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Tyndale University College and Seminary

Developing the Confidence and Competencies of Church Board Chairs:
Designing, Facilitating and Evaluating a Training Course to
Develop Church Board Chairs for Effective Leadership
in their Local Churches

A Thesis
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John Gordon Cressman

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ABSTRACT

Comparatively little focus has been placed on the leadership development of church board chairpersons. This thesis reports the findings from a six-month training course delivered to a group of church board chairpersons in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC). The course was designed to increase participant awareness of the Chair's responsibilities and the skills necessary to effectively fulfill the role. The course was delivered in such a way to foster peer interaction and build Chair self-confidence. The helpfulness of the course, as well as the perceived effect the course had on participants, was evaluated by the participants themselves and their fellow board members. Two board governance experts reviewed the course curriculum and provided an evaluation.

This thesis includes a theological foundation for Chair leadership in the church as well as a review of the precedent literature on the role of the Chair. The project was designed utilizing the concepts of action research. Data was collected through personal interviews, self-assessments, peer assessments from board members, participant journals and an expert panel curriculum review. The data was evaluated and findings are presented in this thesis, with reflections for further research in this area. The course curriculum and the pedagogy were both found to be effective in building self confidence and in increasing self-awareness in the participants.

DEDICATIONS

This paper is dedicated to all the mentors, teachers, family members and friends who have shaped my development as a leader and follower of Jesus.

I am a product of your loving investment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my heartfelt thanks to the church board chairpersons who participated in this research project. I owe a special thanks to the EMCC National Team and family for your tangible support and encouragement. My thanks to Dr. Paul Magnus and Dr. Stephen Roy for your wisdom along the way, as consultants. And to my small band of brothers in Christ, Cohort 5 - thanks for journeying with me. Finally and most importantly I thank God for my wife, Melanie, you are a blessing to me. Thanks for your steadfast encouragement in life and in ministry. Better together.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCCC:	Canadian Council of Christian Charities
CGO:	Chief Governance Officer
EMCC:	Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
KJV:	King James Version Bible (2010). Kindle.
NASB:	New American Standard Version Bible (1995).
NIV:	The New International Version Bible (1986). Unless otherwise indicated all Bible quotations in this paper are from NIV.
NLT:	The New Living Translation Bible (1996).

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

There are two words that could describe the church board chair: overlooked and under-resourced. While the role this person fills is arguably a key component to the effective function of a church board, it has been largely overlooked when it comes to training and support in our particular denomination, the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC). I don't believe this oversight has been intentional. It seems more a case of focus, which will be explained later. I would suggest, from my experience as a church pastor and denominational leader for over 25 years, that church greeters have tended to receive more training than church board chairs. Every volunteer in the church, including the chair of the church board, deserves the equipping necessary to fulfill his or her role. This thesis project was conceived and designed to address this need in the local church by providing a practical training course to equip and support church board chairs in their role. Writing to a for-profit audience, Andrew and Nada Kakabadse in *Leading the Board* make a similar observation, "Yet despite the obvious importance of the chairman, the role has received surprisingly little attention" (Kakabadse 2008, 2). The Chair sits in a pivotal position in the life of a corporation and a local congregation. This thesis project seeks to bring

some further understanding and resourcing to the role of church board chair.

My conjecture is this: training church board chairs can have a positive and exponential effect on church board culture and effectiveness. This thinking is validated by the precedent literature and will be discussed in Chapter 3. The degree to which the church board fulfills its responsibilities to the congregation depends considerably upon the leadership provided by the church board chair.

Aubrey Malphurs, a leading voice on church board governance, declares, “there is a huge need to train church governing boards to function better as leaders of leaders” (Malphurs 2005, 13). I would agree, but would take this declaration one step further. Based on the findings from this project and a review of board governance literature, there is a huge need not only to train church boards, but also to target that training to church board chairs. This thesis project focuses on the role of the church board chair. I found congruence between my small sample of participants and the broader literature pointing to this gap in board chair development.

It seems apparent in our denomination, from conversations with present leaders, that we have not seen the connection between effective church board performance and the training of church board chairs. During this project, I am serving on the EMCC National Team as the Director of Operations and as a Regional Minister (providing first response care and coaching to pastors and church boards). Our National Team gathers twice a year for what we call, “Staff Days.” It was during one of these retreats that we

brainstormed how we might better serve our local churches. The need to resource church board chairs rose to the forefront of our discussion. Our denominational structure is such that we have five Regional Ministers overseeing congregations and pastors across Canada. Each Regional Minister cited cases where church board dysfunction was a present reality and a pressing concern. Collectively they suggested the idea of doing something to resource or train the church board chair. The thinking was, “to equip the leader is to equip the team.” I was assigned by the group to research this need and opportunity. This thesis project flowed out of those conversations.

In the case of EMCC, we have rarely worked to assure good church board leadership with the same rigour that we have applied to pastoral development. Our attempt to resource our congregations has been, by all appearances, pastor-focused. Within our congregations, board chairs are serving faithfully, yet, as my data will demonstrate, Chairs admit they are self-taught. They are learning the role through trial and error. It is long past due to address this need so that these unsung heroes of the local church can receive the training they deserve. According to the experience of the nine church board chair participants who participated in this research project, this training course did fill a gap in their leadership development.

My thesis project was to design, facilitate and evaluate a training course for church board chairpersons. It was my intention to develop a curriculum and training experience that would increase the Chair’s understanding of the role as well as build up the Chair’s self-confidence to

fulfill those responsibilities. To that end, the course was designed as a community learning experience. We (EMCC) believe effective church leadership flows from a dual focus on following Jesus and helping one another grow to become the disciples and leaders Jesus has called us to be. We need Jesus and we need each other to develop as leaders. As I will explain in Chapter Two, church leadership is vitally connected to our relationship with Jesus in submission, stewardship and servanthood. As my data demonstrates in Chapter Five, my pedagogy had a significant influence on the success of the course. Church board chairs interacting with each around the curriculum proved invaluable to the learning experience.

It is my personal mandate to restore nobility to the role of Chair in the local church. The Chair serves the church board in fulfilling its role. The church board serves the church by overseeing the affairs and mission of the church. In the context of selecting leaders in the local church, the Apostle Paul says, "Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task" (1 Timothy 3:1). As this thesis will demonstrate, the task of chairing the church board is a vital role in the congregation, a noble calling. This word, "noble" can also mean "beautiful, good, valuable and privilege" (Anyabwile 2012, 52). Chairing the church board is a valuable and beautiful task. It is not a role to be intimidated by or taken on begrudgingly because no else will volunteer. It is a role that can be enhanced by training and peer support.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One lays out the need for church board chair training to be a vital part of the leadership development program in the local church. This thesis project fills the gap created by overlooking and under-resourcing the role of Chair. The chapter includes an overview of my ministry context, the innovations of the project and key definitions essential to understanding what follows.

Chapter Two presents the theological framework that undergirds and informs this project. The life and words of Jesus Christ define spiritual leadership for those who serve in the local church. According to Jesus, any discussion on church leadership and governance must be nested in a biblical understanding of authority, stewardship and servanthood. The chapter also touches on key passages that provide insight on to how the early church governed itself in the New Testament period. The chapter continues with a history of where the terms, “board” and “Chairperson” originated. The chapter concludes by tracing the history of the role of Chair in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC) and who filled that role.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the precedent literature that pertains to good board governance and effective board leadership, both inside and outside the church. Relevant board and chairing principles are discussed and the responsibilities of the church board chair are identified.

Chapter Four describes the action research principles and mixed methods approach used in this research project. It includes a discussion of

two social science theories that informed the design of the training course: “The Four Stages of Learning” and “Self-Confidence and Leader Performance.” The chapter explains in more detail how the training course was designed, facilitated and evaluated, including the rationale behind why choices were made in each area. The chapter provides a demographic overview of the participants and explains the ethical considerations employed throughout the research project.

Chapter Five examines the findings of the data collected. The findings are compared to the precedent literature. The data points to the helpfulness of the training course in meeting the objectives of increasing chair self-awareness and self-confidence. The chapter includes recommendations that flow out of participant feedback to improve the training course. Two board governance experts weigh in with their affirmation and recommendations.

Chapter Six concludes with an integration of themes that carry throughout the project. It summarizes outcomes of the course and plans for future versions of course. The chapter includes questions for further study and a personal reflection on how this learning experience has shaped the researcher.

Ministry Context

This thesis project was conducted within context of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC). The EMCC is an evangelical

denomination comprised of approximately 150 congregations of various sizes and ethnicities in Canada.

In the EMCC, the local church has the right to govern its own affairs and select its own leaders (*EMCC Articles of Governance, Appendix 2, Gov. 2.5.1*). As a result, one will find some EMCC churches governed by an Elders Board, others by a Ministry Council, still others by a Deacons Board, or, in a number of cases, a Church Board. No matter the name, the board, as authorized by the local church bylaw, governs the affairs of a local church. The chairperson on that governing board is most often chosen from among its members. From my experience and based on this research sample, it is often the person who is most willing and available who takes the role of Chair. For the sake of this project I am choosing to use the words “church board” to encompass all the various governing boards in the EMCC context.

One further point of clarity, EMCC polity does not encourage pastors to chair the governing board of the church. This has not always been the case. In the past, pastors regularly served as Chair of the church board. This item will be picked up later in Chapter 2. In every EMCC church, someone is serving as the chair of the church board. It is from this pool of leaders that participants were invited to join this research project. Eight chairpersons responded and became participants in this thesis project.

Over the past decade, there have been a few shifts in EMCC’s focus and strategy. These shifts have also informed the design of this project. There

has been, what I would call, a “disciple shift.” By this I mean, there has been a deliberate shift in thinking around the ideas of discipleship. In the past and still today, when people think about discipleship they think about Bible Study, prayer, spiritual disciplines and so forth. In this paradigm, the fruit of a disciple is a deeper spiritual life, more Bible knowledge and greater discipline. The church’s role is to make disciples. The church’s preferred method for making disciples has been through preaching, teaching and small groups. This is a familiar paradigm but within the past ten years there has been an intentional shift in EMCC’s understanding and practice of discipleship. The fruit of a disciple is another disciple. In fact, churches don’t make disciples; disciples make disciples. For EMCC, our emphasis is on discipling. Discipling is not a program. It flows through relationships. This concept influenced the delivery of the course I designed. Delivering the course in the context of relationship was key. I will explain this further when I talk about the innovations of this course. Although this project was a training course, at its core it was a discipling course. Chairs discipling chairs in life and leadership, aided by the curriculum and supported by the facilitator.

The second shift that is taking place in our denomination is what I would call a “leader shift.” If disciples make disciples, then, with this view, it follows that leaders should reproduce leaders. The fruit of a leader is another leader. In the past we have outsourced the development of leaders to Bible Colleges, seminaries and a variety of Leadership Conferences and seminars.

This thesis project was designed to facilitate leaders speaking into the lives of other leaders. It was intended to be a resource that current church board chairs could use to mentor future church board chairs. It represents a potential tool to return leadership development to the local church.

The EMCC's third shift is what I would call an "identity shift." A brief look at our history demonstrates that we have been a group that has welcomed new people into our denominational family. In 1993, the Evangelical Church of Canada merged with the Missionary Church of Canada to become the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. In May 2013, after a long process of restructuring that began in 2004, we amalgamated our Canada East and Canada West districts into one National Church. Since 1993 we have been on a journey of discovering our common identity, values and purpose. Bringing together church board chairs from east and west and from these two former denominations has been a by-product of this project. Through the use of technology and meeting in cohorts, we are fostering family and a shared sense of identity.

As I mentioned in the introduction, our national leaders have expressed concerns about the effectiveness of our EMCC church board chairpersons. Regional Ministers regularly get requests from pastors and boards for training and coaching support. Our context was ripe for this thesis project.

Development Gap

As I looked through our EMCC resource files, I saw that we have made various attempts to equip local church boards. They have provided workshops, coaching, and resources to church boards but nothing specifically focused on the church board chair.

In the absence of Chair training, we see pastors step into the chairing gap. In some instances, pastors step in and 'unofficially' lead their boards. They set agendas, lead meetings and drive the decision-making process. In these cases, board chairs often become passengers along for the ride. They are Chair in name, but not necessarily in function. This seems especially true where the pastor is a gifted or a controlling leader. The board governance literature suggests church board chairs and a pastor need to become partners, serving and supporting one another. Maureen Robinson says, "The executive director has no stronger ally on the board than the chair" (Robinson 2001, 115).

Further, in the absence of church board chair training, we see pastors step in and become church board chair trainers. While this can be helpful, it can also be awkward. The chair-pastor relationship is meant to be a partnership not a teacher-student relationship. Not to mention, generally pastors have not been trained on effective board governance. In some of these cases, it is the blind leading the blind. For these reasons and more, training church board chairs is becoming paramount.

One last point, from a denominational perspective, church board chairs represent a potential conduit for the flow of denominational information to the local church. Chairs, because of their position, can have an influence on a church's contribution to our denominational funding. Currently, the pastor is the primary conduit of information from our National Team to the local church. When that link is weak or broken the local church's connection and relationship to the denomination can be negatively affected. A stronger connection to the church board chair has the potential to help our entire denomination move forward together, not only from a financial perspective but in unity of vision and purpose as well.

This thesis project has the potential to do at least three things: forge a stronger link between our EMCC National Team and our local EMCC churches, improve the function of our local church boards by strengthening the leadership competencies and confidence of the chairperson, and provide the opportunity for the networking and cross-learning between chairs from different EMCC congregations, thus elevating a sense of family among our congregations. As we will see, this project is beginning to reap those results. Case in point, due to the connections now established with the participants of this research project, EMCC has some new advocates in our local churches.

Innovations

What makes this thesis project innovative is the targeted nature of the course curriculum. There is a growing array of resources for training church boards but a significantly smaller amount focused on training the Chair. This course was designed specifically to equip the leader of the board in his or her role. In the design of the course I researched both the Bible and board governance literature to uncover the responsibilities of the church board chair. The results of that research yielded a list of ten Chair responsibilities. This will be explored further in Chapter Three.

The second element of the project that proved significant was the way the course was delivered, the pedagogy. Based on the principles of adult learning I made the choice to present the material as a monthly, cohort, interactive, learning experience. These principles will be expanded in Chapter 4. Participants self-selected between two cohorts offered at two different times. The use of video conference call technology created a small group feel to the course. The curriculum was designed to be discussion oriented. This interactive style of delivery will be explained further in Chapter Four. In Chapter 5 we will see the overwhelming response the participants had to this format of delivery. In fact, their positive response has caused our EMCC National Team to revisit how we develop leaders. We have been fond of dumping a lot of content in one sitting. This idea of learning through peer relationships has caused us to rethink. We are incorporating

this approach into one of our latest training experiences, with similar success and appreciation.

I had the following research questions in mind going into the project:

- What training do church board chairs receive prior to assuming the role?
- What is it like being the Chair of the church board?
- Where do church board chairs need help in their development?
- What are the essential characteristics of effective church board chairs?
- Can church board chairs affect church board performance?
- What impact will this training course have on the Chair' confidence?
- How will the course be helpful in the development of the participants?
- What components of the course were valued?
- Is the training course reproducible?
- What adjustments would make this training course more effective?

These questions will be answered in Chapters 5 and 6. They also formed the basis for the construction of my research interview questions and Chair self and peer assessments (Appendices 3 and 4).

Definition of Key Terms

1. Board Governance –describes how a presiding group of appointed/elected leaders, entrusted with the responsibility and authority of those who placed them there, directs the affairs and resources of the organization toward accomplishing its mission.

2. Chair – the individual chosen and/or appointed from the elected members of the church board to lead the board in accomplishing its purposes. I will use the term Chair to include the similar terms of chairman, chairperson, chair leader, lead elder.
3. Chair Confidence – the sense or perceived sense of security and ability an individual has in areas of Chair responsibility.
4. Church Governance – describes the stewardship of authority entrusted by a congregation to those regarded as spiritually mature and competent leaders to direct and protect the mission and vision of the local church. Church governance as we understand it and practice it today wasn't conceived in the early church. The concepts of church governance are described in the New Testament but are not explicit. The Apostle Paul uses the word "*kubernesis*" in 1 Corinthians 12:28 to describe the spiritual gift of governance. This word is translated "guidance" (NIV), "administration" (NASB), and "governments" (KJV). The word describes the ability to pilot and navigate a ship toward its intended harbour or destination (Vine n.d., 498). Paul identifies "governance" as a gift given by the Holy Spirit that enables the church to flourish.
5. Church Board – describes the governing body of spiritually qualified leaders who have been elected by the local church membership and entrusted to direct and oversee the affairs of the local church.

6. **Fiduciary Duties** – the church board has the legal responsibility to ensure that the church is being faithful to its mission, accountable for its performance and compliant with laws, bylaws and policies. The church board acts as a trustee holding the assets of the charity in trust for use in implementation of the purposes of the church. Board members may act as agents in relation to transactions they enter into on behalf of the church but only when authorized by specific board resolution.
7. **Policy Governance** – is a specific model of governance developed by John Carver. It is often referred to as the Carver Governance Model® and focuses on the Policy Governance system (Carver 1997), which he created. In this model, the elected board governs by policy. Policy governance is a comprehensive set of integrated principles. The objective of Policy Governance is for the board to define and monitor policies that provide overall direction and limitations to management in the process of seeing the organization fulfill its mission on behalf of its owners. The board exists to act as the informed voice and agent of the owners.

This first chapter has set the stage for my thesis project. With a keen awareness of this training gap in our local churches and a call to do something practical about it, this project was birthed. The theology that undergirds the development and delivery of the training course and defines church leaderships now follows.

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding and supporting the role of the church board chair begins with a grasp of the biblical character of church leadership. The practice of church governance and chair leadership should be framed by Scripture and not primarily by best practice. There are valuable lessons to be learned from history and practical insights to be gleaned from the business sector but, fundamentally, leadership in the church must be undergirded by Biblical truth, particularly the words and life of Jesus Christ.

This chapter speaks to the character of the church leader, which includes the church board chair. The Chair is challenged to fulfill his or her role as a submitted leader, steward leader and servant leader. Jesus is the example. These themes of submission, stewardship and servanthood influenced how the training course was designed and delivered.

One will not find references to church boards or church board chairs in the Bible. These are modern terms. What is observable in the New Testament is the early formation and function of the church. This chapter will touch on observations of how the early church governed itself. The chapter continues with a history of the terms: board and chairman and concludes with a history of who filled the role of Chair in the EMCC.

While the focus of the church board chair training course is on the role of the Chair, there is no doubt that these responsibilities must be carried out in a spirit of submission, stewardship and servanthood, like Jesus.

Jesus and Leadership in the Church

In the midst of a debate on greatness, Jesus made his definitive statement on church leadership and governance, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25-28). According to the words of Jesus, any discussion or debate on leadership in God’s kingdom must be nested in a biblical understanding of authority, stewardship and servanthood. The same should be true of any course designed for leaders in the church.

Jesus, himself, lived and led his disciples as one under authority, the authority of His Father. Jesus said, “I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will (John 5:30 [NLT]). Jesus was a submitted leader.

Jesus was also a steward leader. He faithfully stewarded the mission his Father gave him. He was responsible and accountable for that which was entrusted to him. In his prayer, recorded in John 17, he acknowledges he

responsibly cared for those His Father has given to him. “While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe... none has been lost” (John 17:12). This is the language of stewardship in the context of leadership.

In the passage already quoted, Matthew 20:25-28, Jesus calls himself a servant. He links greatness with servanthood. He also links governance with servanthood. He demonstrated servant leadership throughout his earthly ministry. To his disciples, and leaders in the church today, he gives the simple yet profound invitation, “I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15). He was specifically speaking about foot washing but figuratively speaking about leading through serving others. Jesus was a servant leader.

