

## Transforming Church Boards

Sharing the Gospel is not one of the "10" things healthy churches do.

It is "the" thing  
(Acts 2: 36-41; 46-47)

## Transforming Church Boards

### A Critical Hypothesis

Most evangelical churches acknowledge the importance of sharing the Gospel. But they lack two things:

- \* a governance structure aimed at "growth" - not "maintenance"
- \* a clear understanding of God's specific direction for their local church (i.e. His distinctive vision for their church)

## Transforming Church Boards

Structure for Growth rather than Maintenance:

Clarifying Responsibilities

## Transforming Church Boards

Where did the "maintenance" structure of most churches come from?

The Industrial Era Business Model  
(Machine Model)

- Standardization
- Specialization
- Synchronization
- Centralization

Result?  
Leadership Hierarchy  
Employer – Employee Relationships

## Transforming Church Boards

Contrast:

1 Timothy 5:17 – *"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."*

- Single group of leaders (church board or council)
- **All** have a role in directing the affairs of the church
- But **some** also freed to preach and teach

## Transforming Church Boards

Q: How well does the leadership structure in this verse fit with church "maintenance structures" that were born out of the Industrial Era Business Model?



## Transforming Church Boards

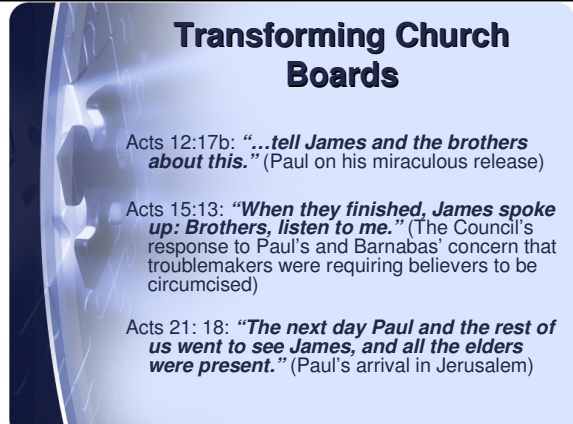
**Key Principle in Structuring for Growth:**

**“Mutual Accountability”  
rather than  
“Hierarchical Accountability”**



## Transforming Church Boards

**So there’s no leader???**



## Transforming Church Boards

Acts 12:17b: “...**tell James and the brothers about this.**” (Paul on his miraculous release)

Acts 15:13: “**When they finished, James spoke up: Brothers, listen to me.**” (The Council’s response to Paul’s and Barnabas’ concern that troublemakers were requiring believers to be circumcised)

Acts 21: 18: “**The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.**” (Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem)




## Transforming Church Boards

**There was a leader.** His responsibility seems to have been to facilitate Council functioning.

He was a kind of “**Council moderator**”

His name was James



## Transforming Church Boards

- But neither James the “moderator” nor the Council itself were the ones God chose to reveal His vision for the church. **Instead, God revealed the vision to a designated *vision leader*. And this *vision leader* was a “*preaching elder*.”**

– Acts 10: 9 - 16 – God reveals a sheet to Peter and tells him nothing is unclean (introduction of the Gentiles into the church)




## Transforming Church Boards

**But Peter didn’t feel empowered by God to “dictate” the church’s vision. Instead he presented it to the Council for acknowledgment and approval**



## Transforming Church Boards

- Acts 11 – Peter then explains the vision and its meaning to the Council at Jerusalem.
- The Council's response? Acts 11:18 – *“When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, ‘So then God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.’”*
- The Council embraced the vision Peter presented to them.
- **NOTE: God didn't give the vision to the Council nor did He use them to generate it.**



## Transforming Church Boards

**But then what is the role of a church board? What should a church board be doing to lead the church?**



## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Church Board

1. Assess church health
2. Determine theological/practical church boundaries
3. Establish major policies
4. Coach the Senior Pastor
5. “Approve” (not necessarily generate) church's direction/ vision or strategic plan



## Transforming Church Boards

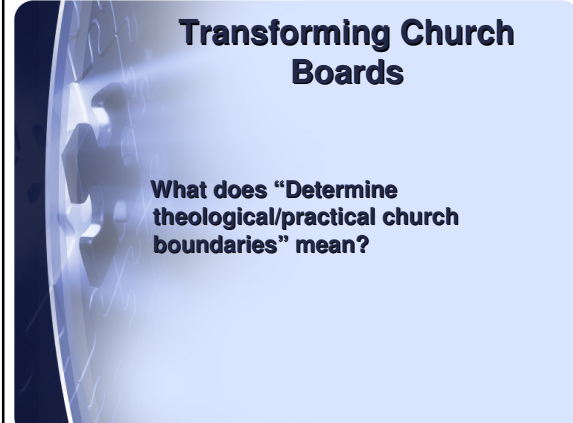
What does “assess church health” mean?



## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Church Board

1. Assess church health
2. **Determine theological/practical church boundaries**
3. Establish major policies
4. Coach the Senior Pastor
5. “Approve” (not necessarily generate) church's direction/ vision or strategic plan



## Transforming Church Boards

What does “Determine theological/practical church boundaries” mean?

## Transforming Church Boards

- **Some examples of “theological/practical boundaries:”**
  - **The church’s response to “emergent theology” and ministry to young adults**

They believe that Christians say one thing but live something entirely different.

They believe Christians are insincere and concerned only with converting others.

## Transforming Church Boards

- They believe Christians show contempt for gays and lesbians.
- They believe Christians are boring, unintelligent, old-fashioned, and out of touch with reality.
- They believe Christians are primarily motivated by a political agenda and promote right-wing politics.

## Transforming Church Boards

They believe Christians are prideful and quick to find faults in others.

### So how will our church respond to them?

- Ignore them?
- Reject them?
- Reach out to them? How?

## Transforming Church Boards

- **Other theological/practical boundaries:**
  - How do we respond to the growing issue of divorce?
  - What is our church position regarding undocumented immigrants?
  - How should our church seek to more intensely engage the community?
  - What should we be doing about racial/ethnic reconciliation?

## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Church Board

1. Assess church health
2. Determine theological/practical church boundaries
3. **Establish major policies**
4. Coach the Senior Pastor
5. “Approve” (not necessarily generate) church’s direction/ vision or strategic plan

## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Church Board

1. Assess church health
2. Determine theological/practical church boundaries
3. Establish major policies
4. **Coach the Senior Pastor**
5. “Approve” (not necessarily generate) church’s direction/ vision or strategic plan

## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Church Board

1. Assess church health
2. Determine theological/practical church boundaries
3. Establish major policies
4. Coach the Senior Pastor
5. **“Approve” (not necessarily generate) church’s direction/ vision or strategic plan**

## Transforming Church Boards

What do you mean we “approve” but don’t “generate” the church’s direction and plans?

## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Pastor

1. **Uncover and cast the church’s vision/direction**
2. Lead, coach and evaluate the staff (paid or volunteer)
3. Enforce theological/practical church boundaries
4. Participate as a full member on the Board
5. Solve tomorrow’s problems

## Transforming Church Boards

### Uncovering the Vision/Direction of the Church

1. No one should care about the “pastor’s vision.”
2. People want to know “God’s vision” for their church
3. The pastor simply “uncovers” God’s vision for a local church

## Transforming Church Boards

- The Pastor uncovers the church’s vision? Isn’t that still too much power in the hands of the Pastor?
- It can be - but it doesn’t have to be
- Should include a congregational voice in the process

## Transforming Church Boards

### Seeking the Pillar of Fire:

Begins with focus group meetings with the church’s Leadership Community

- What are the 2 or 3 greatest gifts God has given this church?
- What are 2 or 3 of the greatest opportunities God may be laying before this church?
- What is your God-given dream for this church?



## Transforming Church Boards

**Seeking the Pillar of Fire:**

- The Senior Pastor goes “up the mountain”
- The church is on its knees
- God speaks



## Transforming Church Boards

**Seeking the Pillar of Fire:**

- The Pastor shares the vision with the Board for their approval – not editing – is this vision consistent with Scripture?
- The vision is shared with the congregation



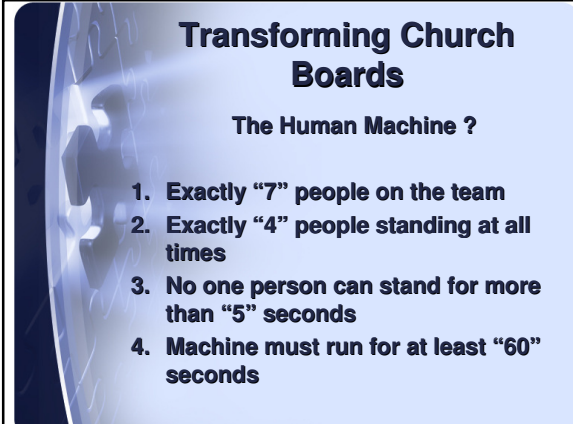
## Transforming Church Boards

**Seeking the Pillar of Fire:**

Strategic Planning and the Leadership Core

Why not the Board? – not qualified

How do staff come to own this vision?



