

Developing and Training a Leadership Team

It must be noted, that within the local church the greatest opportunities and best resources may exist for successfully accomplishing ministry, but without efficient leadership the Christian church will experience inertia. Efficient leadership has an enormous powerful influence on the overall success of the Christian church. Therefore, leadership as individualism is no longer an option; we can't grow up by ourselves to the full stature of Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:13). It is my humble opinion that, 'Team Leadership' provides for the balancing of weaknesses and strengths in the leadership practice, guards against the aspiration for independence and conceit, establishes effective structures for accountability and recognition of the unique contributions of each leader.

Developing a team leadership approach can be quite simple and straightforward however, it cannot be an "add on" or a one-step transition to utopia. The process involves four distinct phases that require extraordinary diligence.

Phase 1 is the preparation phase and involves: (1) Practical work: this includes studying, thinking, reading, visiting other churches where a team leadership approach to ministry is practiced, attending seminars and conferences, and doing whatever else one can do to expand and deepen one's knowledge of the best ways to create and support team leadership. (2) Imaginative work: this requires envisioning a new approach to leadership and ministry, and visualizing how this would be setup and led. And finally, (3) Political work: this demands sharing with others and building consensus for the preferred future.

Phase 2 is the direction setting. This phase call for: (1) clarifying vision, (2) establishing mission statement, (3) developing values, and (4) modeling the team leadership culture by the pastor and elders' board. Phase 3 is the designing phase. In this phase: (1) developing a new culture mechanisms, (2) creating a visible structure, and (3) tuning and establishing

organizational processes are the main focus. And finally Phase 4 the Implementation phase. This phase involves executing the new model of leadership by (1) educating the church, (2) selecting leadership teams and assigning a ministry portfolio, (3) developing and training leadership teams, and (4) formalizing the new structure.

There are two crucial aspects of team leadership development. These are team developmental stages and team practices. Teams naturally evolve through crucial identifiable developmental stages. Each stage defines the specific needs and identifies the process necessary for the team's success. Bruce Tuckman, who developed one of the most renowned¹ characterizations of team development, identified four stages. They are forming, storming, norming, and performing stages.² If leaders are well acquainted with one another and have worked together for years, then more attention can be dedicated: to developing and defining goals, roles, responsibilities, and authority appropriately. Secondly, building trust and initiation into problem-solving skills. And thirdly, providing opportunities for leaders to practice working as a team and sharing the experience of collective goals accomplishment.

In developing healthy leadership, the following team practices are essential:(1) healthy God-given relationships, (2) collaborative visioning, (3) shared values, and (4) straightforward procedures. To facilitate these practices, leadership retreats are helpful opportunities for developing and engaging leadership team in exercising of these team practices. retreats are also times for spiritual and relational renewal. These retreats can be

¹M. K. Smith, "Bruce W. Tuckman: Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing in Groups," Encyclopaedia of Informal Education, www.infed.org/thinkers/tuckman.htm (accessed May 19, 2009).

²Bruce W. Tuckman, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," *Psychological Bulletin* 63, no. 6 (1965): 384-399.

divided into three sections: focus on God, focus on the leader's development as a leader and focus on ministry competencies and skills required for effective and efficient leadership.

It is imperative that adequate resources are allocated for leadership training.

Excellence is achieved through consistent practice. Many churches have great leaders, however they are not able to execute their ministry portfolios effectively because they have not been equipped. Workshops and seminars are excellent educational formats for communicating new ideas and training new leaders. To maximize the effectiveness of workshops and the seminar experience, the services of professional consultants are strongly recommended.

With pressing demands of routine church life, it's not always easy to think about devoting time and resources to leadership development in many local churches. But in the long run, it will be an investment well spent.

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