Any training of church board chairs begins with an understanding that the Chair is first and foremost a submitted leader, a steward leader and a servant leader, like Jesus. It is the words and way of Jesus that must inform chair leadership in the church. Jesus was a transformational leader and he challenges every leader in the church, including the board chair, to be the same. The following sections will expand these thoughts.

The Chair as Submitted Leader

Any biblical discussion on church leadership or church governance must begin with the acknowledgment that Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 4:15). In their book, *Perspectives on Church Government*, authors Brand and Norman place the lordship of Christ as the starting point

for any biblical study of church governance. “The issue of governance is most visibly seen in the lordship of Christ” (Brand & Norman 2004, 3).

I agree with Brand and Norman’s understanding that church governance becomes one means of exercising the authority of Christ within a Body of believers. Church governance “thus becomes a means of manifesting the lordship of Christ within His people” (Brand & Norman 2004, 4). Put simply, the governance structure of a church, the function of its officers, including the Chair, and the board’s relationship to the church members must all be understood as expressions of Christ’s governance over His people. As the church corporately submits to the lordship of Christ, the structure of her submission is through a designated governing church board. As the governing board functions in Christ’s name it does so in submission to His authority, voice, and Word.

This plays out on a number of levels in the local church. The church board must be submitted to the authority of Christ. The church board chair is submitted to the authority of the board as a whole. The chair has no more authority than any other board member. The chair has limited authority only in areas that have been delegated to him/her by the whole board. Submission may seem like an unusual place to begin a conversation on church leadership and governance but theologically, it is foremost. The Chair must carry out his or her responsibilities as one under submission. The Chair’s responsibility is to submit to the will and decisions of the board. The Chair’s life must be submitted to the lordship of Jesus.

The Chair as Steward Leader

The Apostle Paul refers to leaders in the church as God's stewards. "For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward" (Titus 1:7). The church is not the sole proprietorship of the pastor or the governing board. The church belongs to Christ. The church board therefore is accountable to God, and to the members of the congregation, as stewards.

A steward is was one who manages a household. The church board is charged to steward and manage the resources of the congregation, God's house. Like a steward, the church board has fiduciary responsibilities. Board members act as agents on behalf of the congregation in relation to financial and property transactions. The board acts as a trustee holding the assets of the charity in trust for use in implementation of the purposes of the church. Stewardship is the language of trust and the steward leader must prove trustworthy. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1Pet. 4:10). "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" (Matt. 25:21). These verses point to the role of steward in the leadership of a congregation.

Likewise the church board chair is a steward leader. The Chair stewards the board's process. The Chair is not the boss of the board. The Chair is to aid the board in stewarding the affairs of the church.

Scott Rodin in his book, *The Steward Leader* does a thorough job of proposing a comprehensive matrix of steward leadership. I have condensed it for our consideration.

4 Levels	Transformation In the life of the Steward Leader	Trajectory in the life of the people being led	Trajectory in the organization he/she leads
Level One: We steward our relationship with God, our Creator	We have been recipients of God's love and mercy – the trust of His love, gospel and Spirit. We steward our relationship with Him through worship and obedience.	We lead others by example in seeking first God's Kingdom and prioritizing his agenda over our personal agendas. We steward our personal lives in relation to others.	We create a corporate culture that prioritizes relationship over status and title. Where doing flows out of being.
Level Two: We steward our relationship with ourselves as God's Children	We steward our bodies as temples of God's Spirit. We steward our minds. We steward the calling and blessings He has given us.	We seek to disciple others and value others for who they are and all God wants them to be.	We set policy and invest resources that build up and care for the whole person.
Level Three: We steward our relationship with our neighbours.	We steward our relationships with others. We value others, and take responsibility for our part.	We lead others by example in ways that bless our neighbours and community.	We put people before programs. We steward resources in a way that blesses others.
Level Four: We steward our relationship with God's creation	We steward the resources God has given us: our time, treasure, talent, gifting & resources.	We lead others by example in ways that challenge them to be generous and responsible.	We create a leadership culture of responsibility, accountability, and integrity.

Figure 1: Steward Leader Matrix
Adapted from Roden (2013, 93).

The two right columns of the chart speak to the church board chair. The Chair as a steward leader must lead by example in generosity, in nurturing relationships, blessing others and prioritizing God's kingdom agenda. The Chair as a steward seeks to create a board culture that is characterized by relationship, accountability and integrity.

The Chair as Servant Leader

In his teaching and by his example Jesus modeled a life of servant leadership. Jesus calls his followers to do the same (Mark 10:33-34). Servant leaders serve without fanfare. They serve sacrificially. They put the needs of others ahead of themselves.

Perhaps there is no other position in the local church where these attributes are tested more than in the role of the church board chair. The church board chair's primary role is to serve the church board in fulfilling the board's governance role. An effective Chair is one who sets aside personal opinions in favour of helping the board reach a unified decision. The church board chair often puts in more hours in preparation and in follow up than other board members. This means a sacrifice in time on behalf of others. The Chair is most effective when unnoticed, facilitating dialogue between board members.

Servant leadership has become a popular theme in leadership literature in recent years. James Kouzes and Barry Posner, in their book, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose it* (1993), describe the characteristics of contemporary leaders who are looked up to. Within this description one can clearly hear the language of servanthood.

Leaders we admire do not place themselves at the center; they place others there. They do not seek the attention of people; they give it to others. They do not focus on satisfying their own aims and desires; they look for ways to respond to the needs and interests of their constituents... serving others is the most glorious and rewarding of all leadership tasks (Kouzes and Posner 1993, 185).

Max De Pree states, “Chairing is where servant leadership comes strongly into play” (De Pree 2001, 61). John Carver describes the unique double servant role of the board chair. He posits that the chair is a servant leader of the board and the board is the servant leader of the ownership or membership. The Chair is therefore a servant leader of servant leaders (Carver 2002, 188). While servant leadership has become in vogue, there is little doubt in whom servant leadership originated: Jesus, “Who, being in the very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather he made himself nothing by taking on the very nature of a servant...”(Phil. 2:6-7).

In Chapter Three we will see these three concepts of submission, stewardship and servanthood surface as we further review the precedent literature for principles of good board governance and chair leadership. In Chapter Four and Five we will observe how the training course I designed incorporated these elements. These concepts are also embedded in the ethos and culture of EMCC, what we call, “The Way of Jesus.” The Way of Jesus is a set of seven statements or markers that capture the heart, mission and vision of our denomination. These statements are expressions of submission, stewardship and servanthood. They are as follows:

1. I have begun to follow Jesus and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.
2. I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.
3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours and character.
4. I am learning to love God and love others.

5. I am learning the teaching of Jesus.
6. I am helping someone and someone is helping me to be a growing follower of Jesus.
7. I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

The Way of Jesus (2015) <https://www.emcc.ca/can-we-help/individuals/following-jesus/seven-markers/>

Each of these statements was presented in the course curriculum (see Appendix 2, Session 1). Church leaders in the EMCC who embrace the Way of Jesus are submitted leaders, steward leaders and servant leaders.

Church Governance in the New Testament Church

An overview of the whole Bible suggests the people of God have struggled to govern themselves. Leaders like Moses faced numerous governance challenges (Exodus 18). Kings, like Solomon, struggled. This struggle may have been what led to his prayer, “So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong” (1 Kings 3:10). With the formation of churches in the New Testament, there is evidence that early church leaders also struggled with governance issues (see Acts 6, 15). One could make the argument that the Apostle Paul was as much a church governance coach as a theologian by reading his letters to the early churches.

Gene Getz, in *Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church* (2003) roots his theological understanding of church governance in the biblical account of the early church in the Book of Acts and New Testament

letters. He conducts a thorough study of everything that these books say about local church governance and leadership. In the process he makes fourteen insightful observations. For the sake of this discussion on the role of Chair I will narrow my focus to two of them.

The first relevant observation that emerges from a study of the New Testament is the use of plural references when referring to leaders in the various local churches and contexts. As the early church continued to grow and expand “it becomes progressively clear that each local church was to be shepherded (governed) by a unified group of godly leaders” (Getz 2003, 209). Interchangeably referred to as elders or overseers. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders (plural) in each church they visited (Acts 14:23). In Ephesus, Paul challenges the church leadership team to, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Again we notice a plurality of leadership. No more clearly is this seen than in Paul’s instruction to Titus. “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 (Titus 1:5). In these and other references to local church leaders the overall profile, according to Getz, demonstrates that God’s plan seems to be that every local church would be governed by more than one elder/overseer (Getz 2003, 211). How each congregation was structured and just how each leadership team was led is not laid out for us in the biblical narrative.

This leads us to a second observation that Getz makes that is relevant to our discussion. Getz suggests that, “the New Testament seems to illustrate that where there is a plurality of leadership someone needs to function as the primary leader of the team” (Getz 2003, 217). What that person was called, we are not privy to. Who that person was, we are only left to speculate. One might assume it was one from among the group of elders? The clearest example we see is in the church in Jerusalem where James, the half-brother of Jesus, emerges as the key leader among the elders there (Acts 21:18). Could James potentially represent a forerunner of the church board chairperson? We are only left to speculate.

We observe James in action in Acts 15. The actions of the early church leaders in response to a pressing concern facing the early church provide some further insights into how the church should make decisions. If ever there was a need for corporate discernment this was the time. When the church gathered in Jerusalem they debated and they listened. “The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them” (Acts 15:12). They cited Scripture. They shared their opinions and traditions. They listened to the wisdom of James the leader of the church in Jerusalem. When all was said and done, a letter was crafted to the church in Antioch informing them of the church’s unanimous “discerned” decision.

In that letter a key discernment phrase stands out: “*It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us* not to burden you with anything beyond the

following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things” (Acts 15:28-29 italics mine). It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. In their book, *Selecting Church Leaders: A Practice in Spiritual Discernment*, authors Olsen and Morseth point out, “both the ‘Spirit’ and the ‘us’ are vitally important. In spiritual discernment we seek to bring God’s ways and our ways into congruence. Seeming good to the Spirit and seeming good to us come together after a patient, prayerful process and faithful set of practices” (Olsen and Morseth 2002, 13). From this particular scene in Acts 15 we see again the importance of: listening to the stories, conducting necessary research, consulting the Scriptures, healthy debate, waiting and listening in silence, seeking wise counsel, relinquishing personal agendas and seeking God’s will above all else.

It is the practice of corporate communal discernment that distinguishes the church board from the other boards. The role of the church board in guiding the discernment process will be explored in the next chapter. This passage and these concepts were incorporated into the church board chair training course (see Appendix 2, Session 4).

When the New Testament period comes to a conclusion and the apostles and their representatives have passed off the scene, we can find further evidence from history that someone was often designated the primary leader of the governing body of a local church. This thought moves us to the next section.

Chairs and Boards: A Modern Development

As I stated earlier, the use of the words “church board” and the identification of someone as the chairperson cannot be found in the New Testament. Board governance in general is a relatively new phenomenon. From the New Testament period up to the 18th century, church governance has taken on various forms. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Gene Getz traces the early development of a three-tier system of church leadership in the first and second centuries (Getz 2003, 224). The primary leader of the elders/overseers became known as the bishop. The bishop had authority, unlike the modern church board chair. The bishop essentially directed the local church elders who in turn gave oversight to the deacons and the local church. This model predominates church history through to the 18th century. Andrew and Nada Kakabadse trace the development of term and role,

In England, Scotland, Ireland and the North American colonies, those people tasked with the responsibility of overseeing a company (business) met regularly to discuss their affairs. At the place of meeting, a long board (sometimes a door) was laid across two sawhorses and the group assembled around this crude table (board). This meeting later became known as “the board meeting.” The leader of the group became known as the “chairman” simply because that individual sat on a chair, while others sat on stools or stood” (Kakabadse 2012, 9-10).

To sit at the board table was to preside over the board meeting. Rules to govern those meetings soon developed and became standardized. It was not long before the church began to incorporate the language and disciplines of board governance. EMCC is a case in point.

Chairing in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

The role of Chair is now commonplace in the EMCC. This was not always the case. In 1993, the Missionary Church of Canada merged with the Evangelical Church of Canada to form the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. Each separate denomination shares a similar history with church governance. Rather than repeat both histories, I will unpack the governance journey of the Missionary Church only to acknowledge that the Evangelical Church has followed a similar path. Both denominations had their beginnings in the United States.

Three different types of leaders, spanning three successive time periods, have filled the role of Chair in the Missionary Church. In the early years of the denomination, which was then known as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (late 1800's and early 1900's), local churches were governed by a group of elders. A presiding elder was chosen from among the recognized elders and had chairing responsibilities (The Doctrines and Discipline of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ 1928, 67).

In 1950, the United Missionary Church was born and with it the inauguration of a new board governance era. In the Constitution and Manual of the United Missionary Church (1959) we read, "the pastor shall be the chairman of the church board" (Constitution and Manual of the United Missionary Church 1959, 56). Pastors served as the Chair of the church board for over two decades.

In 1975 we see the beginnings of a third era in church board governance. The Constitution of the Missionary Church recommends that the church board be composed of the pastor, chairman of the local conference (local church), chairman of the deacons, director of Christian Education, chairman of the trustee board, church secretary, treasurer and as many others as the local church decides. (Constitution of the Missionary Church 1975, 36). Under the duties of the chairman, the constitution states that the chairman is elected by the local conference. If the local church prefers not to elect a Chairman, the pastor shall serve this function. The duties of the chairman are clearly stated: preside at all meetings and serve as chair of the church board (Constitution of the Missionary Church 1975, 34). During this period of our denominational history either a layperson was elected as Chair or the pastor served as Chair of the board. What is worth noting is the church board was comprised of a number of chairmen. This was and still is the case in some congregations today, a Chair chairing a group of Chairs.

This historical overview is meant to give the reader insight into who and how church governance developed in the EMCC. At this point I would make one observation. Our denomination seems to have been influenced by the dawn of modern board governance. The shift from elders to boards is noted. The concern, in the church context, is embracing a secular system at the expense of the dynamics like communal discernment that make church governance unique.

The purpose of this chapter has been to lay a theological foundation for leadership in the church. Church board chairs are first and foremost spiritual leaders marked by submission to authority, faithfulness in stewarding the task and an attitude of servanthood. According to the Scriptures, these qualities take priority responsibilities. In other words, leading flows out of following. These concepts are embraced by EMCC and were incorporated into the training course. Further, the chapter has introduced us to the biblical concept and practice of communal discernment. *It is the discernment-oriented process that differentiates the church board from other boards.* The church board chair becomes a key player in guiding the board toward discerned decisions. This responsibility became the topic of an entire session in the training course (Appendix 2, Session 4) and will be highlighted again in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE:

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to show how this research project fits into existing research that has gone before it. The chapter focuses on a select review of the precedent literature that was consulted in the design of my church board chair training course. The project sought to incorporate and build upon previous research in the area of board governance leadership both inside and outside the church context. The chapter includes principles gleaned from precedent literature related to effective board governance and chair leadership applicable to the church context. The chapter concludes with a list of church board chair responsibilities that ultimately formed the content of the training course curriculum.

There is a vast amount of literature written on effective board governance. Some key authors include John Carver (2002, 2007), Jim Brown (2006), Beverly Behan (2011), Max De Pree (2001), Eli Mina (2009), and Cathy Trower (2013). This would also include literature written for the non-profit organization. These authors would include: Robert Andringa and Ted Engstrom (2012), Andrew Green (2014), Yvonne Harrison (2012), Maureen Robinson (2001), Marjorie Sharpe (2014) and Mindy Wertheimer (2013). These authors made contributions to the shaping of the training course.

There is a smaller yet growing body of board governance literature written for the local church. Again, the following made key contributions: Aubrey Malphurs (2005), Dan Hotchkiss (2009), Glenn Daman (2009), Lebron Fairbanks, Dwight Gunter and James Couchenour (2012), Ted Hull (2015), T.J. Addington (2006) and John Pellowe (2010).

A broad search of the literature focused specifically on board leadership revealed a relatively small pool of resources. While helpful, the vacuum of research and resources dedicated to equipping the board chair points to the need for ongoing research. I highly recommend the following resources: *Leading the Board* (Kakabadse 2012) and *The Board Chair Handbook* (Wertheimer 2013). The Handbook is potentially the most comprehensive resource available written specifically for board chairs. Articles by Walker (2014), Male (2015), Joyaux (2014), Harrison (2007), Furr (2005) and Brown (2004) were also helpful.

Finally, beyond a few pages and reference in the church governance literature, the church board chair has only one dedicated resource to turn to: *The Church Board Chair Leadership Manual* (2013) written by Larry Perkins. Larry is a Ph.D graduate who wrote specifically on this topic. His manual and website (www.churchboardchair.ca) along with online resources and blog entries represent the most complete library for church board chairs. His focus was on designing a manual for church board chairs. My focus was on designing an interactive course that church board chairs would take together.

The following diagram provides a visual overview of the literature relevant to my research. The inverted triangle is indicative of the volume of literature available in each area. There is considerable more written on board governance in general (profit and not-for-profit) than written about church governance specifically. The same is true about chairing any board over against specifically chairing the church board.

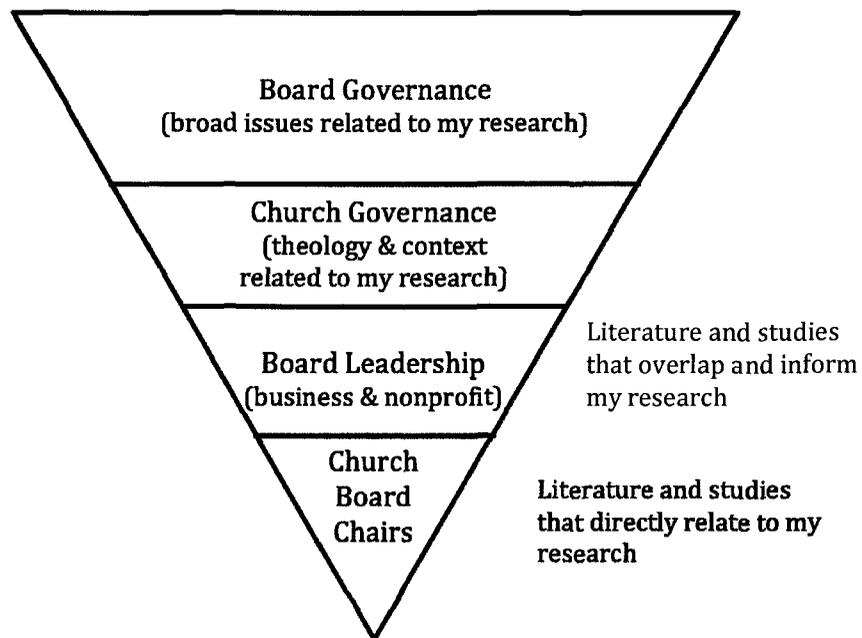


Figure 2: Precedent Literature Overview

Adapted from Reid, Taylor, Turner, and Shahabudin.

(<http://www.reading.ac.uk>).

Principles from Board Governance Literature

The following governance principles were relevant to the design of my church board training course. There is general agreement on the

following governance principles across all sectors (business, nonprofit, church). I will not expand in length on each items but will simply clarify meaning through a few representative quotes or comments.

“Board members are all imperfect” (Brown 2006, Introduction, xiv).

This statement is quite liberating at the outset. In the forward to Brown’s book, *The Imperfect Board Member* (2006) , Patrick Lencioni adds, “They are often volunteers who have nothing to gain from sitting on a board other than taking part in a learning experience and knowing that they are contributing to something important” (Lencioni 2006, x). Board governance research demonstrates that human factors deriving from personality, values, and insecurities all play an influential role in affecting board effectiveness and organizational outcomes (Wertheimer 2013, 16).