## Transforming Church Boards

The Human Machine ?

1. Exactly “7” people on the team
2. Exactly “4” people standing at all times
3. No one person can stand for more than “5” seconds
4. Machine must run for at least “60” seconds



## Transforming Church Boards

**Seeking the Pillar of Fire:**

1. Strategic Plan Reviewed and Approved by the Board
2. Strategic Plan “Rolled Out” to the Congregation
3. Implementation



## Transforming Church Boards

Role of the Pastor

1. Uncover and cast the church’s vision/direction
2. **Lead, coach and evaluate the staff (paid or volunteer)**
3. Enforce theological/practical church boundaries
4. Participate as a full member on the Board
5. Solve tomorrow’s problems



## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Pastor

1. Uncover and cast the church's vision/direction
2. Lead, coach and evaluate the staff (paid or volunteer)
3. **Enforce theological/practical church boundaries**
4. Participate as a full member on the Board
5. Solve tomorrow's problems



## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Pastor

1. Uncover and cast the church's vision/direction
2. Lead, coach and evaluate the staff (paid or volunteer)
3. Enforce theological/practical church boundaries
4. **Participate as a full member on the Board**
5. Solve tomorrow's problems



## Transforming Church Boards

### Role of the Pastor

1. Uncover and cast the church's vision/direction
2. Lead, coach and evaluate the staff (paid or volunteer)
3. **Enforce theological/practical church boundaries**
4. Participate as a full member on the Board
5. **Solve tomorrow's problems**



## Transforming Church Boards

### Breakout No. 1

**For Board Members:** What are "4" stupid things boards sometimes do?

**For Pastors:** What are "4" stupid things pastors sometimes do?



## Transforming Church Boards

### Key Principles for a Church Board that Will Position Them for Mission Impact



## Transforming Church Boards

### "7" Key Principles for Boards

1. The Board represents the "full" ownership of the church
  - a. Legally: the members of the congregation
  - b. Morally: the denomination; the conference/district
  - c. The "mission" (?)
2. The Board must speak with one voice – and one voice only.
  - a. Not who speaks the loudest (passion)
  - b. Not who gives the most

## Transforming Church Boards

### "7" Key Principles for Boards (cont'd)

3. The Church Board has "one" direct report
4. The Church Board "approves" but does not necessarily "generate" church ministry plans

## Transforming Church Boards

### "7" Key Principles for Boards (cont'd)

5. The Church Board is accountable for the "oversight" of church operations
6. The Church Board must avoid the creation of a "risk-averse" church culture

## Transforming Church Boards

### "7" Key Principles for Boards (cont'd)

7. The Church Board should help and encourage the Senior Pastor to minister from his/her "sweet spot"

## Transforming Church Boards

Vince Lombardi

Vs

Don Shula

## Transforming Church Boards

### Breakout No. 2

Meet with your jurisdictional leader

## Transforming Church Boards

### What Makes a Board Meeting Worth Coming To?

1. The existence of a non-fluid agenda and a commitment to following it
2. A Board Leader/Moderator who creates an atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to share



## Transforming Church Boards

### What Makes a Board Meeting Worth Coming To? (cont'd)

3. Making sure that "Pastors Reports" are distributed ahead of time and not necessarily presented in detail at the meeting
4. Celebrating successes



## Transforming Church Boards

### What Makes a Board Meeting Worth Coming To? (cont'd)

5. Clear differentiation of the Leader/Moderator of the Church Board and the Church Treasurer
6. Giving up the notion that "if we don't...it won't"



## Transforming Church Boards

### The Last Word

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. Acts 1:8-9 (NIV)



## Transforming Church Boards

### The Last Word

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1-4 (NIV)



## Transforming Church Boards

### The Last Word

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people." Acts 2:14-17 (NIV)



## Transforming Church Boards

### The Last Word

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39 (NIV)



## Transforming Church Boards

### The Last Word

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:41-42 (NIV)



## Transforming Church Boards

This is our inheritance

How will we pass it along?