministers who are assigned as members of the congregation or congregations of the charge. All members of the Local Conference shall be members in good standing (See 302) of a congregation on the charge and entitled to one vote.

## **336 PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

There shall be a committee on Pastoral Relations constituted annually by the Local Conference. This committee shall function according to the rules of the respective National Conferences. The primary function of this committee shall be to aid the pastor, and any pastoral assistants, to serve effectively the needs and programs of the local congregation. It shall be a conferring and counseling committee and shall be available for consultation with the pastor concerning conditions within the local congregation(s) that pertain to various pastoral duties. Any requests concerning stationing must come through the Pastoral Relations Committee to the Supervisory Committee on behalf of the charge.



SECTION

2

# Evaluating Your Current Governance Structure



## Overview

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**T**HERE'S A SAYING, "If you aim for nothing, that's exactly what you'll hit." Adopting a new form of local church governance will only be of maximum benefit if you establish a compelling case for making a change along with a clear description of where this change will take you. In other words, begin with a destination in mind.

It is strongly encouraged that church leaders first invest the necessary time and prayer to determine what are the purpose, mission, vision, and values (PMVV) of the ministry before contemplating any transition in church governance. The Conference Ministers and Church Health Commission can provide you with additional resources and tools to make that assessment. Once you have an accurate understanding of what is or isn't working, as well as an awareness of "how to do church" more effectively in your context, you are then ready to start the search for the kind of governance structure you need to get from "here" to "there."

Included in this manual is a "Church Governance Evaluation Form" to help you launch that discussion with your current leadership team. It is tempting to hurry through or bypass this part of the journey, but time well spent on the front end of the task will yield considerable dividends later. Thoughtful preparation now will make it more likely that the new design will find support and be accepted in a smooth transition. It will also increase the lifespan of the new structure, enabling it to serve you well for an extended period of time.

## An Important Reminder...

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The only genuine and reliable motivation for making a comprehensive organizational change is the prayerfully tested prompting of the Holy Spirit. Change - no matter how essential and positive - is always a challenging and stressful process. This is especially true when adopting something as significant and pervasive as a new governance structure. In many cases a whole new way of "doing church" is replacing an old but very familiar system.

It is imperative that you have laid a solid spiritual and relational foundation on which to build before you proceed. Attempts by a few key leaders to impose a new framework on a distrustful congregation are doomed to fail. A culture of higher and healthier trust needs to be cultivated and nurtured throughout the transition.

We strongly suggest that your leadership group include an assessment of trust as part of this evaluation stage.\* Six key factors can be used to measure and deepen the trust factor:





# Understanding Key Issues

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**STRENGTHS**

What is working well?

**WEAKNESSES**

What is missing or needs improvement?

**OPPORTUNITIES**

What possibilities do you see?

**THREATS**

What obstacles have you identified?

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**Describe accurately your current reality:**

# Reflection Checklist for Church Governing Boards

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## ✓ Consider the big picture:

1. What has God called you to do?
2. What are your hopes and dreams?
3. Which of your responsibilities are you handling well?
4. Which ones need attention?
5. What obstacles are you facing?
6. What opportunities do you see?

## ✓ Issues sorted by importance/urgency:

1. Brainstorm a list of possible goals.
2. What's really important?
3. What's urgent, but not important?
4. Which issues feel most pressing to you right now? Why is that?
5. If you could improve just one ministry area, what would it be?

## ✓ Priority issues identified and concurrence established:

1. Where do you want to go?
2. What priorities will you focus on?
3. How strongly do these priorities connect with your values?
4. Who needs to embrace these priorities?
5. What changes are needed to obtain concurrence?
6. How will you cultivate agreement on the priorities?

## ✓ Commitment to address issues obtained:

1. How committed are you?
2. What are you willing to invest in this?
3. What will you stop doing to free up time and energy?
4. What will you start doing to focus your efforts?
5. What will you continue doing?
6. Who can help encourage and assist you?
7. What accountability structures will help you maintain focus?



SECTION

3



# Choosing Your Governance Structure



## Choosing Your Governance Structure

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**T**HIS SECTION of “Building A Leadership Team” provides you with several basic templates that are suitable for use as a format for local church governance. Our churches are not restricted to choosing one of the following designs. You have the freedom to “order off of the menu” and develop one that is uniquely your own. These models do reflect systems that have been used effectively by our churches or in denominations with a kindred spirit in theology and polity. In many cases you will be able to borrow and compare copies of by-laws and transitional governance ideas from other EC Churches that will inform and expedite your own efforts to fashion a governance structure. It may not be necessary to “reinvent the wheel.” You may be able to customize an existing system to fit your present or projected context for ministry.

Each of the following designs has been used to advance the gospel and glorify God. All of them possess both strengths and weaknesses. A chart has been developed to provide you with a generalized overview of some of the contrasts and comparisons between them. This analysis attempts to be neutral, but is by necessity simplified and limited in its assessment. It is not intended to favor one structure over the others or to be a critique of any, merely an objective guide as to some of their distinguishing features.

In addition to the chart there is a written summary of each of the structures offering a more complete description of the options. In order to be faithful to a “principle based” philosophy of governance, these definitions have been kept basic and concise. It is for the church to elaborate on the outline and put “flesh on the skeleton” so as to adapt it to your needs and situation. Like any team, your leadership group will combine different skills, experiences, and opportunities that make it unlike any other. Be sure to maximize the gifts and graces of the “players” God is bringing to you. Make the most of your “home field advantage.”

# PREAMBLE to leadership model options

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**G**OVERNANCE in a local Evangelical Congregational Church starts with the congregation. The Discipline requires at least one annual meeting of the congregation “to review the work of the year, consider local opportunities and needs, and elect leaders and officers required by the Discipline or by the by-laws of the congregation. (The congregation) shall hear reports concerning the work, present status, and future program of the Church and of its organizations and societies, shall make recommendations to the Official Board/Ministry council, and shall transact such business as may come before it.”

