



Pastor Board Relationship

Committed to Effectiveness

By Randall A. Bach, Superintendent

The Church

The church, like no other model, is God's living and breathing creation and He intends for there to be a godly order in leadership of His church. The church is not like a secular corporation. It is not like a labor union. It is not like a school board. It is not like a neighborhood homeowners' association. It is not like a political party. The pastor and board are called by God to work together, seeking to discern and fulfill His redemptive purpose and destiny for the church, in order that the Lord may be glorified and His work carried out. God, who calls, holds all authority and commissions people to faithfully teach, model, and carry out His Word (1 Peter 5). Church leaders must be stewards who tune their ears to the frequencies of both the Spirit and God's people. Theirs is a sobering assignment, to faithfully follow God's voice and direction, adhering to His Word, submitted to Him and to each other, in fear of the Lord.

Roles

The Pastor: CEO or Chaplain?

Is a pastor called to be a CEO - chief executive officer, or a chaplain? In some denominations the pastor is hired to preach, call on the sick, administer the sacraments, and moderate meetings. Under that model, the pastor is a shepherd but not a leader, much like a chaplain that faithfully ministers to a flock, but without authority to lead or influence the direction of the flock. A church board or council carries authority in such a structure to cast vision and set the course for the church and the pastor follows. But, in Open Bible Churches as well as virtually all Spirit-filled church movements, our understanding of Scripture is that God calls and anoints pastors (Ephesians 4:11) to be leaders who cast vision and lead the church into fulfillment of God's destiny for that body (Hebrews 13:17). The pastor should set the course, in counsel with the leadership team, establish the agenda, and rally the people to the cause. If a pastor either settles for being a chaplain or is not released to flow in a pastor's leadership anointing, the church suffers. God has always raised up pastors, not as dictators, not as mere couriers, but to lead people to maturity and to prepare them for service and ministry, both corporately and individually (Ephesians 4:12-13). God made us that way. The plan is His design. A pastor needs to give particular attention to building relationships with, growing, encouraging, and equipping the board members that serve at his or her side in leadership. Board members are part of the leadership team and merit focused and loving attention.

Please God First, But Never Forget the People

When a pastor assumes the mantle of responsibility for leading a church it must be with a shepherd's heart of sacrificial ministry for the flock, protective and loving, anchored in the Word, firm in conviction, and sensitive to the needs of the people. But, to be effective in leadership, the pastor's desire must be to first please God, but never forget the people. Balance is so important. The church is not a democracy where the pastor must campaign for political favor with people in order to accomplish an agenda. However, neither is the church an autocracy where, in the name of God, the pastor wields control over all. No leader can be above accountability to others, claiming accountability only to God. All leaders have feet of clay and need forums of supportive accountability. ***When a pastor has absolute, unquestioned authority the church is vulnerable to abuse of that authority. When a board confuses its role and sees itself as a controlling body over the pastor the church can also suffer from an abuse of authority.*** Divine order is lost and the church becomes impotent.

