

Application for Board of Directors For New Light Metropolitan Community Church.

Name _____ D.O.B. _____

Contact Details (Address, Phone, email etc)

Religious Denominational Background (Including MCC memberships)

What ministries have you been involved with in the various churches to which you belonged?

As a Board member you are called to be a role model for the congregation. Leaders confess their faith in deed and action. In what ways do you feel you are called to do this?

What specific skills and talents will you bring to the board of directors if elected?

Why do you want to serve on the board of directors?

In what ways is your commitment to God and this congregation already evident?

Board of Directors Resource: Orientation for New Board Members Your Ministry as A Member Of The Board Of Directors

All too often, service on a Board of Directors for a church is seen as a necessary exercise of secular duties in a sacred setting; a distinction is made between that which is administrative and that which is spiritual. But the work of the Board of Directors should be seen, like all other service in the congregation, as a ministry whose successful efforts are essential to the mission and purpose of the church.

Strong, healthy, knowledgeable leadership in the church must begin with the biblical foundations of charisma, a biblical word, identified in I Corinthians, Ephesians, Romans and elsewhere. Charisma means literally "a gift of grace." In these epistles, numerous gifts of grace at work in the church are mentioned. Interestingly, "leadership" is identified as one of the charismatic gifts in Romans 12, where leaders are instructed to "lead with diligence." And, "administration," or what we would refer to as "management", is one of the gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 12. While all in the church are gifted with charisma in one or more of many gifts, some will have the specific gifts of leadership and administration, and there is no indication that these particular gifts are limited to bishops, pastors or apostles who hold offices we might normally associate with such gifts. What is crucial is that these specific gifts are vital to the health of a growing church. These are the gifts which are important in the exercise of the work of the Board of Directors. And, fortunately, individuals blessed with these gifts are often those chosen for such service.

Anderson and Jones, in their excellent book, *The Management of Ministry*, identify three tasks of church leadership: authentic spiritual direction, effective associational leadership, and efficient organizational management. I find these to be useful categories for framing some thoughts on the tasks central to a Pastor, Board of Directors and other key church leaders.

Authentic Spiritual Direction

Authentic spiritual direction is a matter of both character and competence. Paul Tillich says that church leaders "gain absolute authority because of the absolute character of what they stand for." Anderson and Jones talk of the leader as "bearer of the holy." This is the "values" dimension of leadership.

Character counts. Aristotle, in his *The Rhetoric*, saw three major sources of persuasion: ethos was the persuasive character of the speaker, logos was the logical argument of the speech and pathos was the emotional appeal to the listener. Of these three, ethos was the most important. A derivative word of today, ethic, is no less important to the contemporary art of communication. As the saying goes, "what you do speaks more loudly than what you say." This is what has been called the first law of leadership: "If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message."

Scott Peck in his popular book, *The Road Less Traveled*, sees a character disorder in those who refuse to accept responsibility for themselves. Peck identifies four tools of self-discipline for the process of confronting and solving life's problems: 1) Delaying gratification, a process of scheduling the pleasure and pain in life; this is the self-discipline of managing one's time. 2) Acceptance of responsibility is the willingness to confront a problem, knowing it is one's own. 3) Dedication to the truth, which is a continuous openness to stringent self-examination, and a willingness to be personally challenged; this is commitment to a life of total honesty. 4) Balancing is the discipline of discipline, the capacity for "giving up", that is rejecting, responsibility that is not truly one's own. Exercise of these disciplines is an absolute prerequisite to strong, healthy leadership. Authentic spiritual direction is also a matter of competence. Latin American Baptist Rene Padilla says, "the church that does not feed its faith through reflective thinking easily falls victim to prevailing ideologies." Paul's repeated challenge, "I do not want you to be ignorant" is critical for us today. Church leaders, clergy and laity alike, need to function from a strong foundation of biblical and theological competence. Orlando Costas, in his definition of holistic church growth, includes "conceptual" growth as an important indicator of the health of a church. Conceptual growth is growth in one's knowledge of the faith. Commitment to such growth is also prerequisite to effective church leadership.

Effective Associational Leadership

If authentic spiritual direction is about "values," effective associational leadership is about "vision." Bennis and Nanus in *Leaders: Strategies For Taking Charge* write, "Leaders create focus which gives the organization a sense of direction. To choose a direction a leader must first develop a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This image is called a vision." When such a vision is truly compelling and credible, and when it is widely shared by individuals in an organization it carries the power of transformation.

Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral defines leadership as: "Thinking ahead, planning for the future, exhausting all the possibilities, envisioning problems and dreaming up solutions to them, then communicating the possibilities to decision makers. This is leadership. In any institution, the leader is the one who is thinking ahead of everyone else...not living in the past, but in the future, for leadership draws its inspiration from future projection and not from past accomplishments. The leader is alert to movements, trends and evolving developments...literally thinking longer thoughts than anyone else is and expressing them effectively."

The big question is, "how do leaders learn to develop and communicate vision?" Bennis and Nanus say that "usually the vision did not originate with the leader personally but rather from others." Successful leaders are great askers and great listeners, and they are great learners. If there is one competency that stands out to me as I observe what I believe to be highly successful church leaders it is the capacity and passion for learning. This is where vision finds its roots.

Efficient Organizational Management

Anderson and Jones make the point, "it is often hard to distinguish where organizational management ends and association leadership begins." Bennis asserts a distinction in his more recent book, *On Becoming A Leader*. For instance, "the manager maintains; the leader develops." Or, "the manager administers, the leader innovates." And, "the manager asks how and when, the leader asks why?" It is my observation; a strong, healthy church must have both.

There are five traditional categories or functions of management: planning (setting goals), organizing (recruiting), staffing (training), directing (supervision), and controlling (evaluation). In my experience, these necessary functions occur in very informal ways in smaller churches. But when churches move beyond 150 in size, these functions begin to become much more important, and competency to execute them is critical. I believe that management deficiencies are a significant reason why churches do not move beyond the size of 200-300. Unfortunately, most churches don't realize how some of the most basic management tools, such as planning, can serve them.

Welcome to your work! May your ministry as a Board member be filled with blessings, for you and for those you serve.

Five Key Skills In The Way Leaders Relate To Others:

1. The ability to accept people as they are, not as you would like them to be.
2. The capacity to approach relationships and problems in terms of the present rather than the past.
3. The ability to relate to those close to you with the same courteous attention you extend to strangers and casual acquaintances.
4. The ability to trust others, even if the risk seems great.
5. The ability to do without constant approval and recognition from others.

From Bennis and Nanus in *Leaders: Strategies For Taking Charge*