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Organizational Behavior

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The Importance of Organizational Structure Within A Church

When constructing any sort of building, there are many elements that must be factored in before, during, and after the construction is complete. “What is the purpose of the building?” “Do we have enough materials to continue construction?” “How will we maintain it ?” These are the sorts of questions the architects must ask. Without this information, the building will not be able to meet the needs or purpose it was intended for. On a more societal level, similar structures can be found. Entities such as Uber and McDonald’s share similar questions. “What will be the products/services we will be providing?” “As an organization, how can we grow?” “What is our mission?” Attesting to their reputations and influence, they have gone to extreme lengths to ensure that their structures are stable. On a community level, can the same be said and applied for local churches? In many instances churches lack the critical thinking and organization to maintain and grow their faith based operations. Lack of understanding it’s historical identity, inefficient application and practice, and misplaced spiritual guidance are what causes some local churches to close or suffer the risk of closing. In order to prevent this outcome, the church and it’s leaders must first understand it’s organizational roots.

The viewpoint a majority of christians have concerning the administrative aspects of the church are of a black and white perspective. Once someone suggests a framework similar to an organization of the secular world, they are met with resistance. Believing that the church should be built with a different framework. However, the Bible teaches otherwise. Both the old and new

testaments of the Bible are riddled with figures who were skilled at organizational structure; conveying elements such as: delegations, planning, decision making, communication, and design.

In Exodus 18: 21-22 Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, saw the stress Moses was putting himself into; acting as the only one who will give counsel to the people of Israel. Seeing the inevitable burnout, Jethro suggested to Moses the concept of delegation to lighten the weight off Moses' shoulders and build a better leadership framework. In the Book of Nehemiah, planning and decision making are essential narratives found in the text. When he saw the condition the walls of Jerusalem were in, he plotted a manageable direction in order to rebuild the dilapidated walls. Once Nehemiah was met with slackness from the people concerning the wall's construction, he made the decision to have them build the areas of the wall closest to their home. Which in the grand scheme of things aided in it's construction. As for the new testament, the existence of the letters Paul wrote to the churches value the importance of communication. Through these letters Paul sent instruction, correction, and positive recognition which he used as tools to convey a larger message to his intended audience. Finally from a macro perspective we have the world which God created. Great detail and attention was put into making this complex universe. Supporting this universe would be impossible without a properly designed framework; a structure only God can build. No matter if it be in the books of the Bible or the universe at large, the Lord has given His followers tools to build a proper organizational structure for any church. However, it is up to the church to apply them.

Just as a physical structure has it's cornerstones serve as a means of pinpointing the parameters of the building and playing the crucial role of supporting the future structure, so should the church's organizational design. One of the crucial cornerstones in building the

church's design should be understanding it's identity. The church is not only a place of worship for it's congregants, but also a public benefit for the community; also known as a nonprofit as described by the Washington Nonprofit Handbook. The church's role in a community is very important. People have left their life of crime, alcohol and/or drug consumption thanks to church. Not to mention, people who have had mental and physical illnesses miraculously be healed. Once the regular and new members begin to congregate, what type of protocols and procedures will the leaders have to enforce? This is when the management cycle should be applied.

With a set group of leaders committed and an understanding of identity, the next phase would be application and practice. Which will be put into motion by the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of the leaders. As mentioned in the fifth chapter of Cengage's Principles of Management, S.M.A.R.T. goals should be the template used for the planning process. Goal making should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Without any sort of planning, it would be impossible for the church to operate in the first place. The leaders must realize the weekly operations of the entity; including the policies and procedures which contribute to the governing of the organization. Once there is a solid foundation of planning, the ideas which were in the planning process can now move to the next phases.

The organizing, directing, and controlling of the plan will be the determining factors whether the planning process was successfully executed. As the church begins to grow, the development of: departments, positions, and programs must be established. Giving thought to the roles and purposes they have in the larger church narrative. Once the proper people have been chosen and trained the directive phase can be put into motion. Through delegations, the pastor or any other leaders will no longer be needed to oversee the education department or the women, men, youth, and children ministries. Sub-leaders can now be placed in charge of their

respective responsibilities. Now with a larger framework of leaders, more detailed meetings must be established; discussion whether the ministry or department roles are being fulfilled correctly within the parameters of the church's mission. Throughout the execution of the cycle the guidance of the Lord is needed in order to properly control and oversee the operation. The bylaws of Cornerstone Church give a reminder the type of organization it is. Some churches are founded without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Not factoring in the leadership of the Lord in a church can be compared to building a robot with no operating system. While the management cycle may hold the key to maintaining and growing a church it is purposeless without God's guidance.

In such a complex world, it is mandatory to have a set order to how operations are to be executed. No matter the size of the operation, organizational structure must be developed and maintained. Major construction projects and corporations understand the importance to having a stable organizational structure, the local church should be no different. However, the organizational structure of many churches fall due to the lack of identity, ineffective application and practices, and misplaced spiritual guidance. Understanding its organizational roots within the Bible, assimilating the use of the management cycle, and being lead by the Holy Spirit will help shepherd the church's leaders into developing a fortified structure effective and suitable to be used for the God's will.

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