Duties of Elders¹

1. Overseer (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 2:25)	16. Encourager (Prov. 25:11; Gal. 6:1-2; Phil. 2:25-27; 2 Tim. 1:2-4; Phil. 1:10-18; Prov. 16:24)
2. Ruler (1 Tim. 3:4,5,12; 5:17; 1 Thes. 5:12)	17. Share the Same Vision as the Pastor (1 Cor. 1:10; Zech. 4:1-6; Psalm 133; Eph. 4:1-3; Isa. 65:8; Psalm 133:1-2)
3. Feeder (Acts 20:28)	18. Transparent (Prov. 27:5-6)
4. Prayer Warrior (James 5:15-16)	19. Submissive (1 Peter 5:1-3)
5. Watchman (Luke 12:37, 39; Acts 20:28-30; 1 Thes. 5:6; Ezekiel 33:6-7)	20. Liberal Giver (2 Cor. 9:1-6; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; Malachi 3:4-12)
6. Student of the Word (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Titus 3:9)	21. Positive Attitude (Phil. 2:14-15; John 6:43; Phil. 1:27)
7. Able to Teach Sound Doctrine (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:7)	22. Disciplined Lifestyle (Gal. 6:4; Prov. 16:32)
8. Show Compassion (Ezekiel 34:16)	23. Person of Faith (1 Sam. 17:37; Deut. 32:20; Josh. 1:1-16)
9. Example (1 Peter 5:3; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12)	24. Worshipper (Rev. 4:10-11; 4:5-11; 5:1-10)
10. Leader (Heb. 13:7)	25. Protect the Flock (Acts 20:28-31)
11. Called to Sacrificial Service (Luke 14:25-33; 2 Sam. 24:24; Rom. 12:1-2; Mark 10:42-44)	26. Filled with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:4)
12. Wise Counselor (Prov. 24:6; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50; Psalm 16:7; Prov. 1:25,30; 20:18; 11:14; 15:22; Isa. 9:16)	27. Motivated (Prov. 12:24; 18:9; Phil. 3:13-14)
13. Work Hard (Phil. 2:30; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Thes. 5:13; 1 Cor. 3:13-15; Eph. 4:12; Prov. 24:30-34)	28. Know Grace Gifts and Gift Limitations (Rom. 12:3-9; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:7-11; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 Tim. 4:14-15; 2 Tim. 1:6-7)
14. Bearer of Burdens (Ex. 18:22; Deut. 1:12; Num. 11:11, 17; Gal. 6:5)	29. Listen to Constructive Criticism (Prov. 19:20)
15. Team Person (1 Cor. 3:8-9; Ecc. 4:9-12; Rom. 12:3-5; Matt. 18:19-20)	30. Practice Loyalty (Prov. 17:17)

Balance in Authority

The church is blessed when the pastor and board embrace mutual submission and accountability. The pastor, instead of having unquestioned authority, must accept accountability to the board, a group of people called by God to serve at the pastor's side with counsel, prayer, and a joint commitment to lead the church into fruitful growth. Board members are not the pastor's overseers or overlords. Board members are accountable to the pastor, called by God to provide leadership. Accordingly, a church board is called by God to first support and minister to the pastor and, secondly, serve as a sounding board and place of accountability, and always in that order. When both pastor and board members understand this wonderful blend of leadership roles and mutual accountability, when both humbly recognize that they have been brought together by God to serve, when both accept that they have been called to complement and not compete with each other, when both walk in harmony as brothers and sisters in the Lord, the church is blessed—and the Lord is glorified. The pastor needs board members that flow in support of him in order to be most effective. Board members need spiritual headship and leadership. When pastor and board members are functioning in their roles it is like the pastor is singing the melody, and board members are singing the harmony, each needing the other to accomplish what could not be done independent of the other.

The Congregation Already Knows, And Follows

Members of the congregation do not even need to sit in board meetings to know whether the pastor and board members' hearts dwell in unity of spirit, vision, and deed. The congregation already knows, because relationships between leaders cannot be hidden. When all is not well between pastor and board the congregation suffers. Problems and challenges could have existed for years in the church and the people may have exhibited tolerance and patience with those difficulties. But, when problems arise between the pastor and board, that patience and tolerance can then evaporate. The people turn inward over the strains and become more consumed with discovering more internal problems than focusing on outward ministry. The church's mission becomes fuzzy. Sniping about leadership can become more pronounced and visible. Though usually not even a conscious process, the congregation typically follows what their leaders model. Relationships in the congregation are greatly affected by the relationships and ministry effectiveness demonstrated by the pastor and board members. That is why church leaders, though accountable to each other, carry an even greater accountability before God: ". . . *Much is required from those to whom much is given, and much more is required from those to whom much more is given*" Luke 12:48 (NLT). When pastor and board members demonstrate love, mutual submission, and a sacrificial passion for ministry the congregation flows in like manner. The blessings of the Lord are released. The winds of adversity can blow against a church where relationships are in order and functioning as God intends and the church only becomes stronger. Vision is alive and empowering, and faith to pursue the vision is released.