A healthy congregation will invest in their chosen leaders the authority to set the mission and govern the ministries of their church. This representative body (the leaders) can be structured in a variety of ways.

The traditional Evangelical Congregational structure is the Official Board. This structure is weighted towards property interests (trustees), pastoral interests (stewards), and traditional ministries. This has served our churches well as a decision making body.

An alternative Evangelical Congregational leadership structure is the Ministry Council. This structure is most effective when designed to accomplish the stated mission of the church. Decision making is delegated to those doing the ministry while the Ministry Council reviews policy according to mission. When using this structure, the budget becomes the means of control.

There are times when it is appropriate for the leadership of the congregation to be formed around the vision of ministry of a pastor or pastoral staff. A core group of leaders attuned to that vision are then brought together to guide the ministry of the church.

While these options all have many features in common there are ways in which the central emphasis varies between them. Perhaps we can generally differentiate between these four possible structures by seeing the first as focused on decision, the second on mission, and the third and fourth on vision.

*Find out what a church's people can do and plan that, before planning its structure, forms and organization. Let the church's self-identity be revealed. (Attributed to George Patterson in Knocking Over the Leadership Ladder, by Paul Ford.)*

# Leadership Model Options

## General Comparisons and Contrasts

Model	Advantages	Challenges	Pastoral Role	Comments
<b>OFFICIAL BOARD</b>	<p>Traditional Decision Oriented Democratic Brings all key leaders to the table</p>	<p>Property/Finance Focus Administrative/Maintenance Orientation Emphasizes checks &amp; balances</p>	Pastor serves on governing body	Most adaptable to small & medium size churches
<b>MINISTRY COUNCIL</b>	<p>Contextual Ministry Oriented Representational Allows for broader balance and emphasis on the mission</p>	<p>Requires better communication and more trust Raises the bar on leadership competency and responsibility</p>	Pastor shepherds the governing body	Most adaptable to medium and larger churches with clear PMVV statement
<b>PASTOR LED</b>	<p>Intentional Vision Oriented Authoritative Provides necessary direction and decision-making while leadership team is being built</p>	<p>Until leadership team is expanded it may limit ministry to pastor's ability Could become authoritarian</p>	Pastor chairs the governing body	Most suitable for church plants and restarts
<b>STAFF LED</b> (Team Approach)	<p>Relational Vision Oriented Cooperative Broadens the leadership base, brings the capacity to address complex and large scale ministry, allows for specialization</p>	<p>Greater challenges for communication and coordination Large degree of separation from congregation as a whole Requires higher levels of proficiency</p>	Pastor(s) serve as leadership group (coaches)	Adaptable to any size church, allows for expansion over time and formation of separate visioning and administrative boards (councils)

# Official Board Model of Development

FOR EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

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**T**HE OFFICIAL BOARD MODEL represents the traditional, historical format for local church governance in the EC Church. In that capacity it has served well for churches of varying sizes and in many different settings. In addition to familiarity, the Official Board has the advantages of simplicity and intimacy, bringing most of the key leaders “to the table” for every leadership meeting. It has the potential disadvantage of being weighted towards a focus on matters of Property and Finance if organized along customary lines with a preponderance of Trustees and Stewards. For the Official Board model of governance to be most effective it is highly recommended that the various groups represented (i.e. Stewards, Trustees, Missions, etc.) meet separately and do their work prior to all Official Board Meetings and report actions and recommendations to the group. When this happens the Official Board is then free to spend its time considering the greater vision and mission of the church. This requires strong leadership on the part of the pastor and the Official Board president and discipline on the part of the president of the Trustees and Stewards.

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Much of the following is adapted from the **2004** Edition of the *Discipline of the EC Church*, Section 312.

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## Purpose

The Official Board shall serve as the administrative body of a particular congregation, conducting the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregation subject, however, to the right of the review vested hereby in the Local Conference. Under no circumstances shall the Official Board usurp or infringe upon the duties and powers, as well as the right of administrative review, vested by the Discipline in the Local Conference or others.

## Membership and Organization

The membership of the Official Board shall consist of the pastor(s), the lay delegate to the National Conference, the class leaders, the trustees, the stewards, the general superintendent of the Sunday School, the president of the senior Christian Endeavor Society, the youth ministries representative, the president of the adult Missionary Fellowship or the chairperson of the local Missionary Committee, the church treasurer, and the chairman of the local board of Christian Education, all of whom shall be members of the congregation in good standing. Should any of the above persons be under legal age (18), they shall be advisory members. The congregation at the annual meeting may authorize the election of additional members to the Official Board. When authorized, such additional members shall be elected annually by the Official Board at the meeting following the annual congregational meeting, unless the congregation at the annual meeting has already elected such members. The number of additional members shall not exceed the number of trustees.

The Official Board will elect its officers (president, vice president, secretary and any others deemed necessary) annually at a meeting convened as soon as possible after the annual congregational meeting. The

Board will also elect or appoint a church treasurer from among its members or the congregation. The treasurer will present a financial report to the Board at each of its meetings and complete the monthly and annual fiscal report forms required by the National Conference. The Board Secretary will maintain an accurate record of the minutes of all its proceedings. These minutes shall be open to the members of the congregation for inspection. The overall duties of the Board Officers shall be those customarily expected of their office, unless otherwise specified.

## Meetings

The Official Board shall meet regularly, usually on a monthly basis. Due notice of each meeting shall be provided to all Board members. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Board President or Pastor or at the request of four members of the Board. The Official Board shall also provide for and call the regular and special meetings of the Congregation.

## Responsibilities

Subject to the rights and powers reserved to the Local Conference, the Official Board is charged with administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation, receiving members into the congregation, approving and disapproving requests for letters of transfer, concerting the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, supervising the administration of the various societies or officials of the congregation. The Board shall have authority over the uses made of the church building and other property. It may also appoint standing or special committees as needed. Standing Committees traditionally included an executive, property, and membership committee. When not a regular member of a committee, the pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member.