The board as a whole holds the authority and responsibility to govern legally. The Chair is first and foremost another board member. The Chair serves the board. The Chair is neither the boss of the CEO nor the company. The is true for the church board chair. He or she is neither the boss of the church nor the pastor. The Chair has no more authority than any other board member; only what has been delegated to him or her from the board. This is foundational to effective chair leadership. This Chair principle, flowing out of the precedent literature in a variety of places, aligns well with our theology of submission.

All boards should clearly understand their responsibilities. Aubrey Malphurs has rightly observed “the root cause of many board struggles is very simple: Boards don’t understand their role or how they are to function” (Malphurs 2005, 16). Jim Brown puts it simply, “the board’s primary responsibilities are to direct and protect the organization” (Brown 2006, 6). Many governance books and articles present the basic responsibilities of the board. While these responsibilities vary slightly based on context and board type, the point remains: the board must know its role.

The same principle applies to the Chair of the board. The Chair should know his or her role and responsibilities. John Carver suggests “the primary role of the chair is guardian of board integrity and process” (Carver 2007, 143). Carver calls the Chair, the Chief Governance Officer (CGO). The CGO basically sees to it that the board gets its job done as the board has defined that job. To clarify: the board is responsible for the CEO (pastor) and the organization (church) and the Chair is responsible for the function of the board. Max De Pree contends, “the most crucial element in turning a group of volunteers into an effective organization is the perception the chairperson has of his or her role and the way he or she carries out his or her responsibilities” (De Pree 2001, 45). Precedent governance literature is clear: clarifying the roles and relationships within an organization is a strategic step toward board effectiveness. It also reinforces the issue of stewardship identified in Chapter 2.

Chair leadership is one component that impacts board effectiveness.

Beverly Behan in her book, *Great Companies Deserve Great Boards*, has found that there are eight components that influence board effectiveness (Behan 2011, 97). She identifies board leadership as one of them. By board leadership she means the effectiveness of the Chair. For Behan, a comprehensive approach to board transformation should include addressing the effectiveness of the Chair. The following diagram identifies all eight areas and highlights board leadership. She maintains addressing any one of these areas can have a positive effect on board effectiveness.

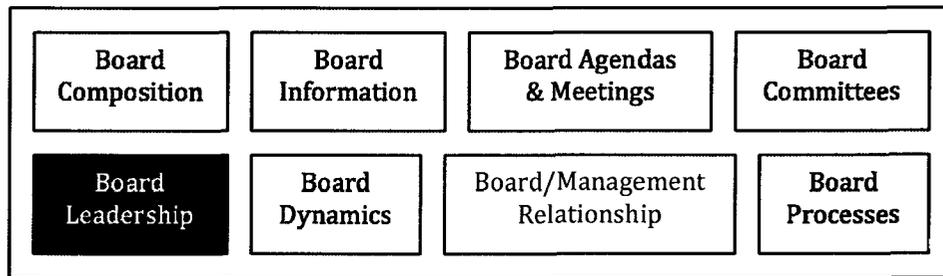


Figure 3: Eight Components That Impact Board Effectiveness

Adapted from Behan (2011 ,97).

Behan's research gives credence to my early conjecture. If you do something like train, resource, coach or support board chairs one can anticipate greater board effectiveness. This intuitively makes sense. This is Behan's experience. In the case of my training course, there was simply not enough time nor data to make this assessment.

Boards are under a lot of pressure today and board chairs feel that keenly. “In the face of many uncertainties and rapid changes in culture, boards must practice discernment and exhibit resiliency. Board chairs must lead the board in regularly managing tensions and transitions. These are tough times and require tougher boards” (Dimma 2006, 1). The church board chair participants in this thesis project echoes this reality. This will be explored in Chapter 5.

Board assessment is one of the most powerful interventions available for turning a good board into a great board (Behan 2004, 1) and *assessing Chair effectiveness should be a part of that process* (Leblanc 2005, 660). While board assessments are readily available, the governance literature suggests many boards still remain reluctant or negligent in evaluating themselves. According to my sample, this appears to be a concern in the church as well.

Governing oneself precedes governing others (Carver 2007, 185). T.J. Addington writes, “The integrity of our lives is inseparably linked with our influence” (Addington 2006, 13). The importance of character has emerged as a key topic of discussion in governance literature today. Before a Chair can effectively lead others he or she must carefully and consciously lead him or herself. This governance principle agrees nicely with our theology of servanthood. This concept was incorporated into Session 1 of the training course. It underscores the role of the Chair as Tone Setter (Appendix 2). It also aligns with a biblical understanding of stewardship.

The board speaks with one voice (Carver 1997, 188). This fundamental principle has the power to build trust between boards and those they serve. Sadly, it is a principle that is not often practiced. Whole books (Mina 2009) are dedicated to boardroom problems and how to manage them. For many boards this is a primary problem. I mention this particular issue because the Chair plays an key role in leading the board toward “one- voice” decisions. The Chair then has the responsibility to communicate the board’s one voice. If church boards and their Chairs get this right it can have a positive effect on trust between the board and the congregation (Fairbanks, Gunter and Couchenour 2012, Loc. 1128). This concept is explained in Session 3 of the training course (Appendix 2).

As has been mentioned, there are considerable resources available on the subject of board governance. These principles have application for the local church. In most cases they are applications of good stewardship and servanthood in the board setting. In the next section we narrow the focus to the literature written primarily to the church context.

Principles from Church Governance Literature

There is a growing accumulation of literature on the topic of church governance. Among the contributors, there are two primary streams of emphasis. One stream of literature focuses on the qualifications and roles of elders and deacons as presented in the Bible (Getz 2003, Van Dam 2009, Anyabwile 2012, Briggs 2015, Goncharenko 2014, Bell 2014). This stream of

literature provided some of the foundation for our theological understanding of church leadership and governance. In many cases the biblical model of elders and deacons is described and prescribed for today's church structure. The other stream of church governance literature, while not downplaying the biblical texts, explores the incorporation of effective board governance principles in the church (Malphurs 2005, Toler 2012, Pellowe 2010, Stahlke 2003 and Hull 2015).

From my perspective, governance in the local church is both spiritual and organizational. Church board meetings are more than just business meetings; they are spiritual meetings as well. The church is not primarily a business, it is local body of believers led by spiritual leaders. Yet it exists as a charitable entity, and, as such, requires a legal governance structure.

The following principles were incorporated into the training course. They apply to church board chairs as well as church boards as a whole. *Every church board member, including the Chair, is accountable to God* (Brand and Norman 2004, 27) *for his or her attitudes, behaviours and character.* The Bible instructs followers of Jesus to “have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority because they watch over you as those who must give an account” (Hebrews 13:17). This again is the language of stewardship. Leaders in the church are followers first. Following Jesus is the way and calling of all leaders. As one writer on church governance has observed, “few congregations rise above the spiritual level of their leaders” (Addington 2006, 20). Further, “the most important contribution a leader gives to the

church is his or her personal holiness not his or her personal gifts or abilities” (Daman 2009, 15). This statement aligns with our EMCC ethos.

Church boards are unique because their members are also beneficiaries.

John Pellowe points out that in the church setting board members play a dual role of providing governance while being a beneficiary. He observes that the roles overlap and can create the potential for issues that one may not encounter while serving on other boards outside the church, such as: personal agendas conflicting with the best interests of the church, emotional attachment that can make it difficult to vote for change, personal ministry experience or expertise that can lead to micromanagement rather than allowing the pastor(s) to do their work. Then there is the unique relationship board members have with their pastor. The pastor cares for the board member (spiritually) while the board member cares for the pastor as employer” (Pellowe 2012, Loc. 1384).

Church board training and resources tend to be under utilized. Church governance writers agree that “church board members are typically people of proven faithfulness who possess some leadership skills; yet so few receive more than a brief orientation for this role that is critical to the effectiveness of the local church” (Forman, Jones and Miller 2004, 133). Leadership development in the local church is the process of helping leaders at every level of ministry and service develop their character, knowledge and skills for the sake of the church and the glory of God. The majority of church governance literature, including this research project, suggests that church

boards tend to downplay the value of board development. This results in sporadic and inconsistent church board training. Malphurs states this reality clearly, “A major reason so many boards struggle in their leadership is that neither established board members nor new board members have been trained” (Malphurs 2005, 117).

The relationship between pastor and church board is critical. We have already noted that the relationship between the pastor and board member is unique. Experts in church governance press the point further to suggest that the relationship between the board and the senior pastor has proved to be one of the key relationships in the church and that the chair plays a key role in facilitating and fostering that relationship. When the relationship between the pastor and board breaks there can be a negative ripple effect on the rest of the congregation (Malphurs 2005, Daman 2009, Osborne 2010). It is generally the Chair of the church board who serves as liaison and facilitator of this relationship.

Church structure will tend to determine the chair role. In Perspectives of Church Government (2004) Brand and Norman suggest, in broad terms, that there are five forms of church governance: “Episcopal (Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists), Presbyterian (Reformed), Congregational (Baptists, Lutherans), Erastian (national state churches) and minimalist or non governmental (Quakers, Brethren, Independent)” (Brand and Norman 2004, 26). The EMCC would be predominantly congregational. Each of these governance systems can shape the responsibilities of the Chair. I would agree

with Dan Hotchkiss, “There is no right way to organize a congregation. I do not believe that an original, correct model of leadership can be found in history or Scripture” (Hotchkiss 2009, Loc. 306).

Church boards seek God’s will when making decisions. While boards outside the church are mainly concerned with the bottom line, the church board’s primary concern is hearing and obeying God’s voice for the affairs of the church. Effective church governance incorporates listening prayer. This reality makes church governance unique from board governance. I dedicated an entire session to *communal decision making and the role of the Chair*. Danny Morris and Charles Olsen coined the term “discernmentarian” (Morris and Olsen 1997, Loc. 952). The Chair is often the one who has the responsibility to guide the board through the discernment process. In this sense the Chair must function as both discernmentarian and parliamentarian in the board decision making process. Authors such as Ruth Haley Barton (2012), Timothy Luke Johnson (1983), along with Morris and Olsen (1997), have provided church leaders with excellent guidance on how a board can discern God’s will together.

All of these principles apply to the church board as a whole. They provide wisdom for effective board governance but this thesis project and course focuses on the role of the church board chair. One of my primary research aims of the literature review was to discover the roles and responsibilities of the church board chair. To do that I consulted literature written for board chairs both inside the church and outside the church. What

follows are principles, concepts and responsibilities that were incorporated into the design of the training course.

Principles from Board Chair Literature

“If boards are to become more effective, there is an urgent need to find ways of supporting the development of chairpersons” (Kakabadse 2008, 236). The work of Yvonne Harrison and her colleagues on Chair leadership is especially helpful at this point. Her two research projects: *Perceptions of Board Chair Leadership Effectiveness in the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sectors Organizations* (Harrison, Murray, Conforth 2012) and *Perspectives on the Leadership of Chairs of Nonprofits Organization Boards of Directors* (Harrison, Murray 2012) were foundational in the design of my research project. This will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

When it comes specifically to the role of Chair, the following observations are noted as relevant to this research project.

The Chair typically has responsibilities before meetings, during meetings and between meetings (Mina 2009, 63-64, Garber 2003). This breakdown influenced the order and flow of the training course. The responsibilities of the Chair were presented in this order.

Every board chair puts his or her own stamp (positive or negative) on the board’s culture, and work. The chair has influence over at least three groups: fellow board members, CEO’s and stakeholders (Harrison and Murray 2012, 416). In the church context this would equate to the church

board members, the senior pastor and the church members. This concept was explored in the first session of my course: *The Chair as Tone Setter*.

Existing research suggests effective Chairs have similar qualities and skills (Harrison, Murray and Conforth 2012). These traits certainly carry over into the church setting. I will compare my research findings with these lists in Chapter 5.

The best person for the role of board chair is the one with the greatest skills and commitment to do the job (Kikkert 2004, 1). To pick the right board chair in the first place you have to have a good job description and a clear articulation of the needed skills and behaviours. Sadly, all too often in the church setting, the Chair is chosen based on a process of elimination rather than on an assessment of skills and commitment.

From a study of the precedent literature the following Chair roles were identified and incorporated into my training course. Various supplementary resources were consulted in the development of each training session around these Chair responsibilities (see Appendix 2 for session outlines and source lists).

- **The Chair as Tone Setter** (DePree 2001, Trower 2013, Toler 2012).

The Chair must understand his or her influence on the board and the congregation. The Chair sets an example for the board in faith, word and good governance behaviour. The Chair “sets the tone for good relationships” (De Pree 2001, 11).

- **The Chair as Table Setter** (majority of precedent literature).
The Chair must prepare himself or herself, prepare agendas and see that board members are prepared for effective meetings.
- **The Chair as Voice Conductor** (Carver 2007, Fairbanks, Gunter & Couchenour 2012). The Chair has the task of blending many voices and opinions into a one unified voice and decision.
- **The Chair as Discernmentarian** (Morris and Olsen 1997, Barton 2012). The Chair has the privilege of leading the board in a communal and discerning decision making process.
- **The Chair as Meeting Manager** (majority of precedent literature).
The Chair is responsible for leading an effective meeting, complete with accurate minutes.
- **The Chair as Member Manager** (Mina 2009). The Chair has the responsibility to address board member dysfunction.
- **The Chair as Ally to the Pastor** (Robinson 2001, Williams & McGinnis 2007, Eadie 2001). The Chair has the opportunity to become a strong ally of the pastor; standing up for the pastor and speaking into the pastor's life.
- **The Chair as Spokesperson** (majority of precedent literature).
The Chair often is the one who speaks on behalf of the board and serves as the go-to person for the congregation.
- **The Chair as Conflict Manager** (majority of precedent literature).
The Chair often serves as mediator, peacemaker, even referee.

- **The Chair as Team Builder and Team Developer** (Walker 2014, Pick 2009, Osborne 2010, Depree 2001). The Chair is responsible for moulding the board into a cohesive team and helping the board focus on recruitment, development, evaluation and succession.

This illustration serves as a summary of the course content present this far.

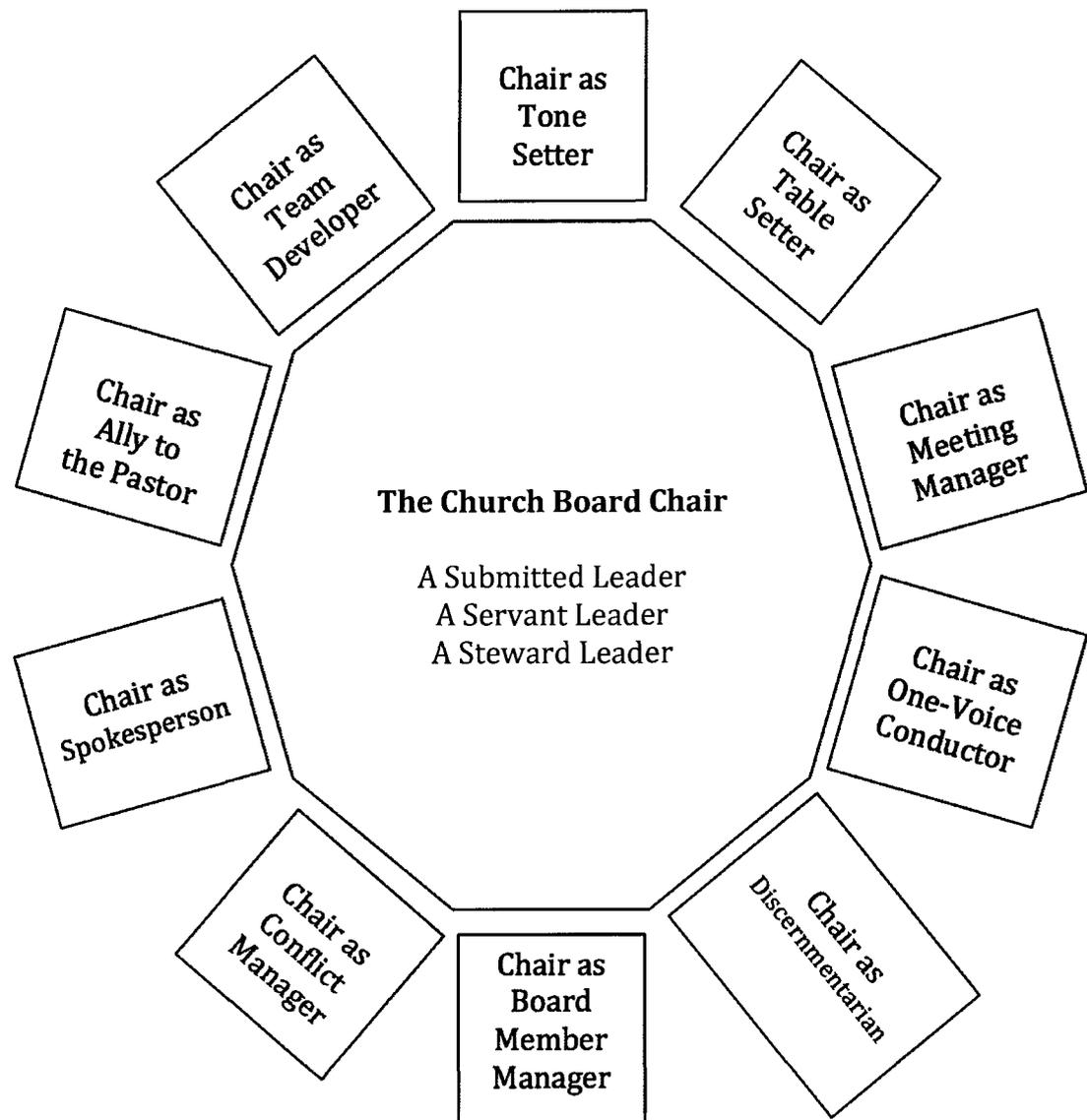


Figure 4: Course Content
Created by John Cressman 2015.

In summary, the role of the church board chair is to serve the church by setting the example, preparing the way for effective meetings, facilitating productive dialogue, guiding the board to discerned decisions, ensuring the board members are following through on assignments, partnering with the pastor in co-creating board agenda and speaking into the pastor's life, speaking on behalf of the board, facilitating conflict resolution and ensuring the board is growing as a team. Each of these responsibilities arose out of the literature review. I gave each responsibility a specific title, i.e. The Chair as Tone Setter. These titles came from the precedent literature. Each Chair role was taught and discussed in the training course. This material formed the content of the training course. Chapter Four will discuss how the course was designed, facilitated and evaluated.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter begins with a brief description and rationale for the research methodology and methods I employed. It will explain how three social science theories shaped course design and facilitation. The chapter contains three major sections: course design, course facilitation, and course evaluation. I will go into more detail about what I did, how I did it and why I did it that way. The chapter also will include a brief overview of the ethical considerations that guided my research from start to finish.

The thesis project had four projected outcomes: 1) to increase understanding of the responsibilities associated with effective church board chair leadership, 2) to promote self-reflection and self-awareness in the participants as to where they might improve, 3) to instill confidence and provide emotional support for the role and 4) to provide a practical training course to foster the development of Chair competencies and relationships.

Action Research

My project employed the ideas of participatory action research. It was an iterative process of research, action, reflection, planning, refining, adjusting, further research and then action again (Stringer 2007, 8). This

process repeated itself through two separate and subsequent facilitations of the course. I began by researching the topic of board leadership both inside and outside the church context. This research formed the basis for the first version of the training course. I facilitated that first version of the course with a first cohort of church board chairs. I gathered feedback from this first set of five Chair participants and made adjustments to the course producing a second version. I then facilitated this new version with a second cohort of Chairs with 4 participants. This action has led to further feedback, reflection and adjustments.

