Building the Trusted Team: Governance in the Church

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Building the Trusted Team

George I. Butler and the "Great Man" model of leadership.

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...when we became a fully organized body, and several men were chosen to act in responsible positions, it was the proper time for my husband to cease to act any longer as one man to stand under the responsibilities and carry the heavy burdens. This labor devolved on more than one.

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When this power which God has placed in the church <u>is accredited to one man, and he is invested with the authority to be judgment for other minds, then the true Bible order is changed</u>...Satan's efforts upon such a man's mind will be most subtle and sometimes overpowering, because through this mind he thinks he can affect many others...*<u>God never designed that His work should bear the stamp of one man's mind and one man's judgment.</u>*

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* vol. 3, page 493

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The Church is centralized for the purpose of coordination, not control.

The Church is decentralized, not for independence, but so that it might be responsive to local situations.

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In the SDA Church:

1. Membership is the basis of organization.
2. Status is conferred by another group; one does not confer status on oneself.
3. The decisions are representative and constituency-based.

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4.   Authority is rooted in God and distributed
            to the whole.

Various cultures view power and authority differently.

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Individualistic cultures focus on the individual and reward the individual.

There is generally a distrust of authority.

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Communal cultures focus on the group and seek cooperation and harmony. The individual should not "stick out."

There is a strong respect for authority.

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The nail that sticks out gets pounded down.

Japanese Proverb

The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

American Proverb

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Scriptural Guidelines for Authority:

1. Authority should be distributed.

    Exodus 18:24-28

2. Authority should be arranged so as to protect the organization from abuse.

    Judges 9:1-4

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3. Authority must be exercised in the "fear of God."

    2 Samuel 23:2-4 and 1 Kings 3:9

4. Authority resides in a group rather than in an individual.

    Proverbs 11:14 and Matthew 18:15-18

    See also Acts 15:1-35

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In the SDA Church:

Authority is rooted in God and _distributed_ to the whole. _No one organizational part of the church has final authority in everything._

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- The local church makes decisions regarding membership.

- The local conference makes decisions regarding the employment of pastors.

- The local conference constituency makes decisions regarding the admission of churches.

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- The union conference makes decisions regarding approval of ordination.

- The General Conference in session makes decisions regarding the Church's Fundamental Beliefs, the GC constitution and bylaws, and the Church Manual.

- These most important decisions are made by groups.

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In the SDA Church continued:

5. The church operates on a committee-system model; as noted, decisions are made by groups.

Under this model, administration is shared. There is a three-officer team—President, Secretary, Treasurer

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So long as he remains consecrated, the man whom God has endowed with discernment and ability will <u>not manifest an eagerness for high position, neither will he seek to rule or control</u>...instead of striving for the supremacy, he who is a true leader will pray for an understanding heart, to discern between good and evil.

Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 31

Building the Trusted Team

1. Determine who does what and then preserve and respect boundaries.
2. Set up a schedule for officer consultations.
3. Frequent communication and review among officers. Trust takes time to develop.
4. Deal with conflicts internally.
5. Socialize to know each other better and to build respect.

Building the Trusted Team

Men whom the Lord calls to important positions in His work are to cultivate a humble dependence upon Him. <u>They are not to seek to embrace too much authority; for God has not called them to a work of ruling, but to plan and counsel with their fellow laborers.</u>

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies* vol. 9, p. 270

Boards/Executive Committees

Eccelesiastical System	Institutional System
"Executive Committee"	"Board of Trustees"
Membership elects Executive Committee and Officers	Membership elects Board; Board appoints Officers
Each entity part of the chain of organizations	Each entity a "stand-alone" organization
Many employees are voting members of the Executive Committee	Few employees are voting members of the Board
Executive Committee Chair – Internal	Board Chair -- External
Three officers accountable to Executive Committee	CEO primarily accountable to the Board
More involved in management of the organization	Less involved in management of the organization
Unincorporated status	Incorporated status

Boards/Executive Committees

Board/Executive Committee Members are:

> The trustees of the organization;
> They have a fiduciary duty to honor and uphold

Boards/Executive Committees

A fiduciary is:

Someone who acts for and on behalf of another in a relationship of trust.

Requires action at all times for the sole benefit and interest of the one who trusts.

Boards/Executive Committees

Therefore:

An individual who has a fiduciary responsibility must act not in his/her own interest but in the interest of the "owners" of the organization—that is, the constituency.

Boards/Executive Committees

Board/Committee Members have three fiduciary obligations:

The Duty of Care

The Duty of Loyalty

The Duty of Obedience

Boards/Executive Committees

The Duty of Care:

The manner in which the Board/Executive Committee makes decisions and oversees the organization, including the expected level of competence of the board members.

The Duty of Care requires board members to show independent judgment in voting.

Boards/Executive Committee

- Board education and orientation for new trustees
- Trustees attend meetings regularly
- Trustees receive background materials ahead of time so that they are adequately informed
- Trustees make decisions that reflect the best interest of the organization
- Trustees have access to experts; expected to obtain information from trusted sources

Boards/Executive Committee

The Duty of Loyalty:

Requires board members to show faithfulness to the organization and its mission.

Boards/Executive Committees

- Position is not used for personal advantage
- All conflicts of interest are disclosed
- Trustees maintain undivided allegiance to the organization when making decisions
- Trustees maintain confidentiality of privileged information

Boards/Executive Committee

The Duty of Obedience:

Board members require that the organization remain obedient to its purpose and role.

Board/Executive Committee

- Expect organization to be in compliance with governance documents
- Expect organization to comply with laws of the country
- Expect organization to fulfill commitments to owners, employees, clients, community, and government

Boards/Executive Committees

Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:

1. Institutional success is EC's primary responsibility.
2. Most important decisions are made by the EC.
3. Effective group decisions require deliberate designs in structure and social dynamics.
4. Good governance builds the members' trust.

Boards/Executive Committees

Qualifications of Members:

1. Will they comply with governance documents? Are they prepared to disclose potential conflicts of interest?

2. Will they have an appropriate range of expertise/diversity? Do they understand the organization and its work?

Boards/Executive Committees

3. Will they fairly represent the constituency?

4. Will they have sufficient time? Will they attend meetings on a regular basis? Will they do their homework and come prepared?

5. Will they maintain confidentiality of "inside" information?

6. Will they challenge assumptions and refrain from excessive deference to management?

Boards/Executive Committees

He who seems to be for you may be working against you.

Ghanaian Proverb

Boards/Executive Committees

Evidences of Groupthink:

1. Deference to the view of the leader or influential spokesperson for an idea.
2. Uncritically supporting an idea because it appears to be popular.
3. Unwilling to listen to dissent.
4. Unwillingness to express dissent to retain a favorable image with others.

Boards/Executive Committees

Essential Functions:

1. Set and maintain the strategic direction of the organization, as an SDA organization and based on the mission of the organization.

2. Establish key policies and strategies. Shape the future; not idealize the past.

3. Select, develop, and evaluate officers.

Boards/Executive Committees

4. Ensure adequate financial resources.
5. Build/enhance organization's reputation, which must include monitoring the organization's compliance with the law.
6. Provide adequate risk management.
7. Assess performance against mission.
8. Improve the committee's performance; exhibit a mindset for continuous improvement.

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Having a good discussion is like having riches.

Kenyan Proverb

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Questions to consider:

How can a leader, without the power of position, influence others?

How can a leader minimize the role of "politics" in organizational life?

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How does my culture affect, positively or negatively, the practice of leadership in the church?

How does a Christian perspective of power, leadership, and authority challenge or confront my culture's views and practices of authority?

What changes are needed? How will they happen?

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