Historically the duties of the specific office holders included on the Official Board can be summarized as follows:

**CLASS LEADER(S)** Originally local church members were organized into several classes (small groups) each of which was overseen by a class leader. The class leader was a lay person who assisted the pastor in shepherding a segment of the “flock” and in disciple making. Class leaders also served as prayer meeting and Bible study leaders.

**STEWARDS** Traditionally Stewards were elected at a session of the Local Conference from a ballot of nominees provided by the pastor. Stewards are tasked with meeting with the pastor annually to negotiate his compensation package starting from the guidelines set by National Conference. They also are charged with seeing that adequate housing is provided for the pastor and for the provision of the communion emblems for the Lord’s Supper.

**TRUSTEES** Traditionally Trustees have been given responsibility for the maintenance and purchase of the church facility and property. Where the congregation is not yet incorporated, the Trustees hold and receive title to the property for the use of the congregation. They may be authorized by the Official Board or at a congregational meeting to represent the church in negotiations to buy, sell, or lease church property.

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The most recent description of these traditional offices appears in the **2004** edition of *The Discipline of the EC Church* in paragraphs 314, 315 and 322. The **2004 Discipline** is archived on the website [www.eccenter.com](http://www.eccenter.com).

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*Every church using the Official Board model should develop a companion set of By-laws consistent with the principles of this Governance Manual and the requirements of the current “Discipline” of the EC Church. The by-laws should clearly define the offices and duties of all office holder included on the Board. They should also specify how Board members are appointed or elected, their terms of office, and procedure for filling vacancies in office. Finished by-laws will provide a practical definition and explanation of the unique variant of the Official Board model developed and used by your congregation*

## Links

**TO THE CONGREGATION** – The Official Board should be in constant & regular communication with the congregation at large. It is required to hold at least one annual congregational meeting at which it reports on its actions and conducts the business and elections that may be required by the by-laws or Discipline.

**TO THE LOCAL CONFERENCE** – At least once a year the Official Board will convene in Local Conference. This means that it may be joined by the Conference Minister and any holders of EC ministerial credentials assigned (located) at that congregation by National Conference. This reconfiguration provides for a point of connection between the local congregation and National Conference where matters of joint concern defined by the governance manual and Discipline are addressed.

**TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE** – The most significant linkage is through the annual election of a Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate at Local Conference to represent each church at National Conference. Together with the pastor these delegates provide every congregation with a voice at National Conference and ownership in its decisions. The delegates serve as the liaisons between the denomination and individual congregation.

# Ministry Council Model of Development

## FOR EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

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**T**HE MINISTRY COUNCIL model traces its roots to permission given to churches in the 1990's to explore "Alternative Organizations." The intent was to provide freedom to design and test governance structures enabling local churches to become more missional in the context of their community. As a result of this successful experiment, authorization for churches to adopt a Ministry Council Structure was approved for inclusion in the 2004 edition of the Discipline.

The Council structure benefits from being built around leaders who represent key ministry areas of the church which reflect the purpose, mission, visions, and value of the congregation as a whole. This more balanced and holistic approach to governance tends to result in a more outreach, growth-oriented congregation. Since in most council designs each major ministry is represented by a single person, there is a greater need to communicate discussions and decisions to other members of the wider ministry team. Council members may be required to wear multiple leadership "hats," serving on the council as well as a ministry commission or committee. This structure works best when it is trust-oriented and permission-giving in nature, empowering individuals and groups to do the ministry, while the Council focuses on the "big picture" of vision, goals, and overall mission of discipling.

### **Purpose**

The Ministry Council shall serve as the administrative body of a particular congregation conducting the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation subject, however, to the right of the review vested hereby in the Local Conference. Under no circumstances shall the Official Board usurp or infringe upon the duties and powers, as well as the right of administrative review, vested by the *Discipline* in the Local Conference or others.

### **Membership and Organization**

The membership configuration of each Ministry Council may vary greatly from church to church because its structure should reflect the purpose, mission, vision, and values of the local congregation and facilitate the fulfillment of the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Every Ministry Council must include the pastor(s), the lay delegate to the National Conference and church treasurer. They will be joined by a leader (chairperson) representing each of the major ministry areas (commissions/teams) designated by the congregation as necessary to be directly represented on the council as the governing body of the church. Churches with council governance have usually established "commissions" to oversee the following essential areas of ministry: Evangelism, Discipleship, Property, Worship, Missions, and Finance. These groups may be re-combined and renamed as deemed best in the local context. The aim is the development of a system that promotes church health in terms of missionality, spirituality, and functionality.

Additional ministry representatives or at-large members may be added as the church determines, but their number should not exceed those of the core ministries identified by the congregation. Council members shall be members of the congregation in good standing. Should any of the above persons be under legal age (18), they shall be advisory members. It is up to the local church to determine how Council members are

selected and by whom. In some current Ministry Council configurations individuals selected to chair a ministry commission are given a seat on the council by virtue of that position. In others, leaders are selected to the Council and then appointed to serve on or lead a particular commission.

At the next regular Council meeting after the annual congregational meeting, officers should be selected. Typically they will include a Chairperson (president), Vice Chairperson, (Vice president), Secretary, Treasurer, and others deemed necessary. The treasurer will present a financial report to the council at each of its meetings and complete the monthly and annual fiscal report forms required by the National Conference. The Secretary will maintain an accurate record of the minutes of all its proceedings. These minutes shall be open to the members of the congregation for inspection. The overall duties of the Council Officers shall be those customarily expected of their office, unless otherwise specified.

## **Meetings**

The church may determine the frequency and scheduling of Ministry Council meetings. It is recommended that the governing body convene at least on a bimonthly basis. Due notice of each meeting shall be provided to all Council members. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson or Pastor or at the request of four members of the Council. The Council shall also provide for and call the regular and special meetings of the Congregation.

