

SIMPLE STRUCTURE

(The following is adapted from Rick Warren's early presentations on his Purpose Driven Conference lecture on "Simple Structure" i.e. how we work together in the church. Rick subtitled this lecture "How to Structure for Growth")

Inadequate structure causes:

1. Plateaued growth
2. Internal conflicts (when people fight over decisions, it means you've got the wrong structure)
3. Discouraged leadership ('a lot of pastors just get tired of fighting the bureaucracy—it's the number one ache of pastors: drains their vision, their energy).

Structure doesn't cause growth, but it does control the rate and the size of growth

The shoe must never tell the foot how large it can grow, i.e. God's dream for your church will outgrow any structure you put in place as long as that structure is adaptable and willing/able to reevaluate and readjust for effectiveness. All churches are to grow! It's the natural thing for living things to do. You get a new skeleton every seven years. Every 45% growth, you need a new structure. What works at 50 will not work at 200. You must be continually renewing structures (wine skins). A major problem is traditional structures that squeeze the life right out of churches—doesn't allow for more people to be absorbed into the life and leadership of the church.

The model for structure is the Bible, not business or government. Many times we use terms in the church and associate thoughts with these concepts that are unbiblical in origin:

(The word 'vote' was foreign to the NT—deciding Judas's apostleship replacement was by straws [lots]. The first vote in the church was three steps: 1) understood the qualifications: qualifications were Scriptural and common sense thinking for God's work to be achieved, 2) after such understanding they reasoned and realized who met those qualifications, and 3) after putting forward names, they entrusted themselves to the Lord's decision for His leading and will by drawing straws.) Appendix: there is no clear-cut organizational pattern in the NT.

I. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH DETERMINES ITS STRUCTURE

1. The church is a FELLOWSHIP

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

1 Cor 5:2 "...man who has done such a thing should be expelled from your fellowship."

1 John 1:7 "We have fellowship as we walk in the light."

"A good structure will promote unity and downplay differences"

see Jim Collin's *Good to Great* and John Wooden's *They Call Me Coach*