Board Meetings

What Needs To Take Place

Board meetings take place in order to:

- ▶ Seek God's face concerning how to lead the church
- ▶ Pray for the pastor, one another, staff, and church members
- ▶ Define, refine, and cast vision
- ▶ Develop and pursue a strategic ministry plan
- ▶ Actively seek ways to more effectively minister to the community
- ▶ Actively seek ways to partner with Open Bible district, regional, national, and international ministries
- ▶ Support the pastor in providing oversight to the church's ministries
- ▶ Monitor finances, authorize a budget and expenditures within that budget
- ▶ Approve or ratify staff appointments
- ▶ Oversee physical plant maintenance and replacement
- ▶ Handle disciplinary matters

Guidelines For Effectiveness

With all that must take place in board meetings it is imperative that prayerful and thoughtful planning ahead of meetings takes place and that leadership direction is provided during meetings. The time to pray and prepare for board meetings is in advance, not merely as the meeting commences. It is a misunderstanding of spirituality to believe that failing to prepare is the way to be Spirit led. The Holy Spirit always has permission to move and speak spontaneously. He can always preempt or alter plans. But, He also works and speaks ahead of time through preparation and planning. Accordingly, the following guidelines should be followed with board meeting structure and order:

1. The pastor prepares a printed agenda for each meeting. The pastor has prayerfully evaluated input and requests from board members, reviewed minutes of previous meetings, prepared any supportive information that will be necessary for discussion of items of business, and sought God about agenda priorities. No agenda means no leadership, or leadership by the loudest voice.
2. Any suggested meeting agenda items are submitted to the pastor by board members *in advance* of the board meeting. This allows the pastor to:
 - A. Evaluate how the matter relates to vision and direction of the church, whether the matter can or should be included in the next meeting, or whether it more appropriately fits in another meeting.
 - B. Do any necessary homework, preparation of materials, historical research, etc. in preparation for discussion. It is always wise to seek and provide context, or background, in order to achieve best decisions.
 - C. Privately consult in advance of meetings with the board member, or others, concerning additional information that is needed about the matter. Sometimes, matters can be handled completely at that level and do not necessitate full board attention.

- D. Maintain leadership over general direction and allotted time for the board meeting, having given thought to time required for consideration of agenda items.
- 3. When the pastor and board members fail to respect the advance request procedure for agenda items the following happens:
 - A. Meetings become laboriously and frustratingly long.
 - B. More questions are raised than are answered, which causes all to leave the meeting frustrated and feeling overwhelmed.
 - C. Some matters are handled unwisely or rashly through decisions based on impulsive or emotional reaction instead of complete and prayerfully evaluated information.
 - D. Wrong courses of action can be taken that lead to future complications.
 - E. Such free-for-all “agendas” can permit more vocal board members to dominate meetings, a state of affairs that may intimidate less vocal, and more reflective, board members and frustrate the pastor’s responsibility to lead.
- 4. Board members need to be sensitive to affirming their pastor with Christmas, birthday, and Pastor Appreciation Day expressions, along with other opportunities unique to the pastor’s service or the church’s distinctives. Board members should request time on the agenda from the pastor in order to plan proper expressions, without his presence.
- 5. When planning the board meeting agenda it is important to weigh which items demand the most thought and deliberation.
 - A. It is recommended that the most demanding or weighty agenda items be placed early in the meeting rather than leaving them at the end where time may be most limited.
 - B. The more precisely issues can be defined in advance of the meeting the more effective board meeting time will be. Preparation for discussion and decision-making should provide the board with clarity about these three things:
 - (1.) What is the issue?
 - (2.) What do we know about the issue?
 - (3.) What is recommended?
- 6. Minutes from the previous meeting will have been distributed in advance of the next meeting so that board members can review them for accuracy and completeness, and make any corrections in the next meeting.
- 7. Any committee appointments and assignments that call for a later report should always be coupled with a date by when the report will be submitted. The date should be recorded in the minutes. Assignments without due dates frequently are not completed.
 - A. Committee members look to the pastor for counsel and direction and report first to the pastor. Reports should not be submitted to the board without the pastor having first had opportunity to receive and discuss them.
 - B. Committees always need to have one person, appointed by the pastor, to serve as chair. No assigned leadership means everyone is in charge, which means that no one is in charge.