## **Responsibilities**

Subject to the rights and powers reserved to the Local Conference, the Ministry Council is charged with administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation, receiving members into the congregation, approving and disapproving requests for letters of transfer, concerting the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, supervising the administration of the various societies or officials of the congregation. The Council shall have authority over the uses made of the church building and other property. It may also appoint standing or special committees as needed. Standing Committees traditionally include an executive and membership committee. When not a regular member of a committee the pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member.

*Every church using the Ministry Council model should develop a companion set of By-laws consistent with the principles of this Governance Manual and the requirements of the current "Discipline" of the EC Church. The by-laws should clearly define the offices and duties of all office holders included on the Council. They should also specify how Council members are appointed or elected, their terms of office, and procedure for filling vacancies in office. Finished by-laws will provide a practical definition and explanation of the unique variant of the Ministry Council model developed and used by your congregation.*

## Links

**TO THE CONGREGATION** – The Ministry Council should be in constant & regular communication with the congregation at large. It is required to hold at least one annual congregational meeting to which it reports on its actions and conducts the business and elections that may be required by the by-laws or Discipline.

**TO THE LOCAL CONFERENCE** – At least once a year the Ministry Council will convene in Local Conference. This means that it may be joined by the Conference Minister and any holders of EC ministerial credentials assigned (located) at that congregation by National Conference. This reconfiguration provides for a point of connection between the local congregation and National Conference where matters of joint concern defined by the governance manual and Discipline are addressed.

**TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE** – The most significant linkage is through the annual election of a Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate at Local Conference to represent each church at National Conference. Together with the pastor these delegates provide every congregation with a voice at National Conference and ownership in its decisions. The delegates serve as the liaisons between the denomination and individual congregation.

# Pastor Led Model of Development

## FOR EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

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**T**HE PASTOR DIRECTED MODEL is most appropriate to a new church plant, or a congregation going through the process of restart or revitalization. It is assumed in all of our leadership models that the pastor functions as the primary leader of the congregation and serves as the point person casting a vision for ministry and gathering together a leadership team to pursue that vision. But where a congregation is still so “young” or small that a core group of leaders has not yet been identified and equipped, a solo lead pastor may by necessity be required to take on a wider array of leadership tasks than would be expected or desired in a more mature ministry. In most cases it is anticipated that Pastor Directed governance is a temporary structure that will be outgrown and replaced by another, broader-based model as soon as is practical for the health of the church.

This model has the strengths of being vision-oriented and focused. It enables a new work to be birthed or an older one to be renewed. It facilitates unity and decisiveness. It can have the weakness of being left in place for too long, creating an unhealthy, unscriptural dependency upon the pastor. Even a richly gifted and deeply committed pastor may limit the growth of ministry if he does not multiply and release additional leaders to share the opportunities and responsibilities for outreach and discipling. Every leader, including a church planter pioneering a new work from scratch, needs to be under accountability to someone else and in healthy relationship with others.

### **Purpose**

The Pastor Directed Model allows for a solo pastor with or without a small core group of leaders to administer and establish the work of a new or recovering church by conducting the temporal and spiritual affairs of that ministry. During this interim when many of the leadership structures built into other EC Churches can not be initiated due to a lack of qualified leaders, many of the functions of those groups will be carried by an individual pastor or a ministry launch team of just a few people. Even in this phase, however, the pastor directed structure shall under no circumstances usurp or infringe upon the duties and powers, as well as the right of administrative review, vested by the Discipline in the National Conference or others. In most cases ministries using this model will also function under the guidance and guidelines of the Church Planting Commission.

### **Membership and Organization**

The unique circumstances under which the Pastor Directed Model is likely to be deployed make it virtually impossible to lay out even a skeletal outline describing what this nascent leadership structure should look like. In many ways it is like a child still growing in the womb from conception to birth. It is recommended that the lead pastor consult and use the start up training and resources provided through the Church Planting Commission as he begins to develop a governance structure. The type of leadership team built should flow out of the purpose, mission, vision, and values God has given for the ministry.

Another important word of counsel is to begin with the end in mind. Examine the other leadership models presented in this manual. Make a tentative decision as to which option you anticipate adopting in the future. Find ways to lay a foundation in your fledgling leadership structure and selection of leaders that will position you to transition to the system you have chosen when the time comes.

Since an official “church membership roll” isn’t created until a church is chartered, membership in a traditional sense cannot be used as a criterion for leadership eligibility. An even greater emphasis than usual needs to be placed on issues of character, spirituality, giftedness, and shared vision when selecting leaders for the team. Initially the lead pastor may need to be more involved in things like minute taking and financial record keeping than is ideal. For the sake of accuracy and accountability these are responsibilities that should be shared or delegated with qualified lay leaders as soon as possible. Individuals with the potential to become leaders or officers in the developing structure should be cultivated.

## Meetings

The pastor will determine the frequency and scheduling of leadership meetings. It is important to free people up to do ministry rather than tie them up attending unnecessary meetings. At the same time meeting together helps build relationship and reinforce a common vision.

## Responsibilities

Subject to the rights and powers reserved to the National Conference and others, the lead pastor and leadership team are charged with administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation, in line with the purpose, mission, vision, and values developed for the ministry. The pastor and leadership team are responsible for building a strategy for disciple making and outreach. As the ministry grows, the leadership structure will need to grow with it and make decisions regarding the model of governance it will choose to implement. It must be remembered that structure is but a means to an end, not an end in itself. The system should serve and support ministry, not exist to sustain itself at the cost of ministry. In many cases “less is more” and the simpler the system, the more likely it is to be able to reproduce itself more rapidly.

Every church using the Pastor Directed model should be preparing to select a more developed model as the growth of the church allows and requires. At that time By-laws and other supporting documents and structures can be developed as needed in order to facilitate healthy ministry.

