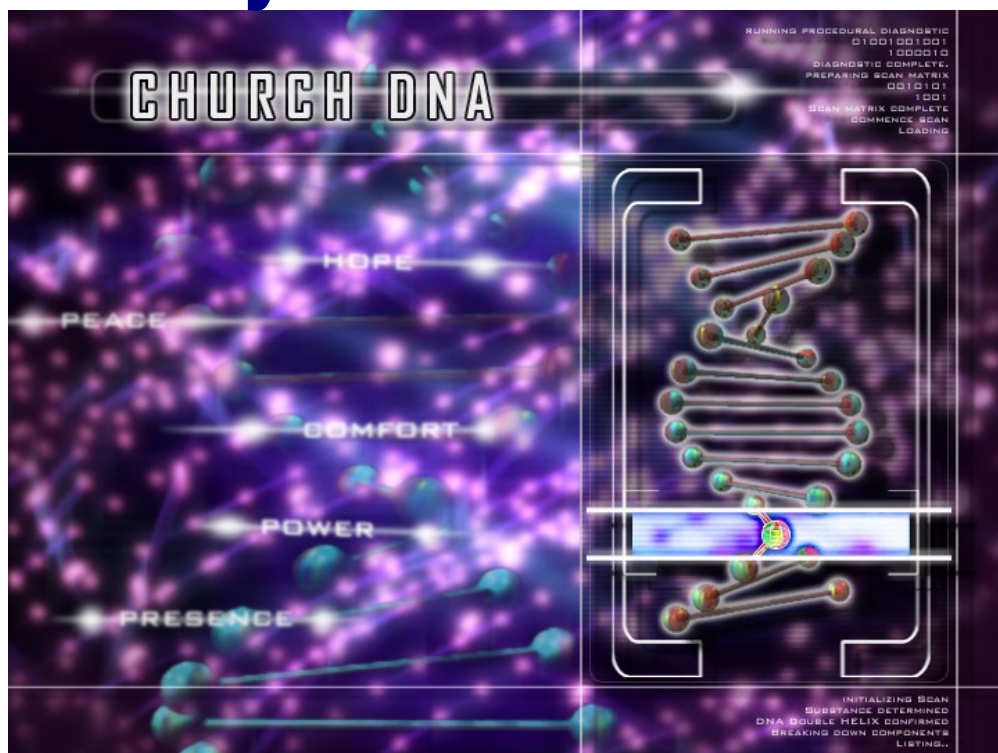


Structural Issues

by Kent R. Hunter



1. Operate with a leadership group or team who are chosen for their spiritual qualities, led by the pastor. Individuals who are involved in other small teams of ministry throughout the church can report to the leadership through personal contact with one of the leadership group team members. They should not attend the leadership group unless they are invited or if they feel compelled to attend and obtain permission. In other words, help them to work through a liaison who is a part of the leadership group.
2. Identify the board or committees in the church as ministries. Put the focus on service, not on talk or decision making.
3. Each ministry should have its own budget, with allocations of budget expenses by the quarter. Empower ministry areas to utilize their quarterly budget without requiring permission or approval outside the budget process. Ask the treasurer to monitor the expenditures of each group and also adjust them to the seasonal financial fluctuations that occur in the congregation.
4. Do not use quotas for boards, ministries, or teams. If no one is available to serve in a certain area, simply disband that area, recognizing that the head of the Body, Christ, has not raised up someone to serve in that area of ministry. Free yourself from guilt concerning this until someone is raised with a passion and the gifts to do that ministry. This is along the lines of what Henry Blackaby has written about: focus on what God is doing, what God is blessing. This is a significant departure from deciding what to do (by democratic vote) and then praying for God to bless it!
5. Do not set rules for quorums unless required by law. When faithful members come together and serve on a ministry and must make decisions, they are greatly discouraged when their time is wasted because other people do not appear. Yes, this can be risky, but it also provides incentive for people to be present. Provide a high bar of expectations concerning ministry



participation as people enter the process. It is more productive to have a few people on a ministry team who are active than a larger number of people, only half of whom show up.

6. Add dimensions to the ministry staff. Staff from within the congregation and recognize you can grow a staff through increments. These increments include the following:
 - (1) Part-time volunteer.
 - (2) Full-time volunteer.
 - (3) Occasional, seasonal, temporary, or interim, paid person.
 - (4) Part-time, paid person.
 - (5) Full-time, paid person.
 - (6) Interim person, ordained.
 - (7) Occasional, seasonal, temporary, ordained person.
 - (8) Part-time, ordained person.
 - (9) Full-time, ordained person.
 - (10) Occasional, seasonal, temporary, commissioned person.
(Commissioned means someone who does ordained work but who structurally, or politically, you are unable to ordain.)
 - (11) A part-time, commissioned person.
 - (12) A full-time, commissioned person.

7. Those in the leadership group should be people who have no term limits. They can be ratified by the congregation annually. This gives the congregation opportunity to raise an objection but does not make the process a political contest. Objections should always be handled privately. Resist public humiliation of anyone at all times. Those who are in leadership positions are allowed to remove themselves from leadership with 30 days notice. They can also return to that ministry after a season, following a rest, while they are away from the church, or when other circumstances require them to be suspended temporarily.



8. Work toward making sure there are few other elected teams. Operate with those who have an agreement to serve, who are focused on the task. Look for those people who have a God-given passion and the spiritual gifts to operate in that area of ministry.
9. Most important, practice the discipleship lifestyle. This means each person in the congregation has a "project." Everyone has someone they are mentoring, they are apprenticing, they are discipling. This is the lifestyle of the New Testament Church, equipping others to do the work of ministry. When this takes place, the multiplying factor of ministry changes the expansion of the church from growth to multiplication and the Body of Christ moves beyond being an institution to becoming a movement.
10. I recommend your leadership team be no more than 6-9 people. Many leadership teams are too large.
11. Concerning pastoral check and balance, utilize a leader from the outside as a visitation connection to your ministry. In the New Testament, this was one of the roles of the apostles.
12. In addition, make sure each Elder and staff person has one or two accountability prayer partners.

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