

Growth Points

Gary L. McIntosh, Ph.D.

11/1/16

Volume 28, Issue 10

Building Board Unity

A number of years ago, professor Robert Munger of Fuller Theological Seminary conducted a survey to determine the satisfaction of board members. One of the questions he asked was, "Since serving on a church board, do you feel your spiritual life has improved or declined? The answer? Eighty percent of board

answering this question in the negative?

Four Causes

Board members point to the following four issues as the causes of negative board participation.

First, there is often confusion over goals. Is the church . . . Focused on

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members said their spiritual life had declined while serving on a church board. How would you answer that question? Unfortunately, for many board members, the answer is not positive.

What factors lead to four out of five board members

investing money or conserving money? Leading the church or representing the church? Reaching new people or caring for current people? Expanding new programs or nurturing old programs? The exact goals are not always clear, which

Life Journaling

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Read three to four chapters a day from the Old Testament, New Testament, and Psalms. Then, after reading, have each board member record the one verse or short passage that stands out to him or her. Under the scripture each should record an observation, an application, and a brief prayer. Finally, the board members answer the question, "How will I be different today because of what I have just read?"

This practice of journaling has made a huge difference in the unity of numerous boards and committees in churches through the United States. Journals can be ordered in various forms from www.enuwhope.org.

How active are your board and committee members in life journaling now?

leads to disagreement among the board.

Second, there are often broken relationships among board members. Board members bring baggage from past board experiences, which cloud their thinking about current matters. Some bring along unresolved family issues, emotional struggles, and financial struggles, all of which impact their current thinking and decisions.

Third, there is a lack of training. Board members are normally given little or no training on how to serve on a board. They are not brought up to speed on past discussions, and are simply thrown into the decision-making process with little background. They are not instructed on how the board operates, how to handle conflict, how to deal with criticism, or how to use their individual gifts on the board. This all causes disunity in numerous cases.

Fourth, the board is often

the climax point of church problems. Issues in the larger church that are not solved at lower levels of government are pushed up to the main board to make the final decisions. This means that major issues meet a climax at this point.

A Key for Unity

A major key for building board unity is for the board members to spend more time together. When Jesus called his original twelve apostles, he did so that “they might be with him” (Mark 3:14). It takes time together to build unity. Here are some ideas to build better board unity in your church.

1. Focus on relationships.

Be certain to meet in a location that stimulates strong relationships. Meeting in a board room is not the best place to build unity. Why not meet in a home for most of the yearly board meetings? You will discover less conflict and disunity just from meeting in

the warmth of a living room. Then, take fifteen minutes of each meeting to share aspects of life together.

2. Require attendance at two board retreats a year. Plan one board retreat in the fall of the year for planning and one in the spring for fellowship. Consider bringing along family members in the spring, also.

3. Schedule two board meetings a month. Use one board meeting for business and the other for prayer and sharing life together.

4. Practice spiritual disciplines together. Spend significant time in prayer together. Ask everyone to read three or four Bible passages each day and record their comments and thoughts in a daily journal. Then, when you get together, ask each board member to share something from their journal with the rest of the team.

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Church Growth Network, P.O. Box 892589, Temecula, CA 92592

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