The following chart provides a timetable of when and how I did my action research. It also serves as an overview of how I put the components of the course together. It demonstrates how I incorporated the research from Chapter 2 and 3 into the course design and evaluation.

Table 1: Course Timetable

Date	Event
May-September 2014	Course Research and Design
September 2014	Recruit Participants – Get Consent
October 2014	Pre-Course Participant Interviews
October 27, 2014	Cohort 1 Training Course Begins
November 2014	Cohort 1 Pre-Course Self and Peer Assessments
January 26, 2015	Cohort 2 Training Course Begins
February 2015	Cohort 2 Pre-Course Self & Peer Assessments
April 27, 2015	Cohort 1 Training Concludes
June 22, 2015	Cohort 2 Training Concludes
June-July 2015	Post Course Participant Interviews
June-July 2015	Post Course Self and Post Assessments Received
July 2015	Expert Review of Version 2 of Curriculum

The purpose of action research is to develop transferable and theoretical knowledge all within the construct of community. Action research is a collaborative process, in that “the members of the system being studied participate actively in the cyclical process” (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, Loc. 176). This was the case here. The Chair participants eagerly contributed to the training experience and the betterment of the course.

Mixed Methods Approach

I employed a mixed method approach to gathering relevant research data. As a result I collected both qualitative and quantitative data. I used multiple methods for collecting my data: interviews, assessments, recordings and journals. Later in this chapter I will explain in further detail what data was collected, from whom, how and why.

At this point it must be acknowledged that I choose to test perception of change, not actual changes in participant behaviour. To test actual change would have taken longer than the parameters of the project. I was particularly interested in understanding the perception of change in the participants’ self-confidence and self-awareness from pre-course to post course. I sought to validate these perceptions with peer input from their fellow board members.

Course Design

As mentioned earlier, the course was designed and delivered with a view to building self-confidence in the participants and increasing their awareness of the responsibilities of the church board chair and an assessment of how they feel about how well they are doing in each area.

Building Self-Confidence

It became clear early in the design of the training course that assessing growth in Chair competence would be difficult to measure in such a short time span. That insight led to the decision to assess self-confidence that the Chair felt in his or her role prior to the course and after the course. My premise: that new awareness of the Chair's role, encouragement from peers, along with some practice would increase self-confidence.

According to Michael J. McCormick, "one of the most frequently reported findings in leadership literature is the relationship between a leader's self-confidence and successful leadership" (McCormick 2001, 22). He continues: "Every major review of the leadership literature lists self-confidence as an essential characteristic for effective leadership" (McCormick 2001, 23). George Hollenbeck and Douglas Hall cite the studies of Alexander Stajkovic and Fred Luthans in their research of self-efficacy, another term for self-confidence stating, "increased self-confidence can translate into significant performance improvements" (Hollenbeck & Hall 2004, 254).

The self-confidence referenced in these studies is not some vain expression of pride. The church board chairs who participated in the research project were extremely humble. The self-confidence I sought to assess relates to one's judgment of whether or not he or she can do something. It is a personal judgment, based on considering all one's capabilities, abilities, experiences, motivations, and resources at one's disposal, versus the requirements of the task at hand.

Self-confidence or the lack of it plays out often in the sports arena. *The science of confidence has become a mainstay in sports research and psychology.* Self-confidence is not fixed. It can change with new self-awareness or new understanding of what the task requires. According to Hollenbeck and Hall, self-confidence grows through actual experience, modeling (the experience of others), social persuasion (the encouragement of others) and inspiration. (Hollenbeck and Hall 2004, 261). These elements were incorporated into the design of the training course. Each session included exercises that participants were encouraged to do between sessions. These exercises were an opportunity for the participants to put into practice what they learned in the session. In the following session there was the opportunity to debrief what was learned through the experience. Each session also included opportunity to watch me model chair leadership as I facilitated the session. Throughout the learning experience, because it was facilitated in a relational peer environment, there were numerous instances of social persuasion, encouragement and stories of inspiration. As the data

will demonstrate, in small way, the course served to build Chair confidence. This will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Increasing Self-Awareness

Another goal of the training course was to increase self-awareness in the participants. This was accomplished through reflection exercises and assessments. Participants became aware of where they needed to develop, along with an awareness of what the role requires.

According to Linda Adams, President of Gordon Training Institute, in an article she writes, “no matter what new skill we decide to learn, there are four learning stages each of us goes through” (Adams, Accessed on April 17, 2016). This model explains the psychological states involved in the process of progressing from incompetence to competence.

In Stage 1, we are unconsciously unskilled. We don’t know what we don’t know. In Stage 2, we are consciously unskilled, that is, we know what we don’t know. We start to learn at this level when sudden awareness of how poorly we do something shows us that we have much we need to learn. By Stage 3, we are consciously skilled. In this stage of our learning and development we are experimenting and practicing the new skill. At this point we have learned how to do something but we still need to think and work hard to do it. By Stage 4, as it relates to a particular skill we are unconsciously skilled. Through repetition and familiarity the skill becomes

easier and given time becomes natural. In Stage 4 we act without having to think about. The skill or action is second nature (Adams, 2016).

I designed this training course with the assumption that the Chair participants would assess themselves at different stages along the learning continuum. I expected that some participants would not be aware of what they didn't know (Stage 1). That assumption became reality as the course progressed and is reflected in the data. My hope was that armed with new information and understanding the participants would take the next step on the learning path.

The majority of Chair participants acknowledged their inadequacies and with new awareness expressed a desire to learn more (Stage 2). This appeared to be a painful stage when participants became aware of their shortcomings. This was observable throughout the course. What helped the participants move on in their learning was the encouragement of their peer participants and the positive feedback from their fellow board members. This course was designed to increase awareness of what to do and provide relevant information on how to do it.

Finally some Chairs expressed a conscious competence (Stage 3) in certain chairing skills. These participants were encouraged to hone those skills through practice and skill building exercises. Each training session was designed with an opportunity to report on where progress was made. The Fours Stages of Learning model shaped the design of my course.

Along with incorporating this model of learning I utilized the best practices of adult learning. Considerable research has been conducted on how adults learn best. This will be explored next.

Utilizing Adult Learning Principles

My church board chair training course was designed with the following principles and practices of adult learning in mind (Knowles 2005, Cranton 1994, Vella 2002). First, adults learn best when they are involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own learning. During each session of the course I invited participants to share with me what elements/concepts/ideas were helpful to them and which needed further explanation. I consistently concluded each session by having each participant reflect on what one thing they were taking away with them and applying to their context.

The second principle of adult learning that was relevant to the course design and facilitation was utilizing the life experiences of others to enrich the learning process. During each session, I encouraged participants to share examples from their own experience and context. These stories brought to life the concepts being taught, and enriched the experience. Participants were eager to learn from the experiences of others.

The third principle of adult learning that participants said shaped their learning experience was how I facilitated. Best practice suggests it is the role of the facilitator to create and maintain a safe and supportive

climate. This promotes conditions necessary for learning to take place. I continually reminded the participants that what they shared needed to stay within the group. I consistently applauded their willingness to learn and experiment. I made sure each participant knew they had my support. I made myself available to them beyond the session. We prayed for each other at some point during the sessions.

Fourth, adults learn in an environment of sound relationships. When the relationship between the facilitator and learner is strong, learning is maximized. When relationships between participants are sound, learning is enhanced. I encouraged participants to email one another and pray for one another. Two board chairs even took the opportunity to meet in person and spend the afternoon together.

Finally, adults learn best when there is a sequence of content, reinforcement, praxis and reflection. I designed the curriculum with that in mind. Each session included content and discussion, followed by homework assignments and debriefing at the beginning of the next session.

Now it is time to get more specific. The next session lays out the components of the course. Each component was strategically chosen with the aforementioned concepts in mind.

Course Components

The training course had six components: the curriculum (teaching content), peer interaction (through videoconference call), peer assessments

(fellow board members), self-assessments and practice exercises (opportunities to incorporate new learning at the next church board meeting), personal reflection (through journaling), and modeling (role of facilitator). The decision to use these components came in consultation with my thesis advisors and from reviewing a similar project design of Tyndale Doctor of Ministry thesis by Robert Cousins (Cousins, 2014).

The initial course content (Version 1) was the product of my personal research of existing resources (books, articles, seminars, online resources, dissertations) on board governance and leadership in the for-profit, non-profit and church context (see Chapter 3). I also received input on curriculum design from two experts in the field of board governance. These experts will be introduced shortly. They provided helpful direction in the prioritizing and ordering of the content.

Drawing on these sources of input I designed a six-session course - complete with session outcomes, a list of session sources and a discussion-oriented outline for participants to follow. I choose six sessions because of my previous history of working with lay leaders in the church. I had a sense eight sessions would be too long to get participant commitment. Church board chairs are often people who have full time jobs. From previous personal training experiences, I knew four sessions would not be enough time to present the material or enough time to see progress in the development of the participants. So I choose six sessions as a reasonable

parameter to facilitate the course and meet the requirements of my doctoral program.

Each session was designed to take approximately 75 minutes to facilitate. I faithfully kept to that time length because I wanted to honour the participants' time. In many cases, participants were surrendering time with family or away from work to invest in their development as Chair. I want to respect their time. I wanted to model good time management as a valued skill for Chairs.

The second component of the training course design was participant interaction. This was facilitated through a videoconference call. I choose this format because it allowed the participants to see each other as they dialogued. The goal was to foster relationship building and collaborative learning. The convenience of technology also allowed for each participant to join the call from the comfort and convenience of his or her own home or office. In one particular session a Chair participant joined us for the call from his combine while planting his crops. Interaction was a key focus of the curriculum design. Each session included discussion questions, experience sharing, brainstorming, and opportunities for feedback.

The third component of the course was feedback. Participants received feedback from the facilitator, fellow participants and through the assessments completed by their fellow board members. This feedback was meant to stimulate awareness and push the participant toward further development.

The fourth component built into the course was challenge and reassurance. Each session included “Chair Exercises,” homework assignments to practice new skills between sessions. In the following session the cohort would take time to share and debrief what they learned from the exercises. I designed these exercises on my own or adapted exercises found in my research related to each session (Appendix 2).

As a fifth component, each session included multiple opportunities for personal reflection. Chairs were invited to reflect on their performance in a particular area of chairing and set goals for themselves. Each session consistently concluded with the group sharing personal “take-aways” and plans for action. Further, Chairs were invited to keep a journal of what they were learning and what they were integrating in their local setting.

The final component of the course was not advertised but was deliberate. As the facilitator I intentionally sought to lead the cohort sessions in such a way as to model the chairing skills I was teaching. As chair of the cohort, I drew all participants into the conversation. I demonstrated meeting management, personality management, time management, and team building. As the facilitator I was conscious about modelling chair leadership to the participants.

Curriculum Development

As part of the design of this action research project, the training course was offered two times. The first course began three months prior to

the second course beginning. This staggered approach allowed me to make changes to the sessions based on the feedback from the first cohort of participants. This produced a second version of the course that I facilitated with a second cohort of participants.

Chair Participants

Participants were invited to participate in the course through an email invitation sent to all church board chairs in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. Those who applied were given the opportunity to participate in the research project. The goal was to have six to ten participate. Nine participants registered for the course. Eight consented to participate in the research project. One chose not to participate in the research project but actively participated in all the sessions. The participants represent a cross-section of church board chairs in the EMCC. The following chart speaks to the diversity of this small research sample.

Table 2: Participant Demographics

Chair	Length in role	Context	Board Type	Church Size
A	1 year	Village	Elders	50
B	5 years	Village	Ministry Council	150
C	3 years	City	Deacons	125
D	6 years	Town	Elders	150
E	1 year	City	Elders	350
F	6 years	Rural	Church board	40
G	2 years	City	Church Board	150
H	6 years	Village	Church Board	200

Ethical Considerations

This research project abided by standards of the “Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans” (TCPS 2010). Participants were given adequate time and information about the exact nature of their participation in the project. They were given the freedom to participate and to withdraw at any time without consequence. I was careful not to coerce their involvement using my position or influence.

Participants (Chairs, board members and expert reviewers) signed written consent forms acknowledging their permission for me to collect and report on any data gathered (Appendix 1). All data was collected in strict confidence and stored in a secure location. The anonymity of each participant and church has been protected through codes assigned to each. All participants were informed that they are welcome to contact me personally in order to have a full disclosure of the findings of this research project. Ultimately, the Tyndale DMin delegated research ethics board approved my research project.

Course Evaluation

In this section I will explain what data I collected, how and when I collected it and why I collected it the way I did.

Table 3: Summary of Data Sets:

Method of Collection	Data Set	Number of participants	How Collected	When Collected
Pre-Course Interview	1	8	Took notes	Sept-Nov 2014
Pre-Course Self Assessment	2	7	Assessment form	Nov 2014 & Feb 2015
Pre-Course Peer Assessments	3	42	Assessment form	Nov 2014 & Feb 2015
Session Recordings	4	9	Digital recording	Oct 2014 – May 2015
Participant Journal	5	2	Handed in	June 2015
Post Course Interview	6	7	Took notes	June-July 2015
Post Course Self Assessment	7	6	Assessment form	June-July 2015
Post Course Peer Assessments	8	27	Assessment form	June-July 2015
Expert Reviews	9	2	Marked up curriculum	July 2015

First, it should be noted again that nine participants took the course while only eight participants consented to participate in the research. The ninth participant specifically consented to allow me to use all data gathered from the session recordings only. Seven of the eight consenting participants completed the course. One participant dropped out after the second session and did not return. This participant submitted pre-course data but did not submit anything post course.

Second, the notable difference in the number of participants responding to the post course peer assessment compared to the pre course peer assessment is primarily the result of how these assessments were delivered and gathered. I asked the Chair participant to identify someone on their board to serve as the point person for gathering the completed assessments. In some cases it was a board member, in other cases it was the pastor. I asked the designated point person to distribute the assessments at the beginning of the next board meeting and allow time for them to be completed during the meeting. Completed assessments were gathered and returned directly to me. I understand from feedback of these point persons that some board members took the assessments home and did not return them. It was made clear to each board member that completing the assessment was completely voluntary. Those who chose to complete the assessment filled out a consent form. Comments from the point persons and those that completed the post course peer assessment suggest that there was simply not enough time (six months) to assess marked changes in Chair performance or confidence. In those post assessments that were received some minor progress was noted. I can only surmise that these factors may account for the lower number of post course assessments submitted.

I will now explain how I designed and facilitated the collection of each of the data sets.

Personal Interviews

I conducted two personal interviews with seven consenting participants. These interviews were conducted in person or by telephone. The first set of interviews took place before the training course began. The second set of interviews was conducted shortly after the course was completed. In each case I created a specific set of open-ended questions that were asked of each participant (see Appendix 3). I developed the interview questions myself based on my initial research questions. In preparation I researched how to conduct interviews and design surveys. I consulted Creswell (2003) and Bradburn, Norman M., Seymour Sudman and Brian Wansink (2004).

Pre-Course Interviews

I had three pre-course objectives in mind as I conducted the initial interviews. First, I was interested in understanding what previous training, mentoring or chairing experience each participant had prior to taking this course. This information would serve as a comparison to the research findings of chair training outside the church. It would also provide me with an understanding of what the participants may have already learned. This would allow me to potentially tailor the material to the specific cohort.

Second, I was interested in the participants' pre-understanding of the responsibilities of the church board chair prior to taking the course. This

would allow me to see gaps in understanding and experience, in order to shape the development of the curriculum.

The third objective of the initial interview was to uncover areas where these particular participants felt challenged or needed some help.

I concluded the interview by asking them to rate themselves as Chair on a scale of 1-10 with 1 = Struggling/ineffective and 10 = highly effective in all areas of my role. The purpose of this question was to measure the participant's initial level of confidence. This information would help me understand how each Chair felt about him or herself going into the course.

Post Course Interviews

The post course personal interviews provided opportunity for reflection and expressions of appreciation. The questions revolved around three objectives: 1) To assess the helpfulness of the course, 2) To discover what adjustments and/or additions the participants would make to the course, both in format and curriculum, to make it better, 3) To reflect on how the course helped them personally and to identify areas of new awareness, confidence and growth. The responses to the post course interviews will be helpful in the design of a future third version of the course.

Assessments

Participants completed a pre-course and post course self assessment (see Appendices 3 and 4). Church board members and pastors of each Chair

participant were invited to complete a pre-course and post course peer assessment. Everyone who participated signed a consent form. The assessments included both qualitative and quantitative questions. I designed the 26-question survey to measure the perception of Chair confidence in the nine areas of Chair responsibility presented in the course. Each Chair participant and peer board member completed the same survey before and after the course. This allowed for a comparison of data from pre-course to post course. The goal was to gather data that might show how the training helped the Chair grow in confidence in certain areas of responsibility.

In the pre-course assessments, I asked the Chair participant and his or her peer board members to list five personal qualities that they believe are essential for a Church Board Chair to possess. Second I asked what they thought were the key skills that all effective Church Board Chairs possess. I asked these questions to gather data to compare to the research of outside sources. Taken from the research of Yvonne D. Harrison and Vic Murray at the University of Albany, NY with Chairs of Nonprofit Organization Boards, I chose to ask some of the same or similar questions so as to compare my research sampling with their research projects (Harrison and Murray 2012). In my pre-course peer assessment I asked board members to rate their Chair's impact on their board performance. I am interested in understanding how church board chairs can influence the church board's perception of their effectiveness. In the post course assessments I was interested in obtaining data on where the Chair had demonstrated improvement.

Participant Journals

Participants were invited and encouraged to keep a journal of their insights from the training course. Further, they were encouraged to write reflections on their performance after board meetings during the training period (six months). Two Chair participants kept a journal of their experience. In the post course interview some commented: a) that they did not understand the real purpose of keeping a journal and therefore did not, b) that they were simply too busy to keep a journal, c) that they were not journalers. The two journals received were analyzed for relevant data.

Training Sessions

Each training session was recorded. Only the relevant portions were analyzed. Particular focus was given to comments on course improvement or participant reflections. The first session of each cohort included an opportunity for introductions, from which pertinent demographic information was gathered.

Expert Reviewers

To strengthen the evaluation of the course, three experts in the field of board governance were chosen by their training, experience and credentials to review the second version of the curriculum.

- Jim Brown, Co-Founder of Strive, Guelph (Consultants and Trainers in Board Governance) and Author of *The Imperfect Board Member*.

- Dr. Paul Magnus, Distinguished Professor of Leadership and Management President Emeritus, Briercrest College and Seminary.
- Dr. Stephen Roy, VP & Academic Dean of Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener. Professor of Church Governance. Dr. Roy has served on a number of church and missionary agency boards, and is currently Chair of SIM International.

Two of the three experts (Dr. Magnus and Dr. Roy) consented and completed a review of the curriculum. I designed specific questions for the experts to answer but instead each chose to provide their comments and additions on a marked up copy of the curriculum. Their comments and will be considered in future versions of the course and are listed in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

I employed an evaluative approach to analyze the data collected (Creswell 2003). All data, except for session recordings, was transcribed, sorted and reviewed multiple times. Data analysis consists of many parts: noticing, sorting, highlighting, coding, thinking and recording observations.

In the coding process, I placed all of my qualitative data into charts, careful to use the specific answers of the participants. The charts had four columns: a column for the participant response, a column identifying the data set, a column identifying the participant, and a column in which to place any sub-themes or words of significance. Each code was given a definition and the relevant comments from the data were placed under that code category. In some cases the code categories came from the participant responses. In

other cases, the categories were identified by the topic of question being asked. Each code sheet was then analyzed by asking the question, “What does this data tell us?” Themes emerged, which are reported in Chapter 5.