## Links

**TO THE CONGREGATION** – The lead pastor and leadership team should be in constant & regular communication with the congregation at large. For the most part business will be conducted through personal relationships and networking rather than formal meetings. As the group grows it should consider the wisdom of holding at least one annual “congregational meeting” to use in part to plan for “the next steps” in accomplishing the mission and reaching for the vision.

**TO THE LOCAL CONFERENCE** – Prior to chartering there is no provision or requirement for an Official Local Conference to be held. Issues generally assigned to that session will be cared for by the pastor and leadership team working with the Conference Minister or Church Planting Commission.

**TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE** – Prior to chartering, the church is not authorized to select a Lay Delegate but can choose representatives who will attend National Conference in an advisory/non voting capacity. These representatives serve as the liaisons between the denomination and individual congregation.

For the Pastor directed model to be used outside of the church plant, restart, or revitalization guidelines of the Church Planting Commission, prior permission must be obtained from the Supervisory Committee of the National Conference. At all stages the Pastor Directed model must operate within and under the requirements of the current Discipline, Rules of National Conference, and strategy and policy of the Church Planting Commission.

# Staff Led Model of Development

## FOR EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

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**T**HE STAFF LED LEADERSHIP paradigm may most commonly be considered for use in a larger, multiple staff congregation where the scale and complexity of leadership is perceived to have outgrown the effectiveness of the Official Board or Ministry Council Model. In this setting a structure is needed which can integrate and infuse the vision of the “pastoral team” through several supportive layers of leadership. In some cases the solution is to create an overall governing board which focuses on the development of vision, direction, and general policy for the ministry. This vision is then entrusted to another level of staff or commission leadership for actual implementation and the creation of procedures, processes, and programs that facilitate daily operations.

It is possible however, that a Staff Led or Team Leadership style structure could be the next step of development from a Pastor Led model or even employed in a church plant. In this case a less hierarchical and more relational “co-pastor” approach might be pursued simultaneously with the creation of a vision-focused governing board or council. There are also team-based structures that seek to organize ministry on a more connectional, networking basis.

### **Purpose**

The Staff Led Model intentionally broadens the leadership base so as to maximize the capacity of the structure to expand and specialize as needed. It has the advantage of embracing a team approach to ministry that finds unity in sharing a common vision. Its ability to separate supervisory tasks (visioning) from administration (management) may enable the ministry to remain more effective and efficient while continuing to grow in size and scale. At the same time a team-based structure can also be used to facilitate the multiplication of groups and leaders on a more localized level. In this form leadership develops organically, in more of a networking style.

The challenges of the staff led approach come in the areas of communicating and coordinating the vision at all levels. In larger churches there may be a greater need to formalize job descriptions and procedures so as to clarify roles and responsibilities. The governing board and staff need to work together in a mutual partnership. The group that does the vision casting must remain connected to the groups that care for the ongoing operations of the ministry. Both of these leadership bodies must stay linked to the congregation as a whole. Since more leaders are needed to populate this structure, the capacity to equip and release gifted leaders becomes crucial.

### **Membership and Organization**

This format has many different variations and can be modified in numerous ways to reflect the opportunities and history of a given congregation. Typically an overall board or council is established and charged with the development and evaluation of the purpose, mission, vision, and values of the ministry. This main governing body usually consists of the pastoral staff and key lay leaders selected for their spiritual maturity,

character, wisdom, and gifting to oversee the congregation from a “big picture” perspective. “What has God called us to be? Who has He commissioned us to reach?” Together this group clarifies the focus. Other officers or representatives may be added to the leadership core group as needed.

Beneath this vision oriented group there is usually another level of leadership organized to carry out the mission and fulfill the vision. This “layer” could consist of as many ministry commissions or teams as the church deems necessary to its healthy functioning. These commissions or teams could be led by staff members, pastoral or lay, or by chairpersons elected or appointed from the membership at large. This group may also be augmented by the addition of other officers or leaders as deemed best. Each of these “units” could have their own sub-set of committees or teams as best suits the situation and system.

## **Meetings**

The two-tiered (or multi-level) nature of this structure means that the schedule of meetings is more elaborate and must be worked out for each local setting. The overall governing board may meet on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis rather than month to month. Meetings of the “middle level” commissions or teams may be monthly or on an “as needed” or “as agreed upon” basis. In this structure the pastoral staff or leadership team play a vital role in cultivating the vision and coordinating the functioning of the various parts of the structure. Informal networking becomes an important piece in releasing and deploying people for ministry, instead of tying them up in meetings. Person-to-person contact is supplemented by the development of a detailed budget and procedures/policy “manual” in order to provide the necessary degree of consistency and control to the system.

## **Responsibilities**

Subject to the rights and powers reserved to the Local Conference, the Staff Led structure is charged with administering the temporal and spiritual affairs of the congregation, receiving members into the congregation, approving and disapproving requests for letters of transfer, concerting the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, supervising the administration of the various societies or officials of the congregation. The governing body shall have authority over the uses made of the church building and other property. It may also appoint commissions, teams, standing or special committees as needed.

Major leadership groups should provide for the existence of their own executive committee. Adequate provision should also be made for the recording of minutes and keeping of financial records. The structure should establish a means of determining church membership. Members of the pastoral staff should be appointed to councils, commissions, or boards that represent the ministries for which they have major responsibilities. It is assumed that the senior or lead pastor will serve on an overall governing body and be at least an ex-officio member of the remaining primary leadership groups, as well as others that reflect his gifts and graces for ministry.

Every church using the Staff Led model should develop a companion set of By-laws consistent with the principles of this Governance Manual and the requirements of the current “Discipline” of the EC Church. The by-laws should clearly define the offices and duties of all governance groups and office holders. They should also specify how leaders are appointed or elected, their terms of office, and procedure for filling va-

cancies in office. Finished by-laws will provide a practical definition and explanation of the unique variant of the Staff Led model developed and used by your congregation. Larger churches may find it necessary to produce a companion manual of policies or procedures to expedite the functioning of their leadership system.

