

ORGANIZING CONGREGATIONS/JUDICATORIES FOR MISSION

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

1. All change starts with **mission** and **vision**. Effective ministries (judicatories and congregations) are **missional** (mission determines behavior) and **visionary** (a preferable future determines present behavior).
2. Mission determines why an organization exists. Mission driven organizations are clear about both the behaviors they practice and those they avoid. The mission is the determining factor in making such choices.
3. Vision provides emotional fuel to pursue the mission, especially when the vision goes beyond the needs of the organization. It changes present behavior so an organization can achieve the preferable future. If stated correctly it produces accountability in enabling an organization to determine whether or not the vision will be achieved.
4. However, **mission** and **vision** will not last and become part of an organization's DNA unless both the underlying **values** of the organization change and the **structure (the way the entity is organized)** changes to reflect new values and enhance the pursuit of the mission and vision.

In my opinion it is most difficult if not impossible to get to the true underlying values of an organization. And even if possible the time and effort to do so, is not worth it since it detracts from conducting the mission and achieving the vision.

However change in structure will surface the real values and enable you to work at implanting new ones. Structural change touches power, turf, and money (which are often the most core and value laden issues in any organization). It deals with the significance of people and whether that significance lies in the accomplishment of mission or the validation of people's worth.

5. The goal in any organization is alignment. I am suggesting that unless the alignment between mission, vision, values, and structure is consistent that change to mission and vision will not occur or last for the long term. I am also suggesting that the way to produce the alignment, once the mission and vision are established, is by changing structure to enhance the accomplishment of the mission and vision. This in turn creates values that are consistent with the mission and vision.

THE PROBLEMS WITH ALL CURRENT ECCLESIASTICAL STRUCTURES

1. All structures were designed hundreds of years ago and take find their basis more in the politics of the times than in the scriptures. I would also suggest that God has not stated clearly any particular structure for His church. I would go further and suggest that the New Testament reveals great flexibility when it comes to structure in the Church.
2. All current structures are designed to keep congregations and judicatories small and in the informational world of the 21st century, ineffective. That is why all larger congregations in all denominations have to “wink” at the prescribed structures in their tradition in order to function well. It is also why larger judicatories function so poorly and are encumbered at Annual Meetings with organizational work that sucks the life out of mission and vision.
3. The biggest issue that must be dealt with in structure is the relationship of “control” to the ability to “trust”. In the *real world of church governance* “control” is much more important than “trust”. All current polities are more focused on “control” than “trust”. The two major ways this is accomplished are as follows:

Bureaucratic Model: Divides authority and responsibility and provides no consistent accountability – It is safe but not effective.

Authoritarian Model: Combines authority and responsibility while providing no consistent accountability – It is effective but not safe.

(Most national denominational bodies move back and forth between these two models to control people and avoid systemic change).

4. The practical result in most congregations and judicatories today is the creation of two problems. The control of people is crucial in order not to upset organizational balance (the status quo). Accountability is ignored since it requires results and maintaining the status quo is a higher value than producing fruit. The result is a model where there are numerous control mechanisms that result in the following:

The leaders control the ministries of the organization to see that people do things a certain way.

The laity control the leadership of the organization to see that the leaders do things a certain way.

Leaders and laity treat each other like children, because doing things a certain way is more important than bearing much fruit.

5. The results of control based structures are:

- Loss of mission and vision
- Declining people and dollars
- Loss of morale, faith, and hope
- Focusing on the dysfunctional rather than the islands of health
- A remnant theology coupled with the value of smallness as the standard of holiness
- A devaluation of leadership and leaders

BASIC CONCEPTS BEHIND THE NEED FOR A NEW STRUCTURE.

1. The first key issue is the development of a trust paradigm. In the trust paradigm:

The leaders entrust the ministry of the Church to people to see that people bear much fruit.

The laity entrust the leadership of the Church to the leaders to see that they, the leaders bear much fruit.

Leaders and the laity treat each other like adults because bearing fruit is more important than doing things a certain way.

2. The second key issue is that transformational and missional leadership is demanded and expected from leaders. Leaders are expected to lead and are held accountable (positively or negatively) for results.

3. Accountability must be built into the system. In fact authority, responsibility, and accountability must be connected together through out the entire organizational system. However accountability is fundamental for an effective structure that enhances mission. If strong leaders are going to be given both authority and responsibility they must also accept rigorous accountability.

4. There must be the elimination of bureaucracy in order to enable leaders to have the time and energy to lead.

4. Pragmatically the new structure must be workable in all current polity systems, assuming that legitimate adaptations can be made in each distinct system. Even though the new structural model creates its own system, it is really a new way of thinking about and creating new processes for current systems or structures.

GOALS FOR THE NEW MODEL

1. The new model must enable the organization to achieve its missional and visionary goals, while reflecting values consistent with the mission and vision. However, it must also fit goals that enable the organization to function in the modern world with all the demands and expectations that such functioning requires.