8. An up-to-date church financial report should be provided for each board meeting with opportunity for review and discussion. No area of church finance should be a mystery to board members. There can be no hidden areas. Full disclosure of all financial information, including complete pastoral and staff compensation specifics, to board members is imperative. It is the pastor's responsibility to assure that board members are fully informed about the state of church finances.

Authority to Call and Lead Meetings

There must be a clear line of authority in the church and between the pastor and board. The pastor calls and leads board meetings. At no time is a board to meet without the pastor's authority and direction, unless authorized by the pastor to do so. This extends to unofficial meetings, those not formally called, but which take place informally. Board members do not have authority, outside of called board meetings, to approach other board members to seek support for positions or decisions that must be made by the pastor and board. That is commonly the way the world does business. It is called politics and there is no place for it in the church. Such conduct corrodes relationships and harmonious effectiveness. Such outside the perimeter conduct is grounds for dismissal as a board member. Likewise, the pastor must respect board members by not working outside the board meeting to isolate members from or position them against one another.

Conflict in the Church

From the first days of the early church there has been conflict in congregations, between congregations and leaders, and between leaders. Church conflict is nothing new or unique to today. The early church survived conflict as can the church of today, if godly leaders follow scriptural guidelines. Conflict can make us bitter or make us stronger, make us fearful or deepen our character. Conflict is humbling and should cause us to ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and minds about motivation and methods. The pastor and board shoulder the mantle of responsibility to handle church conflict. There are three principles that leadership should heed when handling conflict:

Principles For Handling Conflict²

Acts 15:1-4

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." [2] This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. [3] The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. [4] When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. [6] The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

1. Effectively communicate with an honest heart and a teachable spirit.
2. Leaders come together to consider the matter *before* speaking to the congregation.
3. Gather all of the facts from the parties involved.

Other recommended principles when handling conflict:³

1. Refrain from hasty decisions
2. When immediate action is needed do so with grace
3. Allow for human failure
4. Do not repeat half-truths
5. Lovingly look for the best in people
6. Discipline carnal impulses and negative reactions
7. Handle vain imaginations
8. Realize that we are at war with a spiritual adversary, the devil
9. Allow for differences in methodology
10. Deal with root problems, not just manifestations.

Biblical Guidelines for Confronting Sin (Matthew 18)⁴

1. Upon discovery of ongoing sin in the life of a fellow believer, go promptly to lovingly confront the member in private (verse 15).
2. If the believer confesses and renounces sin, grant forgiveness in Jesus' name.
3. If there is no expression of repentance, return to admonish the believer again in the presence of one or two witnesses (verse 16).
4. If there is no repentance, the matter should be brought before the elders or your church leaders (verse 17). The leaders should investigate the matter carefully and thoroughly, discussing the specific charges with the believer.
5. If there is no evidence of repentance, or if the believer refuses to cooperate in the process, the church Body should be made aware of sin (verse 17).
6. If there is still no evidence of repentance, fellowship with this believer should be broken until there is repentance (1 Corinthians 15:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; Titus 3:10,11).

Suggestions, Complaints, and Grievances

There are churches where the congregation has no voice whatsoever. In those cases, the pastor, pastor's family, pastor and staff, or pastor and board exercise virtually total control. No provision is made for input from the people. Usually, those churches are either brittle in responsiveness to people, smothering in spirit and stifled in growth, or dynamically large in size with wide "back doors" where disenchanting people exit. People who feel a sense of ownership in their church's vision and ministries, and believe that an attentive ear will be offered to their input, develop a family-like love and loyalty. It is wise for a pastor and board to make provision, through planned forums and informal discussion, for people to offer input and suggestions about their church's direction and ministry. Let them know that the door is always open to talk about dreams, ideas, and concerns. Encourage people to share their thoughts with the leadership of the church.