## **Links**

**TO THE CONGREGATION** – The Staff Led system should be in constant & regular communication with the congregation at large. It is required to hold at least one annual congregational meeting to which the overall governing body and its major sub-groups report on their actions, and conduct the business and elections that may be required by the by-laws or Discipline.

**TO THE LOCAL CONFERENCE** – At least once a year the highest governing body will convene in Local Conference. This means that it may be joined by the Conference Minister and any holders of EC ministerial credentials assigned (located) at that congregation by National Conference. This reconfiguration provides for a point of connection between the local congregation and National Conference where matters of joint concern defined by the governance manual and Discipline are addressed.

**TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE** – The most significant linkage is through the annual election of a Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate at Local Conference to represent each church at National Conference. Together with the pastor these delegates provide every congregation with a voice at National Conference and ownership in its decisions. The delegates serve as the liaisons between the denomination and individual congregation.

# “Essentials” Checklist for All Approved EC Governance Structures

SEE ALSO *THE 2008 EC DISCIPLINE* SECTIONS 320–326

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**F**OR THE SAKE OF UNITY to our core values and fidelity to a principle based approach to leadership, the following features must be incorporated into the governance structure of all of our churches. [In the cases of a church plant, restart, or revitalization work it is understood that some of these features may not be practical at the very beginning. They should be added to the system as soon as possible and prior to chartering.]

1. The lead pastor will be a member of the highest governing body.
2. Provision will be made for the election of a Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate to National Conference as defined by the Discipline.
3. Provision will be made for the election or appointment of representatives from the church to the District Ministry team the congregation is assigned to.
4. Provision will be made for a functional Pastoral Relations Committee as established in the Discipline and the Rules of National Conference.
5. Provision will be made for the highest governing body to meet and fulfill the duties assigned to the Local Conference by the Discipline and the Rules of National Conference.
6. Provision will be made for the timely and orderly selection of all office holders, along with the means of filling vacancies that arise mid-term.
7. Provision will be made for the selection of the officers of the highest governing body of the church who will also serve as corporate officers for the ministry.
8. Provision will be made for the development of a set of by-laws governing the congregation, and that these by-laws will be stated to be amendable by a favorable vote of the majority of the church membership at a meeting duly called and announced for that purpose.
9. Provision will be made for an Annual Congregational Meeting to be held as defined by the Discipline.
10. The structure must be subordinate to and compatible with the requirements of the Discipline and Rules of National Conference. Each congregation retains the right to own its own property and disaffiliate from the denomination, but only according to the procedure established by the Discipline.
11. All proposals for the development and adoption of a new governance structure must be reviewed and approved by the Supervisory Committee prior to its acceptance and implementation by the local church.

# The Local Conference

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**T**HE LOCAL CONFERENCE refers to special sessions of the highest governing body of the local congregation, which must be held at least once a year. When convened for this purpose the Official Board, Ministry Council, Leadership Team, or Governing Body is augmented by the addition of all itinerant and licensed EC ministers who are members of the congregation. They are joined also by the Conference Minister of the region who chairs the meeting when present.

A complete listing of the duties and details of the Local Conference is found in Sections 330–334 of the *Discipline*. The essential purpose of this session is to provide for an official and guaranteed connection between an individual congregation and the larger denominational family. It is while meeting as a Local Conference that elections are held for the Lay and Alternate Delegate who represent the church to National Conference. It is in this session that a pastoral compensation package based upon National Conference requirements and guidelines receives final approval. It is Local Conference that takes action upon candidates for ministerial credentials who will be referred to National Conference and its committees for processing. In cases where charges of misconduct brought against a church leader cannot be resolved at the local level through the *Discipline's* process for restoration, it is Local Conference that acts to refer the dispute to National Conference for resolution. The Local Conference also functions as a joint governing body caring for matters of common interest in a multiple church charge.



SECTION

4



# Moving to a New Governance Structure



## Moving To A New Governance Structure

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**O**NCE YOUR EXISTING LEADERSHIP TEAM (governing board) has worked through Sections 1-3 of this manual and settled upon a recommendation to bring to the congregation for a new governance structure, it is important to formalize the process. Paying careful attention to observe your current by-laws and leadership format is crucial. Not only does this demonstrate the integrity and honesty necessary for healthy church leadership, it also legitimizes and strengthens the new structure by clearly and firmly anchoring it to the foundation of the history and memories of what preceded it. You are free to build high in your future because your design is deeply rooted in the ministry's past.

While the pathway to adopting a new structure will vary from church to church, there are certain crucial milestones to observe along the way in every setting. Communicate frequently and thoroughly. Explain what you are doing and why. Anticipate possible objections or concerns. Develop a set of answers for the “frequently asked questions” you are likely to face. A lack of information and understanding leads to fear, and fear leads to resistance. Many excellent proposals have been rejected because they were not well presented or sufficient opportunity for input invited from those making the final decision. In most cases more than a majority vote at a congregational meeting is needed to change church by-laws. Do not leave the congregation as a whole out of the loop or in the dark until the day of the meeting. Bring them on the journey with you from the beginning.

Organize the transition. It is unlikely that a new system can be put in place in its entirety overnight. You will need to think through and plan out a means of phasing out what was, while bringing what is to be on line. You may need to allow for a brief interim period where elements of both the new and the old system overlap. In some cases you will be shutting down organizations or ministries that are no longer required. In others you will be creating groups from scratch or recruiting brand-new leaders to give them life. This is a process calling for patience and perseverance. Expect to spend a year or more simply “learning as you go.” It will take time until everyone feels at home in a “new normal” once again. Be positive and adaptable. Remember the vision that you are working for and keep promoting it.