This chapter has laid out the background work used to design, facilitate and evaluate my thesis project. It explains how I designed the training course. The choices I made related to course components as well as to the theory behind increasing awareness and building confidence. To tie this back to Chapter 2, I took on the roles of steward leader, servant leader and submitted leader as guidelines as I conducted my research. I sought to faithfully steward all of the data I collected with integrity and carefulness. I facilitated each session of the course as a servant. I served the participants through listening, drawing them into the conversation and encouraging them. During the data analysis portion of my resources, I endeavored to submit to the coding process, not placing my own biases on data.

CHAPTER FIVE:
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The focus of this research project was to evaluate the effectiveness of a training course designed to develop confidence and competence in church board chairpersons in the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada. Participant and peer feedback indicates that the course did result in increased role understanding, heightened self-awareness, strengthened confidence and new chairing behaviours. The research findings point to a modest increase in the competency level of the participants, particularly in areas of acknowledged weakness. Each one expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate and provided an endorsement of the course for future participants. In this chapter I will focus on my findings and their potential meaning for church board chair development. Admittedly, the small research sample makes it difficult to generalize. Still my findings reinforce prior research, point to further questions and amplify the need for additional research in this area.

Becoming the Chair

All participants stated emphatically that they did not receive any deliberate training before they became chair of their church board. In fact

this particular course was their first intentional training experience. Further, all participants added that they did not receive any deliberate mentoring prior to taking on the chair role. One participant served as Vice Chair of his church board yet did not receive any intentional mentoring while in that role. One chair described his journey as “self-taught.” Another as, “learning by trial and error.” This overwhelming response should be cause for concern. These findings reinforce the idea that the Chair is an overlooked leader in the life of the local church.

This data reinforces the need for a course like this one. For this group, leadership development was not part of their journey to becoming chair. This is potentially a sobering commentary on the value of leadership development in the local church, particularly at the board level. These findings, in turn, support the trends found in the outside literature. Yvonne Harrison summarizes, “With respect to leadership of nonprofit organizations, most literature has tended to focus on the competencies of the board as a whole or the organization’s chief executive officer. A review of the nonprofit literature shows little mention of the board chair” (Harrison 2012, 412).

Three out of eight participants in this research project had no previous chairing experience prior to taking the chair. Five of eight describe some form of chairing experience outside the local church context in a variety of community, school, business and nonprofit settings. In the absence of specific church board chair training or mentoring it is assumed that these previous chairing experiences were translated to the church board context.

Six out of eight participants had previous church board experience.

Participants admitted that they learned how to chair by observing other Chairs in their past church board experience. These examples were acknowledged as both helpful and not so helpful.

This sampling might suggest the pathway to becoming the chair of the church board is more often the result of having served as a member of the board or a previous church board. It is concerning to think that one third of these participants took on the role of chair without any chair experience or training. A church board would do well to inquire of a prospective Chair: Have you had any previous chairing experience? What about chair training or mentoring? If the answer is as the research demonstrates, it would behoove the church board to invest in some form of training for their new chair. John Pellowe has two strong opening chapters in his book, *Serving as a Board Member* (2010), designed to help a board candidate sort through his or her readiness to serve and understand how being a board member affects you. I would highly recommend these chapters to any prospective board members, including the Chair.

Being the Chair

When asked to describe their current chairing experience all eight participants described it in positive terms: good, pleasant, enjoyable and rewarding. Based on the number of comments participants made to their experience with conflict situations, one might not have expected these

responses. One respondent added, “My experience has been positive, much better than anticipated.” Makes one wonder what a Chair anticipates as he or she takes on the role. Are there preconceived stereotypes? It was encouraging to hear that this particular group found their chairing experience fulfilling. The data collected also pointed to the fact that support from the pastor and other board members contributed to a positive chairing experience. These comments seem to speak to the issue of building Chair confidence. When a Chair feels supported and finds the role fulfilling Chair confidence grows.

The participants noted that being the Chair was a “weighty” task. “I feel the weight of leading by example.” These comments align with my research that suggests, “these are tough times and require tougher boards” (Dimma 2006, 1). Participants described in different ways the weight of time (personal time management) and the weight of managing pastoral transitions. These comments harken back to the Chair as Steward Leader. A steward accepts the weight of responsibility without complaining. Having interviewed the participants in person, I did not hear tones of frustration or defeat in these comments about the weightiness of the task. What I did hear was an acknowledgement of the seriousness of the role. Carrying the weight of leadership and responsibility comes with the role. Participants expressed gratitude for the course because it provided a sense of solidarity. It gave them an opportunity share their load with others carrying a similar load.

Chair Help

In the pre-course interviews participants were invited to share what they found most challenging in their role as chair and where they could use some help. These requests were addressed in the design of the course. The responses were both predictable and surprising. One might have expected the following cries for help:

- I need help dealing with conflict.

“I don’t like dealing with conflict. It is especially difficult in a small town where these are your neighbours as well.”

“I find it challenging to be asked to mediate conflict between church members.”

- I need help with managing people.

“I find it challenging to foster respect among board members with differing opinions.”

“I have always worked for myself. I am not familiar with proper HR issues and practices.”

- I need help with meeting management and follow up.

“I find it challenging to help the board move toward a decision.”

“It is challenging to get board members to follow through on board assignments.”

- I need help understanding how I can work with/support my pastor.

“I am looking for practical ways to support and encourage my pastor.”
“It is challenging to speak into the pastor’s life.”

“The pastor has been taking on the responsibilities that belong to me as chair. I have been letting him do more than he should. I need help understanding how to bring proper balance to our relationship.”

- I need help understanding my role as Chair.

“I need help understanding my responsibilities.”

What was unexpected in the participant responses was the frequency of requests for help in the area of personal development. There is a popular leadership adage that was true of this group: “the hardest person to lead is me.” This axiom became one of the themes in the first session of the training course. The Chair participants readily acknowledged their personal struggles in the role. Here is a candid list of some of personal challenges these Chairs are wrestling with:

- “My tone and harshness when I am challenged.”
- “My personal walk with Jesus.”
- “My human side.”
- “Managing my expectations of myself.”
- “My personal scheduling.”
- “Tough to not take things personally.”
- “Not owning my responsibilities as Chair.”
- “My frustration with getting the board moving.”
- “Having the courage to speak up or speak into a situation.”

Two things seem clear from this list. First, these comments reinforce the principle gleaned from the precedent literature. “All board members are imperfect” (Brown 2006, Introduction XIV). They are ordinary people with emotions. There is an emotional side to chairing. Second, chairing developments includes personal development. Chairs not only manage

meetings, members and conversations. They also must learn to manage themselves, their own expectations, emotions, schedule and relationships. This personal aspect amplifies the need for any training content to be delivered in the context of support, coaching and accountability.

The course was designed to increase awareness of the responsibilities of the church board chair. What was not anticipated and could be incorporated into future versions of the course is conversation, support and coaching on the emotional side of Chairing. I applaud the vulnerability of the participants. This research discovery opens up new thought on how we might come alongside chair leaders in the future. It would appear Chairs might benefit from some life coaching alongside the training course.

Chair Traits

At the outset of my research I was interested in discovering and comparing the essential qualities and skills of effective chairpersons in the church with those who serve boards outside the church context.

Essential Chair Qualities

In the pre-course assessment, chair participants and board members were asked to list five personal qualities that they believe are essential for a chair of a church board to possess. The following table offers a complete list from 42 respondents (eight Chair participants and 34 board members).

Table 4: Essential Chair Personal Qualities

Essential Chair Qualities	Total Response	Chair Response
Spiritual maturity, Spirit-led	31	5
Integrity, trustworthy, honest,	26	4
Discerning, Wise, Discretion,	20	4
Caring, Compassionate, Personable,	20	0
Conscientious, Responsible	15	1
Humble, Servant	14	4
Approachable	9	1
Proactive, Decisive, Assertive	9	2
Knowledge of Church	8	
Respected/Respectful	7	1
Openness, transparent	5	1
Positive	4	1
Confident	4	1
Impartial	3	
Patient	3	1
Outgoing	2	
Sincere	2	
Enjoys role	2	
Prompt	1	
Adaptable	1	
Handles stress well	1	1
Teachable	1	
Direct	1	1
Generous	1	1

According to the respondents, spiritual maturity, integrity, discerning, caring and responsible rose to the top. Thirty respondents ranked spiritual maturity first on their top five list. At first glance this response seems logical in a church context, yet it should not be downplayed. The priority of spiritual maturity reinforces what we discovered in Chapter 2, that following Jesus precedes leading for Jesus. It reinforces the thought that church board meetings are not only business meetings, they are spiritual meetings as well

and require spiritual leadership along with chair leadership. Questions that surface from this response imply that the selection of a church board chair should not just be based on skills but on character and spiritual maturity.

It is worth noting that none of the chair participants listed caring as an essential quality while it ranked fourth among board member responses. A caring chair is potentially not something one thinks about when selecting the chair. This issue of caring aligns with our theology of servanthood. In fact, taking this a step further, each of these top five qualities align with the theology of a submitted leader (spiritual maturity, integrity), a steward leader (discerning, conscientious), and a servant leader (caring, humble).

These results generally align with the precedent literature. According to the research of Harrison, Murray and Conforth (2012), referenced in Chapter 3 of this thesis, “many of the personal characteristics of effective board chairs could be described in terms of two personality constructs that have been linked to leader and organizational effectiveness: emotional and spiritual intelligence” (Harrison, Murray and Conforth 2012, 6).

Key Chair Skills

In a companion question, I asked the chair participants and their fellow board members to rank the top five key skills that all effective church board chairs should possess. The following chart shows the results of 42 respondents (eight Chair participants and 34 board members).

Table 5: Key Skills of Effective Church Board Chairs

Key Chair Skills	Total Response	Chair Response
Organization Skills	30	6
Communication Skills	22	4
Leadership Skills	21	3
Facilitation Skills	21	5
Listening Skills	15	4
Conflict Management Skills	13	4
Encouraging and Motivating Skills	10	1
Meeting Management Skills	8	2
Team Building Skills	8	
Delegation Skills	7	3
Problem Solving, Critical thinking	6	1
Finance Management Skills	4	1
Preparation Skills	3	1
Computer Skills	1	

At the outset of my research, I was interested in discovering the key skills church board chairs should possess or be working to develop. This chart represents a list of skills church board members value in a Chair. This list is congruent with the precedent literature. Mindy Wertheimer, in the *Church Board Chair Handbook, Third Edition (2013)*, maintains an effective board chair should possess “leadership skills, relationship skills, facilitation skills and communication skills” (Wertheimer 2013, 11-13). The ranked order of the list is worth noting. There is an overwhelming desire to have a church board chair that is organized. This certainly plays out in a number of the Chair’s responsibilities: Table Setter, Meeting Manager and Team Developer. Some Chairs are more naturally organized. This was evident among the participants in the training course. Some came prepared for each session. Some faithfully completed all the assignments and assessments. Other

participants struggled in this area. Chairs would do well to figure what support they need to be as organized as they can be for the task at hand.

From this data the following questions surface:

- Do church boards consider these skills when appointing the Chair?
- What can be done to help develop the Chair in these key skills?
- What role does personality play in the choice of Chair?
- Do church boards choose qualities over skill, or skill over qualities?

I intend to consider these questions when designing future versions of this training course.

Measuring Chair Confidence

One of the objectives of the course was to build Chair confidence. In order to measure chair confidence I asked the participants and their board members (peers) to complete pre-course assessments (Appendix 3) and post course assessments (Appendix 4). Respondents were asked to rate the *chair's confidence in a variety of chair responsibilities*. The survey questions were gleaned from a wide variety of existing church board evaluation surveys available in the precedent literature. They were adapted and chosen to align with the ten church board chair roles identified through my research. That list is found on pages 46-47 of this thesis. Each chair had a different number of peer respondents, based on the size of their board as well as those who actually completed the assessment:

Chair A had six peers respond.

Chair B had six peers respond.

Chair C had three peers respond.
 Chair D had three peers respond.
 Chair E had five peers respond.
 Chair F had five peers respond.
 Chair G had seven peers respond.
 Chair H had seven peers respond

Table 6: Overall Confidence Increase (Pre-Course to Post Course)

Chair	Pre-Self Avg.	Post-Self Avg.	Difference	Pre-Peer Avg.	Post-Peer Avg.	Difference
A	3.8	4.1	+.3	4.4	4.6	+.2
B	3.9	3.9	0	4.1	4.6	+.5
C	3.1	3.5	+.4	3.6	3.7	+.1
D	3.4	NC	NA	4.5	NC	NA
E	3.0	3.2	+.02	4.1	NC	NA
F	3.2	3.5	+.3	3.6	3.9	+.3
G	NC	NC	NA	3.9	4.3	+.4
H	3.6	4.0	+.4	4.2	4.2	0

NC- Not Completed NA – Not Available

This data points to a number of things going on. First it must be acknowledged that in some cases there was not sufficient data submitted to make the comparison from pre-course to post course. This was the case for to chair participants (Chair D, E and H). Of the remaining data, all five Chairs with completed and sufficient data (both pre and post course) received slightly higher confidence scores. One observation of interest is that all the Chairs rated themselves consistently lower than their fellow board members did. In some cases, considerably lower. This may speak to the humility of the participants. Having interacted with them, I believe this plays partially into the equation. These results may also point to the fact that most people are harder on themselves than their peers.

The following table demonstrates where participants showed marked improvement, particularly in areas that received the lowest rating pre-course. This table includes only data from those participants that had both pre and post peer assessment completed and submitted.

Table 7: Increase in Confidence in Lowest Rated Area

Chair	Lowest Rated Chair Responsibility	Pre Course Average	Post Course Average	Difference
A	Addressing concerns with individual board members who are not fulfilling their roles	3.6	4.0	+.4
B	Following up with members that have assignments	3.1	3.9	+.8
C	Ensuring agenda is circulated in advance of meeting	2.3	3.8	+1.5
F	Mentoring other board members	2.4	3.5	+1.1
G	Taking responsibility for board evaluation	2.5	3.5	+1.0
G	Taking responsibility for board development	3.3	3.8	+.5

This table tells, in the case of these chair participants, they showed the perception of marked improvement in the areas where they were rated lowest before the course. It is not clear what part the training course played in this improvement. This result does seem to point to the issue of focus. One function of the assessment was to identify areas to work on. These chair participants seem to have gravitated towards improving areas of weakness. This is an illustration of increased self-awareness. As the chair participants gained an awareness of their responsibilities and reflected on their confidence in that area, it appears to have led to improvement in that particular area.

Course Helpfulness

This leads us to the training course evaluation. Data was collected from post course interviews and assessments. All participants readily agreed that the training experience was helpful to their development.

It was helpful in general:

1. Providing perspective and alternatives (17 comments).
2. Increasing self-awareness (15 comments).
3. Greater understanding and clarity of role and responsibilities (5 comments).
4. Provided an emotional lift – encouragement and affirmation (4 comments).
5. Providing practical tools and resources (3 comments).
6. Building confidence (2 comments).
7. Taking ownership for my role (2 comments).

The course was helpful, specifically:

1. Improving how I facilitate meetings and conversations – drawing people out, engaging everyone, speaking less, listening more (8 comments).
2. Building board cohesion (6 comments).
3. Strengthening my working relationship with the pastor (5 comments).
4. *Being prepared for meetings* (5 comments).
5. Thinking through board development, recruitment, and succession (4 comments).

These comments serve to support the original objectives of the training course: increased self-awareness, increased understanding of the Chair and the development of new behaviours. Comments that the experience provided an emotional lift seem to align with forthcoming comments about the value of the cohort format of delivery. It would appear that awareness led to intention, which in turn, led to specific action. This would align with the Stages of Learning theory discussed earlier in Chapter 4.

Assessing Church Board Impact

The majority of board member respondents expressed that it was simply too early to judge the effect the training course had on the board's performance. Given more time, most surmised overall board improvement could be expected. Realistically, over a six-month period, the board members would have had minimal opportunity to observe any changes in their chair's confidence and in turn any effect on the board's overall performance.

Evaluating Course Components

Participants were asked to describe what components of the course were most helpful to them. Their overwhelming response was "we valued the *interaction with other church board chairs.*" Each participant made multiple comments in favour of the decision to facilitate the course through video conference call.

"Our cohort interaction was the biggest value for me."

“Interacting with other Chairs encouraged me that we are all in the same boat. I am not alone on this journey.”

“It gave us an opportunity to compare notes.”

“Learning that not everybody does things the same way.”

“Hearing from such a diverse group of Chairs provided me with fresh perspective and new alternatives.”

These comments seem to endorse the pedagogy. The participants valued the way the course was delivered. These positive comments align with the principle of adult learning that maintains that adults learn in an environment of sound relationships.

A second course component that received positive affirmation was the layout of the course. This reinforces the adult learning principle: adults learn best when there is a sequence of content, reinforcement, praxis and reflection. One participant commented, “The curriculum was organized in a thoughtful and sequential way. It flowed quite nicely.”

The third acknowledgment from the participants was that I, the facilitator played an influential role in the success and effectiveness of the course. This was affirmed by all of the participants. When asked specifically about how I, the facilitator, influenced the effectiveness of the course, three common themes surfaced:

- Participants appreciated the way I facilitated. They commented that I was time conscious, fostered a safe environment for discussion, pulling everyone into the conversation.

- They acknowledged that I modelled effective chair leadership by the way I facilitated the course. One participant noted, “you were basically serving as the chair of our group and meetings together.”
- They valued my experience, knowledge and passion for the subject. My experience, as a pastor, added to our conversations.

This data is helpful to anyone who may be designing a church board chair training course. The data would suggest a need to pay attention to how the course is delivered (participatory), how the course is laid out (adult learning sequence) and the role of the facilitator (modeling and relational).

There was one course component that proved not so helpful: the use of participant journals. Only two participants kept a journal of their experience during the course. The other participants did not keep a journal and when asked why two reasons surfaced. First, they did not understand its purpose and/or how to do it. That result rests on me as the researcher and facilitator. In future iterations of this course, should I choose to have participants keep a journal, I must explain this assignment clearly.

Second, I must determine whether keeping a journal is doable. The majority of participants simply expressed they did not have time to complete the assignment. Some suggested they are not the journaling type. I understood what they meant. I fall into this category at times myself. Yet when I have kept a journal, it has been a valuable exercise.

The post course peer assessments were less effective primarily because those filling out the assessment did not have a long enough

opportunity to observe any notable changes in their Chair's behaviour. The feedback was consistent: "it is too soon to tell."

The input I received from the governance experts was not as comprehensive as I had hoped or expected. This again seems to be an issue of clarity. I provided specific questions for the experts to answer (Appendix 1) yet what I received was simply a mark up of the curriculum and not assessment of what they thought was valuable to include. A summary of what the experts did suggest to enhance the course will follow in the next section.

Expert Review

Two experts (see page 68-69) in the field of board governance reviewed the course curriculum and submitted their comments. Both endorsed the course and affirmed the need for such training. Their feedback largely contributed to three areas: additional sources, session application, and missing pieces.

One expert suggested some additional sources related to each session. These will be considered in future versions of the course.

Session 1: Hybels, Bill. 2009. *Courageous Leadership*

Session 2: Kaiser, John. 2006. *Winning on Purpose*.

Session 3: Marquardt, Michael. 2014. *Leading with Questions*.

Session 4: Heath, Chip & Dan. 2013. *Decisive*.
Collins, Jim. 2011. *Great by Choice*.