Unity or Wedge

Well-intentioned members of the congregation will offer concerns or complaints about the direction of church leaders and ministries. And, there can be occasions when complaints and grievances are registered by people whose motivation may be personal

in nature instead of care for the greater good and effectiveness of the body. That people will want to offer input is inevitable. And, some very valuable and helpful contributions may be offered. What is important is that the pastor and board have a clear understanding about the procedure for handling suggestions, complaints, and grievances. With an accepted procedure even the most challenging complaints and grievances can be handled with sensitivity and wisdom. Without an accepted procedure, complaints and grievances can create a wedge between pastor and board and between board members themselves.

Pastor—A Ministry of Listening

The pastor must accept that people have opinions and that those opinions are going to be expressed. It comes with the turf. It is far better to take the lead in openness to opinions than try to shut the door on expressions. Secure leaders are not threatened by suggestions or criticisms. They do not first interpret criticism or complaints as personal attacks. They do not react in anger or hurt. They will listen, reflect, and consider whether there is validity to what is shared. Sometimes, the opinion is misguided or arrived at based upon incorrect information or assumptions, which are to be gently corrected. And, sometimes, God may be using one of His children to bring a timely word of instruction. Patiently wade through the dross so that the ore is not missed.

Board Members—Ambassadors

Board members must faithfully represent the pastor's heart, vision, and purposes to the people. Board members are ambassadors for the pastor to the people. And, board members also serve as eyes and ears for the pastor, not in an unseemly "spy" sense, but as faithful leaders who stay in touch with the pulse of the congregation. But, board members are not advocates or lobbyists for segments of or individuals in the congregation. Integrity of the heart is extremely important concerning this matter. A board member is not to build or curry his own base of power or influence with the congregation. It is entirely possible to do so and it can be an ego-stroking experience. But, though a board member may be called to serve by means that includes votes of the people, a board member is responsible first to the one who called before the people affirmed with a vote, to God. One of the quickest ways to bring division is for board members to take up causes at the expense of unity with the pastor and fellow board members, or to lobby fellow board members for a cause independent of counsel with the pastor.

Procedure Guideline

1. *Complaints to the pastor.* The pastor must use discretion concerning how to respond to complaints. Sensitivity must be demonstrated; a caring heart and listening ear are imperative. Sometimes, what is most important to the person with the complaint is that he or she is heard. Even if the issue or concern cannot be completely resolved to the satisfaction of the person it often helps, or even satisfies, to know that the pastor has attentively and respectfully listened. The pastor should be sensitive to the following:
 - A. Lovingly listen. Don't cut off the person unless the complaint turns into an unending loop of the same critical stream. Is the person responding

out of hurt? What has caused the hurt or wound? Can you minister to the root with compassion? Do not answer velocity and volume with the same. Remain calm and controlled.