Reflect as you are in transit. Take notes on what you learn along the way. You may need to make mid-course corrections. Give things time to settle down before making major modifications of something brand-new, but realize that there may be some surprises on the journey. The Lord saw them coming, even if you didn't. Be prepared to revisit and reassess them in due time. Remember not to hold too tightly to any structure. Governance is a tool, not an end product. Eventually the brand-new system you have labored to install will run its course, too. Having served God's purpose in “its generation,” it will need to be assessed and upgraded in its turn. You'll be all the better equipped to make that happen, having successfully traveled that road before.

The implementation phase can be complex and requires thoughtful preparation. A strategy for “closing down” the old format while bringing a new one “on line” must be developed.

Once again the “pathway” that is created to build the bridge from what was to what is will need to be customized to your unique local situation. In some settings it may be possible and preferable to simply terminate the old structure and launch its fully functioning replacement all at once. In others it may be best to design a timetable for more gradually phasing one system out and another in, allowing for a certain period of overlap between the two. Examples of churches that have made a similar change may be borrowed from, but ultimately the template you create must be your own.

The following outline contains a series of suggested steps which are likely to be a part of any effective transition strategy. You may find that not every stage is applicable or in the best order for making your move to a new governance structure. For completeness this sequence attempts to capture the entire process from start to finish, including the discussions and decisions covered in the previous chapters of this manual.

## Transitioning Sequence

- 1. Pray!** Launch & surround the entire process of evaluation, design, selection of leaders, and implementation with prayer.
- 2. Establish a governance study team.** This may be the existing leadership group or a special group appointed for the task.
- 3. Communicate!** This applies to every stage of the process. Keep the congregation informed about the possibility of change. Seek their input. In some settings you may want to obtain congregational approval to undertake the process.
- 4. Complete the governance study.** Work through Chapters 1 & 2 of the manual. Inform the Conference Minister of your progress and consider inviting his participation as a facilitator as you review and/or develop the purpose, mission, vision, and values for your church.
- 5. Select and design your governance structure.** Use Chapter 3 of the manual to shape your selection.
- 6. Present your recommended new structure to the governing body of the church.** Be prepared to explain and answer questions.
- 7. Present your recommended new structure to the congregation.** Be sure to consult your existing by-laws so that the decision is “beyond reproach.” Be prepared to explain and answer questions. Being well prepared at this stage will avoid unnecessary confusion and opposition later on. Consider requesting the establishment of a “trial period” of 6-18 months in which your current by-laws are suspended, and during which the new structure is set up and “tested” on a provisional basis, subject to final approval at a later date.
- 8. Finalize and implement your plan to bring the new structure on line.** This may require identifying, recruiting, and training new leaders for the new structure as well as reassigning or in some cases retiring

former leaders whose roles may be changed or phased out. A means of selecting leaders must be developed. Training in how the new system works is essential.

**9. “Road test” the new structure, evaluate and make preliminary adjustments.**

**10. Prepare a comprehensive new set of by-laws establishing the new governance structure for approval by the congregation.** This formalizes and finalizes the change for now. Expect the need to experience a full annual cycle or two under the new structure until everyone begins to find it familiar and feel comfortable with it. You may feel “in between” for some time.

**11. Periodically evaluate your structure. The governance needs of a healthy growing church may change, and every structure can be improved.** Be prepared to work through this entire process again in the future, if and when your structure is hindering your ministry from being effectively missional.



SECTION

5



# Resources and Bibliography



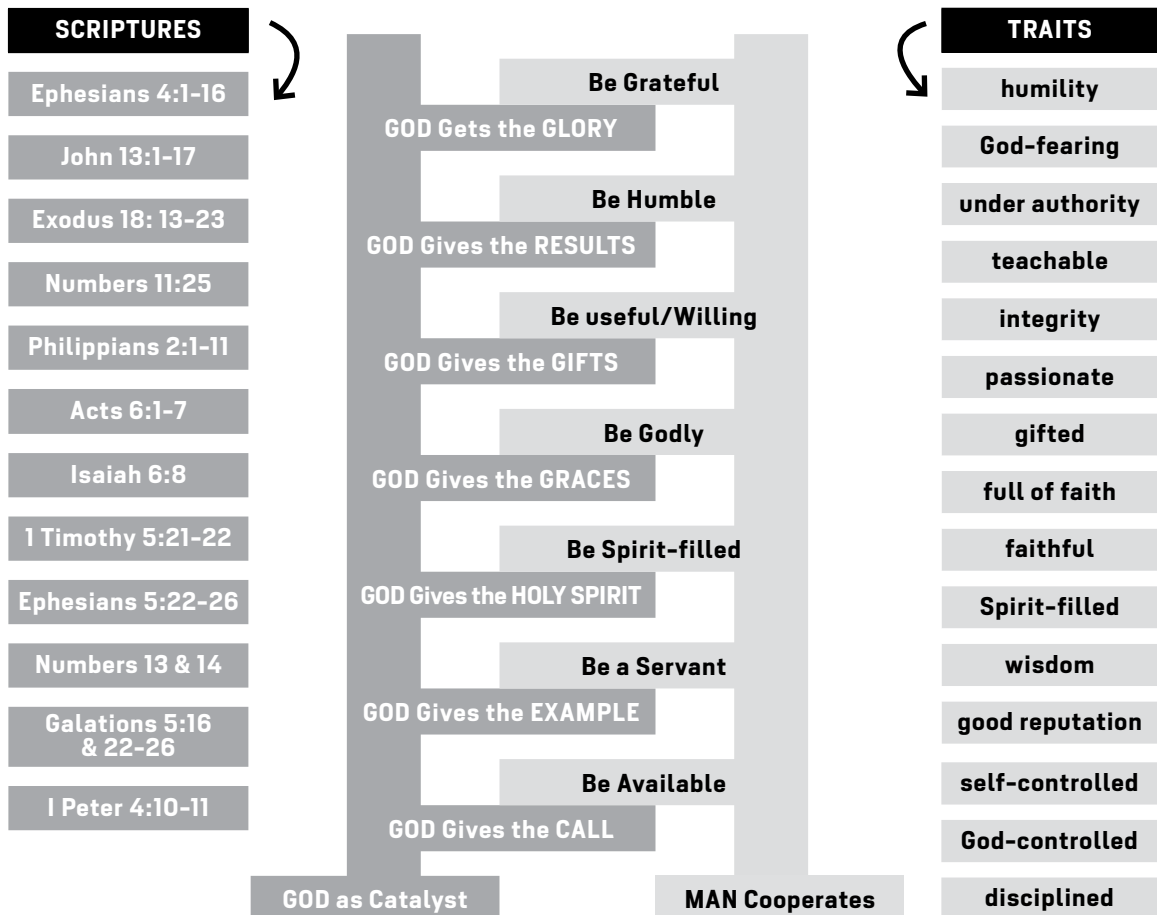
# Portrait of a Biblical Leader: a Bible study