- Session 5: Cloud, Henry. 2011. *Necessary Endings*.
Weese, Carolyn & Russell Crabtree. 2004. *The Elephant in the Room*.
Vanderblooman, William. 2014. *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works*.
- Session 6: Epstein, Marc & Warren McFarlan. 2011. *Joining a Nonprofit Board*.
Lencioni, Patrick. 2011. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.

The experts also provided some excellent questions to enhance the “take-away” ending of each session. “What will you initiate because of this session? Who will hold you accountable for what you initiate? These are helpful coaching questions that could foster greater personal application.

Finally the experts offered some wise course content additions. They suggested adding some case studies (real life examples), expanding on what it means to follow-up as a Chair (following up on minutes, action items), and providing guidance for Chairs during pastoral transitions.

Course Enhancements

In the post course interviews and assessments the majority of participants were kind and clear in their responses: “Nothing is missing from the course.” “I would make no adjustments.” Now, while these comments are appreciated and speak to a positive evaluation of the course, the following comments fall under the category of: course enhancements. The Chair participants provided four suggestions that could enhance the training course in future iterations.

First, the majority of chair participants would welcome a longer course. They expressed a desire for additional sessions. This, they said, would allow for more time to absorb the content and work on the principles. One participant expressed that some sessions felt hurried. An extended course would allow opportunity to cover some concepts in greater depth. For example, a few participants requested more help and discussion on how to handle conflict and difficult personalities. Additional sessions would certainly allow for more Chair interaction, which was consistently valued throughout the entire training experience.

Second, most of the participants would appreciate supplemental resources, tools and assessments. One Chair called these “companion resources” that would explain a chairing concept in more detail or provide practical “how to” ideas. It was suggested that these “bite-size” resources could be available on the denominational website or as part of a regular Chair blog. This idea does have appeal as it became apparent that there is no way a single training course can cover all the aspects of effective Chairing adequately.

Third, a few participants recommended adding a follow up component to the course. They expressed a desire for some type of check in by the facilitator following the course. This could be done one on one between facilitator and chair or it could be facilitated as a group check-in. The purpose of the check-in session would be for accountability, coaching and encouragement. The check-in would not need new content. It could be a

review of previous concepts. It should incorporate an update from the chair on his or her development, challenges and implementation of the training.

The fourth course enhancement given through the post course feedback would be to include more of what one participant called, “chairing basics.” Basics like: how motions work, board policies, quorum, conflict of interest and other legal obligations. These “basics” could become part of the course or be available as a supplementary resource. The point from this feedback is well taken. The course should not assume participants already know the basics.

Course Reproducibility

While this was not a specific question asked in the post course evaluations, the chair participants expressed some passing comments about the course’s reproducibility. A few expressed their intention to review the material with the next board chair. A couple of participants felt that the course was laid out in such a way, that with some coaching and a guidebook, they could see themselves facilitating a training course like this for other board chairs. I will pick this up again in Chapter 6.

In this chapter we have learned from the data that the objectives of the course have been met in some small ways. Participants have expressed an increase in awareness, both of the role requirements and how they are succeeding or need work in those areas. Participants and their peers have

observed and noted a slight increase in confidence in certain areas of the role.

The data also points to a congruence between my research findings and the broader chair leadership literature. It seems effective Chairs, both in the church context and in the corporate sector, share common traits and skills. The comments of the Chairs related to what they valued in the course affirm the course design decisions.

There were two significant discoveries, from my perspective. The first was the positive response to the pedagogy. The second was the window into the personal side of the chairing journey.

As stated in the Chapter 1, it was the way the course was delivered that was innovative and had a significant effect on the outcomes and success of the course. The participants thoroughly appreciated interacting with other chair leaders. They learned from each other as much as from the curriculum. This is a powerful observation that corroborates the principles of adult learning and the components that contribute to confidence building that we looked at in Chapter 4. This concept of learning in community aligns well with the theology of a servant leader who seeks to put the needs of others before his or her own.

One unexpected discovery in the data was the need Chairs have for emotional support. Leadership in the church is a personal journey of navigating insecurities, tendencies, motivations and feelings. Put simply, trainers and board members need to remember church board chairs have

feelings too. Often caught in the middle, the church board chair needs spiritual and emotional support for the task at hand. At the outset of this research and course design my focus was on the roles of the church board chair. Moving forward the focus of any future training must include conversations on the personal side of chairing. This will lead to consideration of additional outcomes and other items for further study that arise from this research.

CHAPTER SIX: OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an integration of the major themes of this thesis project. It seeks to tie together objectives and findings. Training church board chairs has been a worthwhile endeavor for everyone involved: participants and facilitator. There have been some significant insights into how to influence the development church board chairs. There have also been some lessons for us as denominational leaders. As with any research study, along with some answers, there are always more questions that surface. This chapter will include questions for further study.

One outcome of this project has been the development of a third version of the course. As of the time of writing four new church board chair cohorts are forming. The development of this latest version of the course is yet another example of action research. It is another opportunity to improve the curriculum and pedagogy. The chapter concludes with personal reflections on the entire research experience.

I began this thesis with two observations about the role of the church board chair in our denomination: overlooked and under resourced. This need was highlighted by our National Team and reinforced by the precedent literature. The participants in this research project expressed gratefulness

for having a resource like this training course to support and equip them for their role. I am pleased, in some small way, that this project is filling a leadership development gap in our local EMCC churches in a practical way. Overlooked and under resourced, no longer.

At the outset I surmised that creating a training course for church board chairs could potentially have a positive impact on church board culture and effectiveness. It turns out that this conjecture was more hopeful than attainable. As the respondents suggested, there simply was not enough time to assess the effect the Chair training had on the board overall. What is clear from this project is the positive and personal impact the training had on the participants' development: new perspective, new behaviours, experimenting with new ideas, practicing skills, and working on weaknesses.

From the beginning there have been two objectives for this training course: to increase self-awareness and instill a new level of confidence to serve in the role. As was explained in Chapter 4, the course was designed and facilitated in such a way to promote adult learning. The data suggests the course did just that. The literature pointed to how the course could accomplish those objections. The choices in design, particularly in the delivery of the curriculum proved significant and aided in the success of the project.

The participants described an increase in personal awareness. This awareness came as the result of understanding the Chair's role and skills

needed to be effective. This was provided through the course content. The self, and peer assessments served to motivate development through personal reflection. The course reinforces the research literature that there are stages of learning in the development of a skill. Awareness of the responsibilities of the role led to self-reflection, which led to a felt need for change, which led to experimenting with new ways of doing things.

Chair participants also described and demonstrated an increase in confidence that they can do the job. It was and is difficult to measure confidence. In this case, it was the perception of feeling more confident in various aspects of the Chair role. In Chapter 4 we learned that the literature suggests there a number of factors that contribute to the building of confidence. What is clear from this project is the effect that peer support and cohort encouragement has on building a sense of confidence. Confidence comes from practice, understanding and especially the social influence of others. These are all evident in the data.

This leads me to the significant contributions of this project. In the first chapter I mentioned that what was innovative about this course was its targeted nature (focus on the Chair role and skills necessary to fulfill that role in the church) and the pedagogy (the way the course was delivered). It is this latter point that bears highlighting in this conclusion. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the decision to facilitate the course in a cohort format connected through video conference call proved valuable to all participants.

Placing my ego aside, this course was not as much about the curriculum and skills of the facilitator as it was about the effect of the interaction between board chairs. The collaborative environments fostered learning and instilled confidence. As denominational leaders, we have paid attention to this innovation. We are now brainstorming how we could incorporate more peer interaction into all of our conferences and training events.

Although not part of the scope of this thesis project, this training course had other positive effects on our denomination. One welcome, yet unexpected, outcome of this project has been the formation of new lines of communication to our congregations. Our primary conduit as a National Church for communicating with our congregations is through our pastors. The challenge is that when that link is broken or not strong our communication strategy breaks down. This often has a negative effect on our denominational relationship with congregations and on congregational contributions to the National Church, what we call our “Common Cause Funding.” Every congregation is to contribute to the denomination to support the work of our National Team. When the pastor serves as a gatekeeper rather than a conduit for information the system breaks down. It also has the potential to lead to a power struggle between pastor and Chair related to denominational relationships.

What this course has provided is an avenue to connect with a different leader and influencer in the congregation: the church board chair. This course has linked the denomination to the local church in a positive way. As a

result of the course, the chair participants have become EMCC advocates in their local context. One tangible outcome has been increased giving to our “Common Cause.” This is a definite win for us, all of us as a denomination. The challenge before us, stimulated by the success of this research project, is to identify other leaders in the local church who we might resource or come alongside. It is my opinion that we as a denomination have become pastor-focused and this experience has awakened us to the leadership development needs of others in the local church. The National team exists to serve the local church, not the other way around.

This leads me back to Chapter Two where I suggested that our theology must inform church governance and church leadership over best practice. This thesis project, at its core, has been about serving our church board chairs. I laid out a theology of Christian leaders and governance marked by the life and words of Jesus. Whether we have roles on the EMCC National Team or the role of Chair in an EMCC local church, we must be submitted leaders, steward leaders and servant leaders. These themes have surfaced through this research project. They come through in the precedent governance literature both inside and outside the church context. These themes served to guide the course design decision. It was powerful to watch the chair participants serve and submit to one another in their cohorts. It was equally important for them to grasp the nature of their role as well as the responsibilities of their role. It was a privilege to facilitate the course in the

spirit of servanthood and submission. Even the process of research is a lesson in submission, stewardship and service. Allowing the process of action research (research, action, reflection, adjustment) to play out rather than thinking I know it all as a course designer. The course design improved and will continue to improve as I submit to the process and research feedback. Collecting data, handling the data (storing, getting consent) and coding the data is really about stewardship, stewarding the data. A researcher is really a servant to the research process.

Further Study

First, I would recommend further data collection and analysis of future church board chair training courses. This was such a small sample. Second, it would be helpful to facilitate the course in a variety of contexts (size of church, ethnicities, geography, age of church) to understand what is truly transferrable. Third, in future versions of the course, I would ask the following additional pre-course questions to help expand our understanding of church board chair research:

- How were you selected to become Chair? In order to understand how church boards select their Chair.
- Why did you accept the position? In order to understand the personal motivations for accepting the position.

- How is chairing the church board different from chairing other boards you may have been a part of in the past? The question seeks to understand what is unique to chairing in the local church context.
- Do you have a written Chair job description?
- What is your personality profile? In order to understand the relationship between personality type and Chair style. How does personality affect Chair leadership? Do certain personalities make more effective Chairs?
- What are the constraints that Chairs regularly deal with?

Future Supplementary Resources

Based on requests from the participants I would recommend developing the following supplementary resources:

- A Church Board Chair Facilitator's Guide. If the course were to be facilitated by a graduate of the course or another denominational leader, a companion facilitator guide would be helpful.
- A one-page Church Board Chair role overview. This overview would serve as a reminder to those who have taken the course, as well as a marketing tool for prospective participants.
- One-page resource articles that expand or illustrate each of the Chair roles. These "bite-size" resources would supplement the training course. They would be available online, allowing access as needed.

Version 3 of the Course and Beyond

One outcome of this project has been the development of a third version of the course, incorporating the research from this project. This third version includes eight sessions. At the time of writing, there are thirteen Chair candidates who have registered for Version 3 of the course. The following chart compares the layout of Version 2 with the new Version 3. Version 3 features two additional sessions with expanded input on board/pastor relations, conflict management and meeting basics.

Table 8: Course Version Comparison

Session	Version 2- Research Project	Version 3 – Future
1	Taking the Chair Chair as Tone Setter	Taking the Chair Chair as Tone Setter (refined content)
2	Chair as Table Setter	Chair as Table Setter (refined content)
3	Chair as Meeting Manager Chair as Voice Conductor Chair Member Manager	The Meeting Manager and Member Manager (expanded content to include board basics)
4	Chair as Discernmentarian	The Voice Conductor and Spokesperson (refined content)
5	The Chair as Ally to Pastor Chair as Spokesperson	The Chair as Ally to Pastor (expanded content to include pastoral transitions)
6	Chair as Team Developer	Chair as Discernmentarian (refined content)
7		Chair as Conflict Manager (to include new content)
8		Chair as Team Developer (refined content)

The question remains: How can we make this course reproducible? Version 3 still depends on a facilitator, like myself. There could be a number of potential solutions. One option might be to create a workbook that an existing Chair could work through with an apprentice or vice chair in their local church setting. Another solution might be to recruit a few seasoned church board chairs and equip them to facilitate the course for interested Chairs from other EMCC churches. Some of the participants in this course intimated they would be open to doing that with the right resources, coaching and support. This would be a powerful example of Chairs training Chairs.

Personal Reflections

This project has reinforced God's personal mission on my life: to come alongside leaders to help them live well, lead well and finish well. It was a privilege to walk alongside some amazing, godly leaders and encourage them in their personal and leadership journeys. It was extremely fulfilling to be a small part of building their confidence as local church leaders. I am more conscious of the needs, feeling and challenges that our church board chairs face on a regular basis. They are the unsung heroes in our local churches and I am honoured to serve them.

The research process, for me, has always been about providing the local church a practical resource. I have often described myself as a practitioner rather than a theologian. This kind of doctoral research certainly

fit my bent. This entire doctoral experience was fundamentally driven by a core desire to be a life-long learner. I have been stretched and come out the other side humbled and grateful.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges and weight of responsibility, the ministry of the church board chair has the potential to be one of the most fulfilling roles one can experience in serving Christ's church. Nine church board chairpersons are now approaching their role with newfound understanding, increased self-awareness, renewed resolve and fresh perspective. They are not alone on their leadership journey. They have built some new relationships. They have a sense of support from the denomination. I remain grateful for their willingness to take this learning journey with me. We are all the wiser.

Healthy churches should be led by healthy church boards that in turn are led by equipped church board chairs. For far too long Chair leaders in the church have waited for a practical learning experience that will equip them for their noble task at hand. I submit this paper and this project as a practical response to that need.

Appendix 1: CONSENT FORMS

Participant Consent Form
EMCC Church Board Chair Course
A Research Project for Developing Church Board Chairs

Researcher: John Cressman, DMin (candidate), Tyndale University College and Seminary, Doctor of Ministry Program.

Research Advisor:

Dr. Robert Shaughnessy, Tyndale University College & Seminary.

Any questions or concerns regarding this DMin project or the researcher may be directed to John Cressman or Dr. Shaughnessy.

Purpose of the Study:

The focus of this research project will be on the development of church board chairs in their local church setting. The goal of the research project is to design, facilitate and assess a training course that will help Chairs identify and develop the competencies that will enable them to be more effective in their role.

Invitation to Participate:

The following are expectations for participating in this project:

1. The participant will participate in six monthly videoconference sessions.
2. The participant will complete a pre and post training interview as well as complete self-assessment at the beginning and end of the course.
3. The participant will receive feedback through John Cressman and from church board members who will complete peer assessments both at the beginning and end of the course. The feedback is meant to aid development.
4. The participant will keep and submit a journal of their Chairing experience during the training course period.

I understand that this church board chair cohort training with John Cressman will explore my personal experience and understanding of chairing our church board or elders board or ministry council. I understand that John will interview me at the beginning and end of the cohort as to my experience and evaluation. Further, I understand that all assessments completed by me, and about me, will be shared with John for the purpose of evaluating the course as well as assessing my development as a church board chairperson.

I understand that the research being done is for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, Ontario.

I understand that written notes will be taken during the interviews, that my answers will be included with those of other participants in a published project thesis and in a seminar to be presented to the EMCC National Team and at a denominational gathering, and that my anonymity will be maintained along with that of all the participants in all public documents.

I understand that any information collected in any form will be dealt with in strict confidentiality. A code will be assigned to each participant and no personal names or church names or identifying details will be included in the thesis report. Information will be held secure in a locked office and on a password protected computer. Physical documents will be not be copied or shared and will destroyed at the completion of the project. I understand that all information provided in the interviews, during the cohort and through assessments and other communications, such as email and phone, will be kept strictly confidential between John Cressman and me.

I understand that participation in this training course is voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw from my cohort at any time, without consequence. As a participant in the training program, I have the option as to whether or not I choose to be a part of the doctoral research. By signing this consent form I agree to be a part of this doctoral research project. I am free to withdraw from the doctoral research project at any time, without consequence. In other words, I may choose to participate in a Church Board Training Cohort but choose not to be included in the research project. By not signing this consent form I am choosing not to be included in this research project. I further understand that I may withdraw from this research project at any time without consequence. I can choose to remain in a cohort and participate in the training program. I understand I will receive no compensation for participating and that there will be no cost to participate. I understand that I have not waived my legal rights.

I understand that I will be given opportunity to read the written project thesis before it is submitted in its final form. I understand that the findings of the research project will be used in the Tyndale DMIN program and that thesis findings may be used in other reports or publications.

Understanding these things, I freely consent to participate in the project and its related components.

Name (print) _____
Signature _____ Date _____

Church Board Member and Senior Pastor Consent Form

Background

Your Church Board Chair has consented to participate in a training course provided by John Cressman of the EMCC National Team. The course focuses on identifying and improving essential Chair competencies. The course is also part of a research project John is doing to fulfill his Doctor of Ministry Program (DMIN) at Tyndale University College and Seminary. The goal of the project is to design, facilitate and assess a training curriculum and course to develop church board chairs for effective leadership in their local church.

Invitation to Participate

As a member of the board or pastor of the church, where my Chair has consented to participate in the EMCC Church Board Chair Cohort, I am invited to participate in this DMIN research project by completing two assessments of my board chair related to his/her competencies. The first assessment will focus on my perception of my chairperson's performance prior to taking the course. The second assessment will focus on my perception of change in my chairperson's performance as a result of the course.

Consent to Participate

- I understand that the research being done is for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, Ontario.
- I understand that all assessments completed by me will be shared with John for the purpose of assessing the development of my Church Board Chairperson.
- I understand that my answers will be included with those of other participants in a published project thesis and in a seminar to be presented to the EMCC National Team and at a denominational gathering, and that my anonymity will be maintained along with that of all the participants in all public documents. No personal names or church names or identifying details will be included in the thesis report. Information will be held secure in a locked office and on a password protected computer. Physical documents will not be copied or shared and will be destroyed at the completion of the project. I understand that any information collected in any form will be dealt with in strict confidentiality.
- My specific answers and name will not be shared with my Church Board Chair, unless I choose to do so personally and of my own initiation and volition. John will give my Chair an overall summary report at the conclusion of the project.
- I understand that participation in these assessments is voluntary.

Understanding these things, I freely consent to participate by completing two Church Board Chair Peer Assessments.

Signature:

Date:

Church Board Chairperson's Name

Contact Information

Any questions or concerns regarding this DMin project may be directed to:

Researcher: John Cressman, DMin (candidate)

Research Advisor: Dr. Robert Shaughnessy

Expert Review Consent and Instructions

As part of the DMin Project by John Cressman, (DMIN Candidate, Tyndale Seminary)

Background: For the past nine months church board chairs from the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC) have participated in a training course designed and facilitated by John Cressman. The course focuses on bringing awareness, building confidence and improving church board chair competencies. The course is also part of a research project John is doing to fulfill his Doctor of Ministry Program (DMIN) at Tyndale Seminary. The goal of the project is to design, facilitate and assess a training course that seeks to develop church board chairs for effective leadership in their local church.

Invitation to Participate: As an expert in the field of board governance, you are invited to critically review the six-session curriculum and give your feedback. Your comments will be used to inform, shape and refine the curriculum for future applications.