- B. Guard against defensiveness. It is the pastor's Achilles Heel in responding to criticism or complaints. Most criticisms are not intended as personal attacks, even if they feel like it is. Even if the criticism is personal, ask the Holy Spirit to help you with self-control.
 - C. Clarify. Tell the person that, to better understand, you will rephrase back to him or her what you understand the complaint or grievance to be. Faithfully do so, but using your own words to clarify in an attempt to really define what the heart of the issue is. This can be arduous work because the complainant may not be clear in his or her own mind about the real reason for the complaint. Other issues or past hurts could be confusing matters. Do not assume, though the Holy Spirit may provide discernment, that you know everything behind what is being said. Sometimes, the pastor can prematurely jump to conclusions. It is easy to misjudge the motives of the person. Assume the best about motive until absolutely proven otherwise. The Holy Spirit can continue to provide discernment as you rephrase and ask clarifying questions.
 - D. Respond with a gentle explanation if the person needs information or understanding about something over which they have been confused or misinformed. If a revelation of important information has been presented assure the person that it will receive your attention.
 - E. If the nature of the complaint is personal and minor in nature, it may be best to keep it confidential. If the nature of the complaint is such that it bears on the congregation or is, or likely will become, common knowledge in the congregation, it is advisable to counsel with the board. The purpose for doing so is to receive prayerful support and counsel and to help the board members know about the matter and how they will need to be prepared to respond. The board is your covering and protection. It may be necessary to always have a board member present when dealing with some complainants.
 - F. If the nature of the complaint is potentially divisive to the congregation and/or is a serious charge against the pastor, both the matter and person should be brought before the board, after the pastor has first completely briefed the board about specifics. The pastor should not try to handle such explosive matters alone.
 - G. Pray with the person and close the meeting with either an openness to prayerfully weigh the input or a gently firm affirmation of intent to follow direction that the pastor is confident that has been received from the Lord.
2. *Complaints to Board Members.* Members of the congregation will sometimes seek out a board member to offer a complaint or grievance. Sometimes, this approach is used because of a friendship with the board member and it seems natural to first approach a friend. Sometimes, this approach is used because people have learned from the world to try to go around the proper person with their complaint. Sometimes, this approach is used because the

- complaint or grievance is personally directed against the pastor and the person is seeking support or solace from a board member. Sometimes, people are reluctant to approach the pastor because previous efforts to do so have been rebuffed or punished in some way. Regardless of the reason for approaching a board member with a complaint or grievance, it is important for board members to understand a procedure for response.
- A. When a member of the congregation privately approaches a board member with a complaint or grievance, the board member should give a careful ear with the purpose of identifying the core issue or issues. It is not for the board member to explore the matter in depth or to set up an appointment to do so. The board member should direct the person to approach the pastor with the complaint. Board members must help disciple the congregation so that they go to the person in spiritual authority and not around the pastor. The board member should also inform the pastor of the conversation and the counsel to approach the pastor.
 - (1.) If the person is reluctant to approach the pastor, the board member should offer to accompany the person to see the pastor.
 - (2.) If the nature of the complaint is a moral or equally potent charge against the pastor, the board member should consult with another board member before approaching the pastor. Any moral charge against an Open Bible minister necessitates contacting the office of the regional superintendent for counsel and direction.
 - B. When the complainant has followed a board member's counsel to speak with the pastor, upon completion of that initial appointment, the pastor is to privately share about the conference with the board member who originally received the complaint. Together, they will decide if the matter should be reported or brought before the board, or considered closed.
 - C. If a board member receives a private complaint or grievance from a member of the congregation and does not bring first to the attention of the pastor but, instead, brings it directly to a board meeting, it is a violation of leadership ethics. The pastor should always know about any complaint, and have opportunity to deal with it, before it is brought before the board.
 - D. Only if the pastor has repeatedly refused to acknowledge or respond to a complaint when a board member has followed the above procedure, should a board member bring the complaint directly to the board. It should only be done after prayer and private counsel with another board member.
3. Anonymous complaints. Straight to the dead letter file. If people do not have the courage to identify themselves when registering a complaint then the complaint merits the same level of consideration. If a pastor and board allow anonymous complaints to drive them they will only reinforce that avenue of communication. The congregation needs to be instructed about how to communicate concerns and informed that anonymous comments or complaints will not be given attention and will be destroyed. Once the

author of anonymous complaints realizes that no attention will be given to such effort then anonymous letters or notes usually cease.

Confidentiality

Trust is indispensable to good relationships, including pastor and board. There must be confidence that what is candidly shared in meetings will not be revealed to others. A value for and an ability to respect confidentiality are primary qualifications of service for both pastor and board members. If in doubt concerning whether specific information should or should not be divulged to others, err on the side of confidentiality. Confidentiality and secrecy are not the same. Confidentiality is motivated by a commitment to protect relationships. It provides safe nurture for plans that are under development but not yet ready for announcement. And, confidentiality offers freedom to speak candidly about delicate issues or people with the safe assurance that it will remain with only the ears that were present when spoken. Secrecy is motivated by a desire to hide information, wrongdoing, cover up how business is handled, or to protect control.

