

Foreword

YOU 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 – “like 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

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.

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.

“Building A Leadership Team – a Governance Manual for Local Churches” is designed to help your church develop a functional leadership structure. Churches are not required to change their existing governance format, but 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.

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