Expert Panel Members:

- Dr. Paul Magnus, Distinguished Professor of Leadership and Management and President Emeritus of Briercrest College and Seminary, Adjunct Professor in DMin Program at Tyndale Seminary, Experienced Board Consultant and Trainer.
- Jim Brown, bestselling author of *The Imperfect Board Member: Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence*, teacher, trainer, coach and consultant on board governance, co-founder of STRIVE, a leading organizational consulting firm that successfully advises organizations, board and councils around the world on how to significantly improve governance.
- Dr. Stephen Roy, Vice President and Provost, Chief Academic Officer and Dean, Assistant Professor at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener. Dr. Roy has served on a number of church and missionary agency boards, and is currently Chair of SIM International.

Consent to Participate

- I understand that the research being done is for a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, Ontario.
- I understand that my feedback will be included with those of other expert reviewers in a published thesis and in a seminar to be presented to the EMCC National Team and at a gathering of John's peers.
- I understand that participation in this expert curriculum review is voluntary.
- I give permission for my name and credentials to be used for the purpose of presentation and to endorse the value of this DMin project.

Understanding these things, I freely consent to participate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions or concerns regarding this DMin project may be directed to:

Researcher: John Cressman, DMin (candidate)

Research Advisor: Dr. Robert Shaughnessy

Expert Reviewer Instructions

Background:

Two learning cohorts were formed with four to five church board chairs in each. For a period of six months, each cohort met once a month via video conference call to interact with the curriculum. Each session outline has been designed with objectives and outcomes in mind. These are listed at the beginning of each session. Specific sources used in the creation of the curriculum have also been listed. The curriculum was designed to foster discussion among board chairs for peer learning.

Instructions:

1. Review the curriculum as a whole and each individual session.
2. In written form, either by writing notes on the curriculum word document or in a separate document respond to the questions below.
3. Return your feedback to John by or before July 30, 2015 either by mail (129 Windflower Dr. Kitchener, ON N2E 3S9) or email

Questions:

A. Keeping in mind the objectives of each session...

1. Does the content of the session match the objectives of each session?
2. What content should definitely remain in future versions of the curriculum?
3. What adjustments would you make to each session?
4. What additions would you make to each session?
5. What clarifications would be helpful to understanding each session?
6. What other sources would you recommend for each session?
7. What adjustments would you make to the "Cohort Sharing" questions in each session that are intended to foster discussion among the board chairs?
8. What is your assessment of the overall curriculum (all six sessions combined)?

B. As part of my research I asked the church board chair participants and their church boards the following two questions. I would value your answers as well.

1. List the personal qualities that you believe are essential for a Chair of a church board to possess. Rank in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. What are the key skills that all effective church board chairs should develop? Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix 2: COURSE CURRICULUM (Version 2)

Session 1

Session Title

Taking the Chair - with humility, integrity and courage

Session Description

This session will seek to orient the participant to the training course: overview, logistics, technology, assignments and fellow participants. It will focus on building the Chair's awareness of his/her responsibilities, influence, authority and context with the understanding that self-awareness and others-awareness can lead to greater competence.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- An overview of the course and an introduction to fellow participants
- An appreciation of the calling and influence of a Chair leader
- An understanding of the importance of continual self-examination as a leader
- An understanding of the links between awareness, confidence and competence
- An awareness of how he/she impacts church board function
- An appreciation for the members of their church board and their unique contributions
- A fresh awareness of how their particular context affects board function
- Considered current board function challenges

Session Sources

Anyabwile, Thabiti M. 2012. *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

Brown, Jim. 2006. *The Imperfect Board Member: Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carver, John. 2006. *Boards That Make a Difference*. Third Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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Getz, Gene A. 2003. *Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee. 2004. *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*. Boston, MS: Harvard Business School Press.

Harkavy, Daniel. 2007. *Becoming a Coaching Leader*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Harrison, Yvonne. 2007. *The Best and Worst of Board Chairs*. Nonprofit Quarterly.

Harrison, Yvonne; Murray, Vic and Conforth, Chris. 2012. *Perceptions of board chair leadership effectiveness in nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations*. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary Nonprofit Organizations*, 24(3) 688-712.
 Mina, Eli. 2009. *101 Boardroom Problems: And How to Solve Them*. New York, NY: AMACOM.

Session Content

Welcome, Introductions and Prayer

Share participant names, family, context, contact information and “Chair” journey.

1. Course Overview

The Church Board Chair has responsibilities...

Before the Meeting

During the Meeting

Between Meetings



Think Preparation

Think Participation

Think Communication

- Session 1: Taking the Chair: The Chair as Tone Setter
Becoming an “Aware Chair”
- Session 2: Before the Meeting: The Chair as Table Setter
Preparing Yourself, the Board and the Agenda
- Session 3: During the Meeting:
The Chair as Meeting Manager - Facilitating Conversation and Clarity
The Chair as Voice Conductor - Blending Many Voices into One Voice
The Chair as Member Manager – Addressing Unhealthy Habits
- Session 4: During the Meeting: The Chair as Discernmentarian
Leading the Board in Communal Decision-Making
- Session 5: Between Meetings:
The Chair as Ally to the Pastor – Forming a Strong Alliance
The Chair as Spokesperson - Communicating with the Congregation
- Session 6: Between Meetings: The Chair as Team Developer
Taking Responsibility for Board Development and Team Cohesion

Journal Assignment

During the course, keep a journal of your development as a Chair-leader. After each board meeting, reflect on your performance and any adjustments you are making in light of learning from this course. Make journal entries after each interaction with your pastor or after a congregational meeting. In the curriculum there will be Chair Reflection Exercises and Board Exercises for you to reflect on, complete and record any observations in your journal.

2. Calling and Influence

a. Calling - A Noble Task

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach... (1 Timothy 3:1)

- Trustworthy saying – a saying in circulation, common knowledge deemed true, or a way of saying, “you can depend on this.”
- Aspires – “sets his heart on,” literally “to stretch oneself out” – feel like that at times. Speaks to our motivation: Why are you the Chair?
- Noble Task – beautiful, good, valuable, privilege (not about title but responsibility).
- An overseer – the words “elder, shepherd, overseer” are used interchangeably in the New Testament. The chair has a responsibility to oversee the church board to ensure the board does its work. The chair is a leader of leaders (a leader of equals). Not the board’s boss.
- Above reproach – speaks to actions and appearances (integrity) Not open to blame. Not one without sin but one morally careful and responsible. The New Testament speaks more to the character of a leader than to the role. Corporate integrity is vitally tied to individual integrity.

The New Testament illustrates that where there is a plurality of leadership someone needs to function as the primary leader (the word and concept of Chair comes later). The New Testament does not prescribe a particular form of church governance, rather it describes how the early church formed and governed itself.

Throughout history church governance has taken many forms. The EMCC does not dictate the governance structure of local congregations; as a result one will discover a variety governance structures in our churches.

b. Influence - The Chair as Tone Setter

Set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)

- “The most important contribution a leader gives is his/her personal holiness.” (Glenn Daman)

- You are a follower before you are a leader.
Refer to the Way of Jesus – wayofjesus.ca
- I have begun to follow Jesus and am depending upon the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.
- I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.
- I am learning to be like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours and character.
- I am learning to love God and to love others.
- I am learning the teaching of Jesus.
- I am helping someone and someone is helping me to be a growing follower of Jesus.
- I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

Cohort Discussion:

In what areas should you, as Chair, be setting the example for your board?

Chair Reflection Exercise:

Leading by example means living the values/vision of your church. Example: If your church espouses small groups and you are not in one, what does that communicate?

As you consider the vision and values of your church, in what areas do you need to consider setting the example? This would be a good conversation to have with your pastor.

c. Influence Observations

Research suggests that board chairs have influence over at least three groups: fellow board members, CEOs (pastors) and stakeholders (church members). See article by Yvonne Harrison, *The Best and Worst of Board Chairs*.

Another research project (Harrison, Murray and Conforth) revealed:

- Chairs, perceived to be effective, shared similar behavioural characteristics.
- Effective Chairs are relational leaders. They interact and build relationships with others, who in turn, place a positive value on those interactions and their leadership.
- The greater the frequency of Chair interactions with people the greater the perceived impact the Chair has on board performance, the CEO (pastor) and the organization.
- Effective chairs possessed emotional intelligence (EI) and spiritual intelligence (SI). EI characterizes emotional maturity and is defined as one's ability to be aware of personal emotions and understand the emotions of others when dealing with them. SI speaks to beliefs and

related behaviours such as helpfulness, compassion, humility and honesty. These traits characterize the authenticity of the leader.

d. Self-Examination leads to Self-Awareness

Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching (1 Timothy 4:16 NLT).

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you... (Psalms 139:23-24).

- “You can’t effectively lead others until you’ve effectively led yourself” (Daniel Harkavy).
- “Governing oneself precedes governing others” (John Carver).
- Leaders need to be conducting regular self-evaluations (spiritual and performance).
- Consider *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. He practiced the spiritual discipline of *Daily Examen* where each evening he would review his day with God- noting His presence, giving thanks, offering confession, seeking direction. (Google – “Daily Examen - St. Ignatius of Loyola”)
- Four areas of your life to watch and examine:
 - Self-Care = caring for yourself physically, emotionally, spiritually
 - Self Control = guarding areas of temptation and impulse
 - Self-Development = intentional development as a person and a leader
 - Self-Sacrifice = serving like Christ yet knowing your limits

Chair Reflection Exercise:

Set aside one week and conclude each day in quiet reflection with God.

Consider the following questions and journal about your experience.

- *Where might you need to make some changes as you examine your life?*
- *What areas of your life often go “unwatched”?*
- *Who holds you accountable for your life and your role as Chair?*

3. The Aware Chair – Lots to be aware of.

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

a. Know yourself.

Your Personality, Tendencies, History, Experience, Baggage, Bias, Strengths. Being aware of yourself, your emotions, your personality, your tendencies, your strengths, your biases, your history, your experiences, your baggage etc. is a sign on maturity. See studies on Emotional Intelligence (Daniel Goleman) to learn more.

There are a variety of assessments you can take to discover more about yourself and how God has wired you.

Chair Reflection Exercise:

Who are you, really? Use the categories above to create your personal Chair autobiography. Share it with your board at a future meeting. This could lead to a discussion about how each member impacts the board.

b. Know your role.

Do you have a written role description?

Chair Exercise:

Find your role description. Review it. Update it. Create it. Note: if the role description is part of your bylaws go through the proper process to make any changes.

Pay attention to your responsibilities before, during and after meetings.

c. Know your limits.

Be aware of your authority as the Chair. Generally speaking, the Chair only has authority that has been delegated to him/her by the rest of the board (i.e. to speak on their behalf). It is the church board as a whole that has the authority, duty and responsibility to govern the church. The Chair has no special or extra authority over the pastor or the church; authority lies with the board. The Chair must be careful not to overstep his or her delegated authority, particularly outside of the boardroom.

Cohort Discussion:

What is the difference between spiritual authority and board authority?

d. Know your church board's role.

- You are Stewards

For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward. (Titus 1:7)

You have fiduciary responsibilities. The board must ensure that the church is being faithful to its mission, accountable for performance and compliant with laws, bylaws and policies. The board acts as a trustee that holds the assets of the charity in trust for use in implementation of the purposes of the church. Board members may act as agents in relation to transactions they enter into on behalf of the church but only when authorized by specific board resolution.

- You are Overseers and Shepherds

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

(Acts 20:28)

The responsibility of the board is to "direct and protect." (Jim Brown)

The board has oversight and shepherding responsibilities.

Note: Some churches have a two-board structure where these roles are divided.

Cohort Discussion:

*What does your church board steward?
What does your church board oversee?
Who and how does your board shepherd?*

Board Exercise:

Take some time in a board meeting to complete the “Who is Responsible” Worksheet. (See EMCC Resource Attachment – Who is Responsible)

e. Know your board.

How well do you know the board members around the table?
Knowing how your board members communicate, think, process information and interact with each other will help the Chair lead more effective conversations.

Chair Exercise:

Spend some extra time with each member sometime over the next few months with a view to discovering their strengths and appreciating the value they bring to the team.

f. Know your pastor well.

How well do you know your pastor?

Chair Exercise:

Plan a meeting with your pastor with a view to understanding his or her strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, needs, triggers, passions, and personality. Ask for any assessments your pastor may have completed in the past. Develop your own mental and/or written profile of your pastoral leader.

g. Know your church culture.

Become an expert on your church context.
What can you and what can't you change?
What is important to them? What is your church's history?

h. Know your governance.

“We have an overwhelming problem of un-attended bylaws and policies. We are notorious for making decisions without consulting our policies.” (Dr. Paul Magnus)
When was the last time you reviewed your bylaws and policies?

Board Exercise:

Over the next six months take the opportunity to review your church bylaws and policies. Take note of what items need to be updated and what may be missing. Share your findings with the rest of the board.

i. Know the areas where your board needs to improve.

A Chair does well to be aware of potential board function problems.

“A boardroom problem is an individual behavior or systemic condition that diminishes the substantive quality of a board decision and/or damages the decision-making process itself.” (Eli Mina)

Often there are root causes of board dysfunction such as a lack of trust on the team, weak member selection, poor orientation, lack of commitment or poor communication habits. Some board problems are obvious, others are hidden, and some are dormant, while others are perceived, but may just be a misunderstanding.

Cohort Discussion:

Reflect on your board. Identify a potential problem (obvious, hidden, dormant, perceived) and share with the group without names or details.

Board Exercise:

*Complete the EMCC Church Board Assessment Tool with your church board.
(See EMCC Resource Attachment – EMCC Church Board Assessment Tool)*

Session Conclusion:

What are your personal take-aways from this session?

What stood out to you? What was new to you? What was helpful to you?

Session 2

Session Title:

Before the Meeting - The Chair as Table-Setter

Session Description

Good meetings are often the result of good preparation on everyone's part. This session will explore the preparations church board chairs can make to properly prepare for meetings. It will include preparing themselves, agendas and board members for effective meetings.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- Become familiar with the components of effective meeting preparation.
- Reflected on current personal habits and disciplines related to preparation and become conscious of potential areas of improvement.
- Resources, understanding and ideas to implement in his/her local context.

Session Sources

- Addington, T.J. 2006. *High Impact Church Boards*. Oakdale, MN: Sandbox Resources.
- De Pree, Max. 2001. *Called to Serve: Creating and Nurturing the Effective Volunteer Board*. Grand Rapids MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Hotchkiss, Dan. 2009. *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute.
- Lencioni, Patrick. 2004. *Death By Meeting: A Leadership Fable about Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mina, Eli. 2009. *101 Board Problems: And How to Solve Them*. New York, NY: AMACOM.
- Olsen, Charles M. 1995. *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*. Washington DC: Alban Institute
- Pellowe, John. 2010. *Serving as a Board Member: Training for Churches and Christian Agencies*. Elmira, ON: Canadian Council of Christian Charities.
- Tucker, Elizabeth J. 2014. *The 7 Deadly Sins of Chairing Meetings*. EBook edition. Shepherd Creative Learning.

Session Content:

Welcome, Check-in, Prayer

1. Review of Session 1, what have you done to become more aware as a Chair?
 - Aware of myself – strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, biases
 - Aware of my role – my responsibilities according to our policy
 - Aware of my limits/authority
 - Aware of my board – their unique personalities etc.

- Aware of my pastor – strengths, weaknesses, tendencies, needs, triggers
- Aware of my church culture – I have learned more about my context
- Aware of our governance policies/bylaw
- Aware of our board gaps and areas for improvement

2. Preparedness – A Biblical Discipline

What do these verses teach us about the value of preparedness?

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God **prepared** in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)*

*My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to **prepare** a place for you? (John 14:2)*

*So you also must be **ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (Matthew 24:44) "Be dressed **ready** for service and keep your lamps burning." (Luke 12:35)*

*But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be **prepared** to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. (1 Peter 3:15)*

Cohort Discussion:

- What interferes with being prepared as a Chair leader?
- What are some of the consequences you have experienced from poor preparation?
- How much time are you able to put into meeting preparation?
- What does it deserve?

3. Preparing Yourself: Pre-Meeting Habits

Prepare yourself physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually before the meeting.

Cohort Discussion:

- What does that look like for you?
- What changes could you make to be more personally prepared for meetings?

4. Preparing the Agenda: Pre-Meeting Meetings

Designing a purposeful, thoughtful agenda contributes significantly to a group's effectiveness.

When it comes to preparing the agenda:

- Are you a passenger?
- Are you the driver?
- Are you sharing the journey with your pastor?

In theory, the meeting agenda should be set by the board chair because the meeting belongs to the board, not the staff or pastor. However, it often doesn't work that way. In reality, the agenda is often the joint creation of the chair and the pastor. (John Pellowe)

Cohort Discussion:

Describe what you do when you meet with your pastor to prepare the agenda? What could you do to improve that meeting?

a. Different Agendas for Different Meetings

The single biggest structural problem facing leaders of meetings is the tendency to throw every type of issue that needs to be discussed into the same meeting – like a bad stew with too many random ingredients. Unfortunately, this ensures that the meeting will be ineffective.

(Patrick Lencioni)

Lencioni proposes instituting four types of meetings, each for different purposes. Adapting it to the church board chair context:

- Check-In Call with pastor (weekly)
Agenda - encouragement, priorities and prayer
- In-Person Meeting with pastor (monthly)
Agenda - agenda planning, coaching, accountability, encouragement
- Regular Meeting with your board (monthly)
Agenda - strategic, monitoring, fiduciary
- Team Building Retreat with board/pastor(s) (quarterly, twice a year, annually)
Agenda - big picture, strategy, policy, board training, team building

Cohort Discussion:

How might this routine work in your context?

b. Agenda Basics

As the Chair, your first task is to decide if a meeting really is necessary.

- ✓ Can these issues be resolved without a meeting?
- ✓ If a meeting is necessary, define upfront the aim/objectives of the meeting.
- ✓ Determine and agree on meeting length.
- ✓ Determine what kind of agenda is suitable.

c. Create a Chair Agenda

A chair agenda is a more detailed version than the one issued to the board members. It can contain item background information and approximate time needed to process each item.

The chair agenda may also include an action the agenda item is calling for. This can help the Chair facilitate the board discussion related to the item.

Typical actions of agenda items:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Decision required. | Discussion only. |
| Report for information – no action | Need Approval |
| Need feedback regarding an action | Find a solution |

d. Go with the Flow – Energy Matters

When creating the board meeting agenda consider the flow of the meeting. Pay attention to the Meeting Bell Curve – energy and focus change throughout the meeting.

- Beginning of the meeting – easy work
- Middle of the meeting – hard work, priorities – bad news
- Towards end of the meeting – team building, reflection, good news items.

e. Plan like a Screenwriter – Plot Matters

Meetings are inherently boring. By definition, they are dynamic interactions involving a group of people discussing topics that are relevant to their livelihoods. So why are they so often dull? Because we eliminate the one element that is required to make any human activity interesting: drama. (Patrick Lencioni)

Lencioni’s challenge: Treat meetings like movies. How is it that we can enjoy an activity (like a movie) that is inherently passive and irrelevant to our personal situation, and loathe another (like a meeting) that is interactive and relevant? He says that it is because screenwriters and directors have figured out that if you avoid drama in your story, no one will watch your movie. Further it is during the first ten minutes that they must use drama to “hook” their viewers, so they are willing to stay engaged for another two hours. The key to injecting drama into a meeting lies in setting up the plot from the outset. Participants need to be jolted a little during the first ten minutes of a meeting, so they understand and appreciate what is at stake.

f. Remember your role as the Agenda “Filter”

When boards think of their work, there are always more rocks than they can effectively handle in the time available. But here is the good news: Leadership boards are not supposed to handle all rocks and pebbles, only the big rocks. Picture this; if you pile rocks of different sizes together, the small rocks, pebbles, and sand sift to the bottom. Boards are called to deal with the big rocks and allow all small rock and sand details and decisions to filter down to other levels of church management. When boards deal with minutia they can quickly find themselves in sinking sand. Some issues are board issues; many issues that come to boards are not. When building agendas for board meetings, it is important to ask, “Is this a big rock or small rock?” Is this an issue that others can and should deal with, or does it need to be a discussion of the board? The chair must be given enough delegated authority to build meaningful agendas and to defer lesser issues to appropriate individuals. (T.J. Addington)

Filter Questions to screen out unnecessary agenda items:

- ✓ Whose issue is it? Be careful if the pastor is creating the agenda. The temptation will be to put staff issues on the agenda.
- ✓ Can this item be resolved or referred to staff/committee, coordinator?
- ✓ Do we have enough information to bring this item to the board?
- ✓ What information is needed and who will prepare it?
- ✓ Is there a policy that speaks to this item?

g. Utilize Creativity and Varied Agenda Formats:

- Future, Present, Past Agenda
Try laying out the agenda by placing vision items first (future), then deal with current items and conclude with debriefing on past items or events.
- Worship-Centered Agenda
To remind the board they are doing worshipful work, fashion the agenda after your Sunday morning order of worship. What role does prayer play? What about testimony/story-telling? What about listening to Scripture? What about singing? (Charles Olsen)

h. Incorporate a Rolling Agenda (also known as a Continuous Agenda)

Think of the board agenda as a continual agenda – running through the entire board year.