2. Corporate Goals (Functioning in a first world nation in the 21st century)

Identity of the corporation in accordance with state and federal laws
Demonstrate financial, legal, and human integrity and protection
Deal with corporate assets related to dissolution
Fix denominational ties and responsibilities
Allow for proper and procedural changes in policies and documents

3. Mission and Vision Goals

Determine Mission, Vision, and Strategy
Honor leadership and create maximum flexibility when changes are required
Describe the organization theologically and ecclesiastically
Define and determine the role of the board, the leader, the staff, and the community and their missional and organization relationships to each other

THE ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP MODEL

1. This model has its basis in the work by John Carver. However it is difficult to bring Carver directly over into the church world:

Carver assumes a group (the board) can lead, I do not assume such
Carver makes the board chair and the leader co-equals, I do not
Carver's four layers of policies/principles creates its own bureaucracy

2. John Kaiser has developed Carver's work in order to make it fit the church world.

The pastor (or judicatory person) is the leader, not anyone else or any other group
The pastor (or judicatory person) as the leader faces rigorous accountability
Hence the name, the accountable leadership model

3. In this model there are four distinct groups or individuals, each with specific roles:

The board governs
The pastor or judicatory person leads
The staff members manage
The congregation (or the congregations) conduct the ministry

GOVERNANCE

1. The board governs the church or judicatory by composing and enforcing guiding principles that authorize the pastor or leader to lead either the congregation or congregations toward fulfilling the mission of the organization. These principles are:

WRITTEN: If it is not written the board did not say it

CONCISE: Keep it simple

AVAILABLE: Every board member has a copy at every meeting

BROAD: Begin with the broadest concepts and move to detail as needed

2. A healthy board governs through principles that:

Define the responsibility of the leader

Delegate authority to the leader

Require accountability from the leader

3. The board governs it does not:

Lead the organization

Manage the organization

4. The board develops three categories of principles:

Mission principles prescribe for the leader the outcomes the board expects the organization to achieve. They are written in terms of ends not means. They determine what differences will occur, for whom they will occur, and by what degree (how much).

Boundary principles circumscribe what the leader can do by telling the leader ahead of time what the leader cannot do. They address the areas of worry that people have (theological concerns, financial integrity, legal liability, and the treatment of people). The principles are stated in the negative as prohibitions. They are stated in the broadest terms first and then restricted until the board becomes comfortable. The board allows the leader to interpret them in a reasonable manner.

Accountability principles are addressed to the board chair who makes sure the board fulfills its accountable responsibilities to the moral owners (God first and the congregation or congregations second), the board itself, and the leader. The board chair ascertains that the board holds the leader accountable for missional objectives and for staying within the boundaries. The board chair holds the board accountable to stay with governance and not stray in leadership or management.

5. Once the board has developed the principles the primary reason for meeting, after dealing with accountability issues, is to empower the leader and to spend time discussing future issues that will confront the organization as the mission is implemented and the vision is achieved. The board should spend far more time in being trained as leaders and focusing on the future than dealing with either the past or the present.

LEADERSHIP

1. A healthy leader has been given very clear direction about what her/his responsibilities are in leading the organization. The leader and the board have agreed together on the mission and vision. It is understood that achievement in implementing mission and achieving vision are the leader's responsibility.
2. The leader is clear about the leader's authority since the leader and the board have agreed together where the boundaries lie that limit what the leader cannot do, allowing total freedom within the boundaries to act.
3. The leader and the board have agreed on that which the leader will be accountable for understanding that reward will come with fulfillment and that penalties will come with lack of fulfillment. It is also understood that the leader will only be held accountable for the agreed upon objectives (specific, behavioral and measurable yearly goals) and for staying within the stated boundaries.
4. Therefore the board expects timely and complete reports from the leader.
5. This also means that the only link between the board and the staff is through the leader since staff members work for the leader.
6. Also all financial, legal, and facility areas of the organization are under the leader's control and must be dealt with by the board through missional and boundary principles.
7. The leader is leader of both the organization and the board. The board chair's role is one of a referee making sure the board and the leader act according to the principles.

STAFF MEMBERS

1. The staff members manage the operations (ministries) of the organization.
2. The staff members work for the leader.
3. Each staff member has her/his own areas of responsibility, authority, and accountability.
4. The leader is able to set clear objectives (yearly goals that are specific, behavioral, and measurable) since the leader demands that staff members do the same for the areas of the organization they oversee.

CONGREGATION OR CONGREGATIONS

1. Every member or member congregation is actively engaged in ministry that is designed to help the entire community accomplish the mission and achieve the vision.
2. In local congregations this means focusing outward. In judicatories it occurs as congregations are transformed and then begin reproducing.
3. Members of the community approve a few broad decisions as it fits the appropriate polities and traditions of a particular denomination.

THE RESULTS OF SUCH A STRUCTURE

1. The leader is freed and protected to develop corporate behavior that stays on target with the mission and vision.
2. Each year there is a clear accounting. When the missional and visionary goals are achieved there is a great time of celebration that provides motivation for accomplishing even more effective ministry the next year. It enables you to feel the “fly wheel effect” that Collins talks about in Good to Great. When goals are not achieved it is rather easy to determine why not and who in particular is responsible.
3. It allows the leader to do the things the leader always thought ministry would be about before the leader became fully engaged in the Christian Ministry.
4. It focuses prayer enabling people to pray for the right issues and the right people.
5. It generates financial resources and attracts high caliber leaders (human resources).

Dr. Paul D. Borden
ABCW Executive Minister

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