

He listened, asked a few questions, and then looked up over his glasses at me and said, “Why are you asking me? You’re the pastor. I’m just a layman. Lead!” Earl’s attitude and trust resulted in four years of remarkable growth. May God increase his number.

4. Individual ministry calling may be confused with official board function. Of course, board members will frequently be individuals gifted to teach, exhort, administrate, shepherd, encourage, and lead. That is fine. But none of those things are necessarily what they should be doing as a sitting board.

The Role of a Church Board

If you have read *Leading Turnaround Churches*, you are already familiar with the 95 percent theory. That is, 95 percent of all major problems in a local church boil down to power struggles. One way to diminish these is for the board to clearly define what they will do and what they are going to delegate. I suggest the board limit their functions to the following:

- a. Determining the boundaries within which the church may function. This may be pictured as a box (see Figure 9-e).



FIGURE 9-E

You may wish to include some of the following when you label your box:

- ◆ Doctrine (include ethics, values, morals)
- ◆ Philosophy of ministry
- ◆ Constitution and By-laws
- ◆ Direction (detailed in the church Master Plan and one year goals)

The board retains the right to bring the walls of the defining box in as close as they deem proper or expand the walls of the box to allow for more freedom and wiggle room. But once the walls have been drawn, great thought and prayer should go into adjustments. Any modification should always be made as a full board. No one member of the board has the authority to adjust the box on their own. Adjustments to the box should be done with much discussion and deliberation, and then duly recorded in the board minutes. This box defines the boundaries within which the church pastor and staff can function. They will be held accountable for any action that transcends the boundaries of the box. But they will also be given much freedom to lead within the confines of the box.

- b. Determining the master plan (Where we are headed?). What ingredients uniquely define this congregation? What broad descriptive factors will guide our programming, facilities, and staffing? The critical thing here is for each congregation to celebrate the great freedom we have in some matters. Our plan will be as unique as we are. It will likely not be an exact replica of any other church. It is governed by assessing our current reality as a local congregation, taking into consideration our culture, location, demographics, personality, history, economics, and dreams. This is determined at the annual ownership meeting.
- c. Affirming and ratifying the one-year goals that will move the church toward its long-range Master Plan. The goals may be recommended by the staff or agreed upon together. Reality suggests that the staff should play a large part in forming the goals since they will be essential for implementing the goals throughout the year.
- d. Ensuring that the constitution and bylaws are followed, or making recommendations for amendment of them. Most constitutions

require the board to be involved in the sale or purchase of real property.

- e. Approving the church budget and making sure that it underwrites the priorities as determined by the master plan and one-year goals. Those closest to the budget lines should probably be given the responsibility to come to the board with their recommendations. Boards make poor committees. Boards, however, should have the privilege of looking over the budget proposal and asking any questions they have—and they should always receive whatever information they request. For a board to function properly, it must have full disclosure.
- f. Holding the senior pastor accountable. The board relates to the staff only through the senior pastor. The board is free to ask any question regarding day-to-day operations. The board has the authority to direct the pastor. But this is as a full board, not any individual member. Such directives should take place in a formal manner and should be in the form of adjusting the box, the master plan, or the goals. His annual evaluation should be based upon his ability to effectively implement the plan of the board.

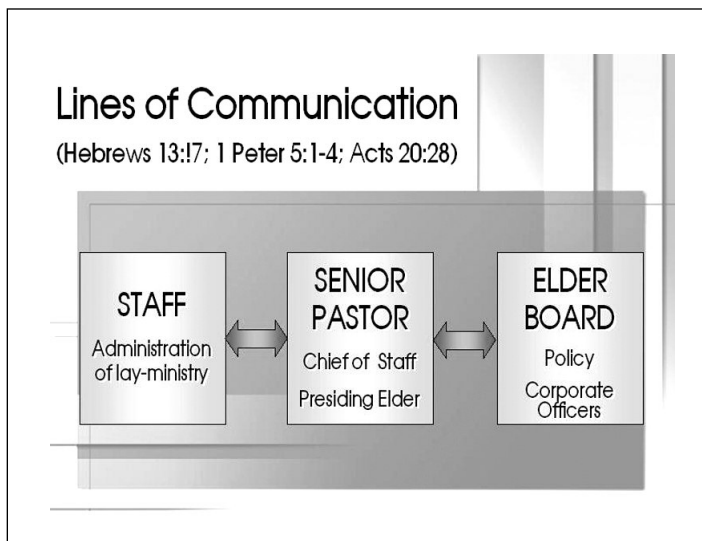


FIGURE 9-F