

# Re-Thinking Church Governance

Breakout Presentation for WELS National Conference on Lutheran Leadership

- 1. Opening discussion: Why might this be a good to be re-thinking church governance and organizational structure?***

## **God & Good Order**

Genesis 1 (The Creation)

1 Corinthians 14: 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

- 2. Table group discussion: How is good order a blessing to the work of gospel ministry?***

## **God & Church Governance**

Consider the examples of God and governance for his believers in Exodus 18, Acts 6 and Titus 1 (full accounts on back page of handout). As you consider these scenarios, reflect on the following questions:

- a. How was greater order attempted in each account?***
- b. What was the desired benefit from re-thinking and re-working the structure of how ministry would be carried out in each situation?***
- c. What pros and/or cons do you see in each example's organizational structure as you're re-thinking the organizational structure of your current ministry context?***

## Headship/Helpership Question

1 Timothy 2: 11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.

Genesis 2: 18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Ephesians 4: 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

In asking, "What is authority?" we \_\_\_\_\_ between trying to walk the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ and being \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ restrictive.

## Examples from Trinity, Waukesha, WI:

### *Old Org Chart:*

1. At a visual level, what is your reaction to the previous organizational structure of Trinity?
2. At a practical level, what challenges does this structure pose to carrying out ministry?

### *Recently Adopted Org Chart & Congregational Meeting Cadence:*

3. Compared to the previous chart, what strikes you most about this new structure?
4. What ministry advantages do you perceive in the new structure?

**Questions as you re-think governance and organizational structure in your ministry context:**

- 1) How well does your current governance and organizational structure engage people in the mission and the work of ministry? What improvements could/should be made? Would a structural change help or hinder?
  
- 2) How well are we equipping and involving all of God's people in using their God-given gifts in our God-given mission and ministry? What improvements can we make? Would an organizational structural change be beneficial to this effort?
  
- 3) If governance and structural changes might be beneficial in your context:
  - a. What is your intent in pursuing change?
  
  - b. What does your end goal look like?
  
  - c. How will you get the conversation started? With whom?
  
  - d. What resources do you need to help move the concept to completion?

**Your Questions:**

**Exodus 18:** 13 The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 14 When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

15 Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. 16 Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.”

17 Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. 18 You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19 Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20 Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21 But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22 Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23 If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”

24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26 They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

**Acts 6:** 1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews e among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

**Titus 1:** 5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. 6 An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.