## What does a Godly leader look like?

**G**ODLY LEADERSHIP is men and women responding to what God has done and what God is doing. Godly leadership is our response to God's call and our stewardship of the gifts that He gives. As believers we are called by God to active service in the various ministries of the church. In order to maximize the effectiveness of those ministries, God calls some into positions of leadership. Scripture clearly identifies the leadership principles by which those so called must be shaped. Leaders recognize that their gifts are given by God, confirmed by the Body, and operate with accountability to the Body. Leaders dedicate themselves to the development of those gifts for the good of the whole.

For the purposes of this study lets liken leadership to a simple ladder, with two rails and a series of rungs. One of the rails is God as the Catalyst who makes things happen. The other rail is the leader who cooperates with God. The rungs upon which the Biblical leader climbs are created in the process as the leader cooperates with God. When (if) the leader ceases to cooperate with God, he has nothing left upon which to stand.

As you study, ask probing questions in response to the scriptures and your reflection upon the characteristics of leadership. For example: With regard to each rung where do I see myself on a scale of 0 to 5? What must I do to improve? How do I rate my church leadership with regard to this characteristic? How can we improve? How do I think others rate me? If the setting allows for a high level of accountability, ask others how they rate you. Ask: "How can I/we be and model men and women who lead according to these biblical principles?"



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Bobb Biehl, president of the consulting firm Masterplanning Group International, believes that decades of emphasis on setting goals has left many in the workplace feeling like second-class citizens. Most people find goal setting to be a major source of anxiety and frustration. Here, he sets out to expose the myth that goal setting is required for success in your business, career, and personal development. Instead, he argues, we can be very successful by simply identifying and solving strategic problems. You may never have to set another goal as long as you live. (from the inside flap)

Biehl, Bobb and Ted W. Engstrom. *Increasing Your Boardroom Confidence*. Multnomah Books, 1988.

Biehl and Engstrom do an excellent job of giving practical advice and help for board members of non-profit organizations, particularly churches. It provides insight for both the board chair and the board member. For instance, “If you cannot give your committee’s report in 5 minutes or less, your committee has not yet completed its work.” They advise how to streamline the work of committees and task forces, and the important elements in successful committee reports. (adapted from Amazon.com customer review)

Ford, Paul R, Robert Rummel, and Julie Becker. *Your Leadership Grip: Assessment Process*. 2nd edition. St. Charles, Illinois: Church Smart Resources, 2007.

Leadership is a series of functions carried out by a group of people, not just a job filled by one person. Leaders are commonly strong in two or three of these five areas: values keepers, team builders, listeners, vision sharers and equippers. The dynamic part of your leadership style grows from your spiritual gifting. There are many things that you do well, but only two or three that you do powerfully on a consistent basis. Finally, you will look at how your gifts function in a team setting. (from Amazon.com editorial review)

Ford, Paul R., Stuart Hoffman, and Julie Becker. *Knocking Over the Leadership Ladder*. Church Smart Resources, 2006.

This book is all about teamwork. It describes what it is to find your God-designed place in a team and how to celebrate who God has designed you to be. (Bruce Wagner)

The GMC Missions Handbook

Olsen, Charles M. *Making Church Boards into Spiritual Communities*. The Albann Institute, 1995.

“... provides a model for a new way of working on church boards that can be fulfilling instead of draining.” (Howard L. Rice, San Francisco Theological Seminary)

Young, David. *A New Heart and A New Spirit: A Plan for Renewing Your Church*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984.

David Young has created a resource that will aid local congregations in planning their own experiences of renewal ... Young explores the Biblical basis for renewal and focuses on developing the unique strengths inherent in every church so that renewal can happen.

## Transitional Resources

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“Leading Congregational Change,” Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, James Furr, Leadership Network Publications

The authors collaborate to produce one of the most thorough and clear explanations of the process of leading change in a local church. Contains many “step by step” descriptions and examples.

“Managing Transitions: making the most of change,” William Bridges, Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1991

This is a classic work in distinguishing transition from change. Knowing how the two differ is crucial in a process like restructuring. The text also explains the three necessary stages of making a successful transition.

“Our Iceberg Is Melting,” John Kotter, St. Martin’s Press, 2005

Another modern-day parable on understanding and leading change. It reminds the reader that people respond to change differently, and makes suggestions for how best to help them move through the process.

“Stuck,” Terry Walling, Church Smart Resources, 2008

“Transitions: Making Sense of Life’s Changes,” William Bridges, DaCapo Press, 2004

“Who Moved My Cheese?,” Spencer Johnson, G. Putnam & Sons, 1998

An easy and enjoyable “allegory” on the realities of change. A good book for helping people understand what they experience through a major transition.

“Who Stole My Church?,” Gordon McDonald, Thomas Nelson, 2008

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If you have additional resources for inclusion, please send suggestions to Jodi Earhart at [jeahart@eccenter.com](mailto:jeahart@eccenter.com).

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# Governance Manual



Made available by the Leadership  
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TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN

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