The Spouse and Confidentiality

It is far too often a reality; pastor and board members leave a meeting with the understanding that information is to be kept in confidence, but someone in the congregation soon knows about specifics through a spouse. Grievous damage has been done in churches because of confidentiality that has been breached by spouses. If such breakdowns occur the responsibility and accountability rests with the one who divulged the information to the spouse. The pastor and board members are to assume authority in their homes over such matters. Repeated failure to do so is grounds for dismissal.

Not all information is of the same level of confidentiality. When extremely confidential matters are dealt with, usually having to do with people, the pastor and board should agree before leaving a meeting about what will and will not be shared with spouses. There are times when it is best to agree that no knowledge or information about a matter will be shared with spouses. Keep in mind that the mantle of responsibility has not been placed upon the spouse and that it may not be fair to burden the spouse with information that could affect relationships. Rather than viewing confidentiality of information with the spouse as denial, consider it as protection. It is difficult to mandate that the pastor and board members must refrain from sharing any and all information with spouses. Spouses are part of a union, a team, and are prayer partners. Sharing with each other is an important part of the marital relationship. However, not all people are able to hold confidential information. If doing so is difficult for a spouse, then the pastor or board member must recognize that and be circumspect with information.

WHAT IT MEANS TO CAST VISION

By Randall A. Bach, Eastern Region Superintendent

LEADERSHIP
RESOURCE

A key, strategic responsibility of the leader is to point the people toward a purpose or vision. When referring to that leadership function we often state that the leader must cast vision. Proverbs 29:18 emphasizes that without a vision, or revelation of direction, people perish or drift in unhealthy ways. God's people must always be in pursuit of vision. So what do we mean when we say the pastor must cast the vision? Typically, we picture an action of pitching, tossing, sending, or lifting and heaving. This picture assumes the pastor has developed and finalized a vision and now casts it by declaring it to the people. In other words, "Here it is, now run with me." It is then the responsibility of the people to fall in line and support the pastor-defined vision. Perhaps that picture worked at one time, when the leader solely decided and declared the vision and the people obediently followed, period. If it did work, it was usually because the pastor was a patriarch-type of leader, perhaps the founder of the church, and with a generation of people given to compliantly following. Succeeding pastors are usually not accorded such unquestioned authority and try to assume it at their own risk.

I believe a more fitting picture of casting vision is that of a foundry worker who prepares a die, or cast, that will hold the molten substance of vision. The pastor prayerfully constructs a cast of what he believes God is saying to the church, a strategic direction and goals. He recognizes that the people must participate with him in providing the substance to fill the cast. Indeed, a cast has little strength of its own because it is but a vessel. The power and strength of a cast comes from what it will contain. The pastor may have a strong sense of direction from the Holy Spirit but not know how to see it fulfilled. But, he faithfully prepares a cast of the vision into which he and the people, in concert with God, fill with the substance of the vision. Vision can run hot like molten steel but, without a cast, it is void of shape or direction. It spills or dissipates and is wasted. But, when a solid cast is carefully prepared, vision flows into every corner and assumes the shape of the cast. The molten alloy solidifies so that it has immense strength of its own far stronger than, but faithful to, the original cast. So it is when the foundry worker pastor casts a vision and the people assume ownership with him for filling the cast. That is leadership at work. Together they see what they have participated in building. It has strength and, because everyone worked to create it, there is little question about its validity and significance. The cast has been filled, not with a single metal of limited strength, but with an amalgam of much greater durability and potency.

Pastor, be a skilled foundry worker and *cast the vision*.

¹ Frank Damazio, *Effective Keys To Successful Leadership* (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1993), 17-27.

² Damazio, 90.

³ Damazio, 90-91.

⁴ Jim Van Yperan, "Conflict: The Refining Fire of Leadership," *Leaders on Leadership* George Barna, ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1997) 258.