Certain items should appear on the agenda at specific times of the year (these items are cyclical) - items like pastoral review, budget, policy review, risk assessment and new member orientation. When you think about it, each monthly meeting could have a theme. The value of utilizing a rolling agenda is that the chair is not relying on memory to create the agenda but on anticipated planning.

Chair Exercise:

Next time you meet with your pastor to prepare the monthly agenda, brainstorm themes and items that would go on a continuous (year-long) agenda. Beside each month of the year place cyclical items the board should deal with during that month.

January – AGM/communication
February – item/theme
March – item/theme
April – item/theme
May – item/theme
June – item/theme

July – item/theme
August – item/theme
September – item/theme
October – item/theme
November – Budget/finances
December – item/theme

i. Take Advantage of a Consent Agenda

A helpful way of keeping the board from micromanaging is to divide the agenda into two parts: a consent agenda and a discussion agenda. The consent agenda contains actions the board will take, without discussion. This allows the board to deal quickly with the necessary but essentially routine things they must act on, so they can spend more time on their main work. (Dan Hotchkiss)

Potential Consent Agenda Items:

- ✓ Approval of minutes
- ✓ Approve signing of contract already approved by board
- ✓ Approve life insurance policy updates
- ✓ Update policies that are simply editorial
- ✓ Affirm appointments to ministry positions
- ✓ Accept pastor/staff reports

The consent agenda is created in advance. At the beginning of the board meeting the chair asks the board if any member would like to move an item from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda. If any member requests it, an item is moved. Then the chair says, "Without discussion we are ready to vote on the consent agenda. Those in favour? Those opposed? All items on the consent agenda are adopted.

Chair Exercise:

Have you ever used a consent agenda? Try it. Explain the process to your board first.

j. Beware of Green Bananas

Typically at the start of a meeting a Chair might ask board members if they have anything to add to the agenda. This practice can be dangerous. Often last minute items are added without background material, with some of them being substantial and/or controversial. Boards are often ill equipped to make good decisions on these last-minute items. Items that are not "ripe" for decision or even discussion are called "green bananas." Pressing ahead with these items is unwise.

Board members may be surprised and uncomfortable having to deal with something on short notice. Low-grade discussions and flawed decisions may result from lack of prior analysis, background and prayer. Not to mention those who missed the meeting may feel left out of the process since it was not included in the agenda that was circulated. There may be no harm if the last-minute items are only discussed, but forcing a decision may be a costly mistake. Unless urgent, it is much wiser to let the green banana ripen by postponing it to a subsequent meeting. As a preventative measure, teach your board to operate less reactively and more proactively, with last minute items being the exception not the rule. Work hard to create an agenda with no surprises. Board members who want to add to the agenda should contact the chair in advance. (Eli Mina)

Cohort Discussion:

Give an example of a recent "green banana" that your board had to deal with.

5. Preparing the Board: The Chair as Materials Manager

It is the Chair's responsibility to see that all materials are distributed prior to meeting.

Cohort Discussion:

What is your rule for getting materials to board members in advance?

Session Conclusion:

What are your take-aways from this session?

Which of these elements of preparation will you experiment with for your next board meeting?

Session 3

Session Title

During the Meeting: The Chair as Meeting Manager
 The Chair as Voice Conductor
 The Chair as Member Manager

Session Description

Like a conductor of a choir, the church board chair facilitates the blending of many voices, ideas, opinions and preferences into one voice – an agreed upon direction/decision. This session will explore ways a chairperson can become more effective in meeting management and encourage board members to foster better board habits.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- Become familiar with the components of effective meeting management.
- Reflected on current personal habits and disciplines related to facilitating effective group conversations and become conscious of potential areas of improvement.
- Reflected on how to manage board members displaying dysfunctional board behaviour.
- Tools, resources, understanding and ideas to implement in his/her local context related to facilitating effective meetings.

Session Sources

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Session Outline

Welcome, Prayer and Check In

Cohort Discussion:

Recalling my last board meeting, in which of the following areas was I effective (place a check) and which do still need some work on my part (place an X)

- I was personally prepared for the meeting.
- I helped create and shape an agenda that was clear, doable and reflected our priorities.
- I was ON time – starting and finishing.
- I engaged all members in discussion and decisions.
- I remained objective.
- I listened well and helped the group listen to each other.
- I incorporated prayer.
- I made sure the minutes reflected our decisions and actions.
- I guided the group back on topic when off track.

1. The Chair as Meeting Manager

- Following the Agenda – a well thought-through agenda is a map for the meeting.
- Following Procedure – all meetings should follow some form of agreed-upon rules of order; establish the ground rules; play by the rules.
- Tracking Time – time is limited; time is precious; start and end on time
- Supporting the Minute Taker – don't make assumptions, clarify motions and minutes.

Cohort Discussion:

Which of these management duties could you work to improve? What would that look like?

2. The Chair as Voice Conductor

a. *Come let us reason together...(Isaiah 1:18)*

The Chair is responsible **to invite** board members to participate.

The Chair is encouraged **to draw** board members **out**.

The Chair is in a position **to call** for unity (not to be confused with unanimity).

The Chair helps the board to **think** together.

The Chair guides the **dialogue** process.

Dialogue seeks to harness collective wisdom. Dialogue comes from the Greek words *dia* and *logos*. *Dia* means “through”; *logos* translates to “word” or “meaning.” In essence a dialogue is a *flow of meaning*.

The intention of dialogue is to reach new understanding.

In the most ancient meaning of the word, *logos* meant, “to gather together,” and suggested an intimate awareness of relationships. In that sense, *logos* may be rendered as “relationship.” The Book of John begins: “In the beginning was the Word (*logos*) Relationship – Jesus. To take this one step further, “Dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in relationship” (William Isaacs).

Cohort Discussion:

How do the following verses apply to church board conversations?

Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)

b. Speaking with One Voice as a Church Board

In the context of a local church board there are many voices, some more vocal than others. Each board member has a right and responsibility to express his or her personal voice on every matter with which the board grapples. Without everyone's voice the board cannot do its best work. Every individual voice is required for the board to have a full voice. The Chair is responsible to help blend many voices into one unified voice. The truth is, the clearer the voice of the board, the more effective the church board, church leadership and church will be in fulfilling the mission God has given them.

One voice - it is not optional. Rather it is imperative for a church board (Fairbanks, Gunter & Couchenour).

For most church board members speaking their voice comes naturally. It is a challenge to put personal feelings and opinions aside and in the end abide by the board's final decision and participate in speaking with one unified voice as an entire board. Humility and respect are at the heart of speaking with one voice. Parking lot conversations, divisive comments, breaking confidence, and even body language all serve to undermine the board's leadership. Multiple voices and messages can lead to mixed signals, confusion and division. One voice implies that the board as a whole must own the final decisions. The board needs to speak as one voice to the pastor(s) and with one voice to the congregation. The Chair is responsible to help the board blend their multiple voices into one voice. The Chair often has the responsibility to speak the one voice of the board to the congregation. Church board members have the responsibility to affirm their one voice.

Cohort Discussion:

What is your reaction to these thoughts?

Do you and your board understand this concept?

Board Exercise:

Start your next church board meeting with a song (sing a cappella).

Listen for the harmony – the blending of voices.

Introduce the concept of “speaking with one voice as a board.”

Talk about what that would look like in your local church context.

c. Learning to Voice Conduct

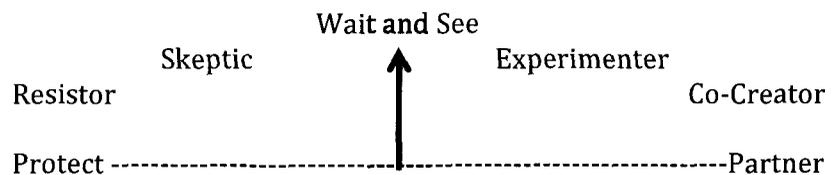
- Begins with Active Listening

As Chair, attend both to the words and the silence between the words.

As Chair, turn off your reactions.

As Chair, pay attention to tone.
 As Chair, listen for the themes.
 As Chair, listen for consensus - the collective wisdom and will of the group.
 As Chair, listen for the common understanding.
 As Chair, listen for the Spirit.

- **Following the Path of the Conversation (adapted from William Isaacs)**
 The route to productive dialogue takes several steps and encounters crossroads.
 The Chair is the guide for the conversational journey and must recognize the terrain.
- **Suspending Judgment**
 When we are listening to someone speak we face a critical choice. If we begin to form an opinion or a response we can shut down the conversation. To suspend our opinion and listen is a honourable and loving choice. The Chair can invite the group to suspend their comments. The Chair can instruct the group to put-on-hold the temptation to fix, correct or problem solve. This is a good time to pray and seek God's will. This is a good time to ask of each other, "What am I missing? What are we missing?"
- **Reading the Room**
 The Chair serves the group best by occasionally "going up to the balcony" during the conversation to gain some distanced perspective to see what is really happening (Ron Heifetz). My family sat in the balcony of my home church growing up. From there I could look over the whole congregation and see what was happening – the side conversations, the disengaged people and the engaged ones. The Chair serves the group by observing where people are at in the conversation – who is engaged?
- **The Arc of Engagement (Glaser 2014, 121)**



- **Summarizing, Reframing, Corraling the conversation.**

Summarizing what's been said so far is a helpful way to keep the group on track.

Reframing what has been said in a different way or giving someone the opportunity to rephrase what he or she is trying to say helps the conversation move along. Negative comments can kill conversation if not reframed in a positive, hopeful way. "If you feel that will not work, what do you think will?"

Corralling - Conversations that “rabbit-trail” or have multiple ideas and themes flowing at the same time may need corralling. Often calling a time out and calling people back to the item at hand is necessary.

3. The Chair as the Board Member Manager

On any church board there may be members whose habits and behaviours may not serve the best interest of the whole board. It often falls to the Chair to address unhealthy behaviours with grace and truth.

Cohort Discussion:

Consider each of these church board members, what thoughtful actions could you take as Chair to address these challenges (adapted from Eli Mina).

- **Meet the Disengaged Member**
Tends to be unprepared; easily distracted; often too busy
- **Meet the Absent Member**
Misses most meetings; often disconnected from the group; struggles to stay caught up and informed.
- **Meet the Talkative Member**
Tends to talk too much and can dominate a discussion.
- **Meet the Single Issue Advocate**
Is passionate about one specific topic or ministry area; downplays what does not apply to him or her.
- **Meet the Quiet Member**
Hesitant or reluctant to speak; often is a deliberate and deep thinker.
- **Meet the Contrarian Member**
Points out the flaws in most new ideas; stifles creativity.
- **Meet the Last-to-Speak Member**
Likes to have the last word; seeks to speak on behalf of others; may unduly or unknowingly influence a decision.
- **Meet the Overly-Sensitive Member**
Tends to take disagreement personally; emotions can cloud judgment; avoids conflict and confrontation.

Session Conclusion:

What are your personal take-aways from this session?

What stood out to you? What was new to you? What was helpful to you?

Session 4

Session Title

The Chair as Discernmentarian – Leading the board through decision-making processes

Session Description

This session will explore the role of the Chair in the board decision-making process. It will pay particular attention to processes that foster a culture of discernment on the board.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- An overview of the discipline and practice of group/corporate discernment from a Biblical perspective.
- An appreciation for the complexity surrounding church board decisions.
- An understanding of three models of corporate discernment.
- An awareness of how he or she might create a culture of spiritual discernment through his or her leadership of the church board.

Session Sources

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Session Content

Welcome, Prayer and Reflection

What is one big or tough decision facing your board in 2015?

What makes decision-making so complex at times for a church board?

From your experience, why do church boards make poor decisions sometimes?

What is the Chair's role in the board decision-making process?

1. A Biblical Understanding of Corporate/Group Discernment

a. Solomon's prayer, our prayer

"Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong." (1 Kings 3:9)

Ruth Haley Barton writes, "Discernment, in a most general sense, is the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God – both in ordinary moments and in the larger decisions of our lives." She goes on, "corporate or leadership discernment then is the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and activity of God as a leadership group relative to the issues we are facing" (Barton 2012).

b. Discernment Words

- *Discernere* (Latin) – to separate, distinguish, to make out clearly
- *Biyn* (1 Samuel 3:8) – to understand and perceive with a spiritual mind
- *Nakar* (Genesis 42:7-8) – to recognize and see with spiritual eyes
- *Shama* (Genesis 3:8) – to hear with spiritual ears
- *Anakrino* (1 Corinthians 2:14) - to distinguish between; to examine and investigate
- *Diakrino* (Matthew 16:3, 1 Corinthians 12:10) – to sift through, to separate apart
- *Dokimazo* (Romans 12:2) – to test and to prove

c. Group Discernment in Action (Acts 15:1-30)

*Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "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 believers 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.*

*5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "**The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.**" 6 **The apostles and elders met to consider this question.** 7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message*

of the gospel and believe. **8** God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. **9** He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. **10** Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? **11** No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. **13** When they finished, **James spoke up.** “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. **14** Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. **15** The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: **16** “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild and I will restore it, **17** that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’—**18** things known from long ago. **19** “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20** Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. **21** For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers.

23 With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:
Greetings.

24 We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. **25** So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. **28** It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: **29** You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

30 So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. **31** The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

Cohort Discussion:

What was the discernment question before the leadership group?

What did the elders and apostles actually do to come to reach a decision?

What was the role of James in the process?

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (v.28) is a key phrase. What can we learn and apply from this to our church board meetings and decisions?

2. Discerning God's Will Together

a. Important theological building blocks that must undergird the discernment process:

- We must believe that God still speaks today and wants us to know His will.
- We must believe that God is good and He cares about our decisions.
- We must believe the Holy Spirit is active and will guide us in personal and corporate discernment.
- We must be willing to ask, listen, trust and obey, as these are preconditions for the gift of discernment.

b. Three Discernment Models:

i) Morris and Olsen in *Discerning God's Will Together* describe ten movements in the discernment process. At the outset of any discernment process it is important to reinforce that the process is one of uncovering the decision, not of making it. It is dangerous to reduce it to a formula.

- Framing – identifying and naming the issue in focus of discernment
- Grounding – setting boundaries and placing the process within the parameters of values, beliefs and purposes of the group deciding
- Shredding – laying aside ego, biases, assumptions and predetermined conclusions
- Rooting – places the process in the context of God's Word and tradition
- Listening – deliberately waiting on the Lord listening for His voice
- Exploring – flowing out of listening, possible options are identified
- Improving – options are improved through prayerful dialogue
- Weighing – options and corresponding feelings are prayerfully tested
- Closing – moving towards a decision with the sense of affirmation of the Spirit and the group
- Resting – testing the decision by allowing it to rest for a period of time to see whether it continues to bring consolation (peace) or desolation (unrest).

ii) Ruth Haley Barton in *Pursing God's Will Together*:

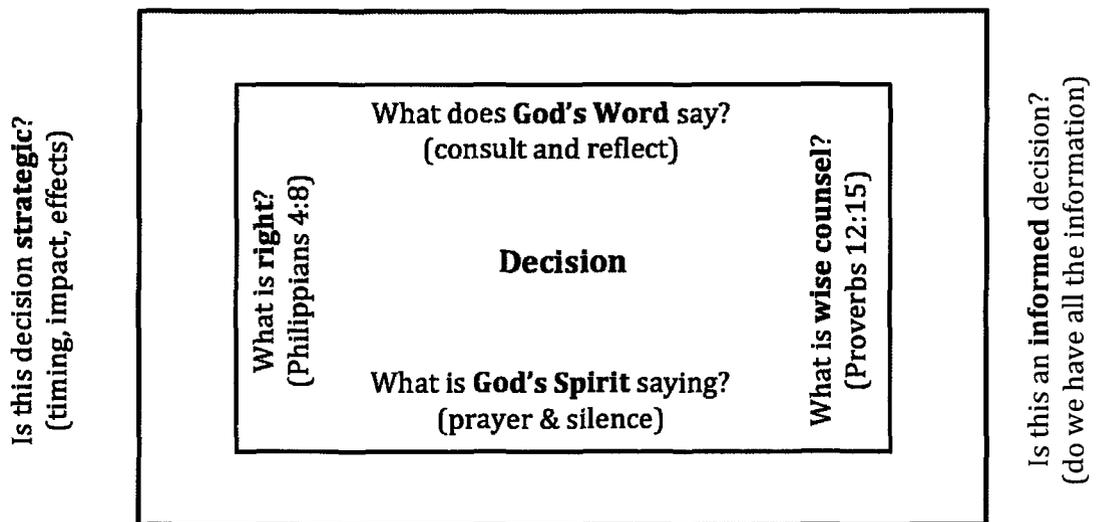
Get Ready: Clarify the question for discernment.
Gather the community for discernment.
Affirm or reaffirm the guiding values of the group.

Get Set: Pray for indifference.
Pray for wisdom.
Pray a prayer of quiet trust.

Go: Listen to what brought the question for discernment.
Listen to each other and the pertinent facts.
Listen to inner feelings.
Listen for God's voice.
Create time and space for silence.
Reconvene, share and listen again.
Select and weigh the options.
Agree together.
Seek inner confirmation.

iii) John Cressman discernment metaphor and tool:
Framing Your Decision Spiritually and Strategically

Is this decision **aligned**?
(mission, vision, values, goals, policies)



Is this decision **shared**?
(consensus, agreement, full input)

c. The Chair as Discernmentarian

Morris and Olsen coined the term, “discernmentarian” as the one who has the responsibility to guide the group/board through the discernment process. In some aspects of the church board meeting the Chair functions as the parliamentarian, at other times, particularly when making important decisions, the Chair must function as a spiritual guide as well.

Cohort Discussion:

What would any of this look like in your context?

What adjustments would you personally have to make?

When would it be valuable for a church board to employ a discernment process?

Session Conclusion:

Vision for a Church Board:

Every member of this board is daily working at discerning God’s will in his or her own life. Daily prayer and silent listening are on the spiritual menu. Occasional retreats are taken to quiet the inner voices and ego demands. Each member joined the board only after thorough examination of the invitation to serve as a call from God through the voice of the people. The board has bonded as a community through stories they have told and their common experience of the grace of God. They are a diverse group but have grown to hold deep respect for one another and for one another’s vocations. The meetings are conducted in a framework of worship. Members pray with and for one another...the decisions are not necessarily the most convenient, cheap, politically palatable, or agreeable to the pastor’s wishes. They are agreed upon with one consideration: that God is leading and calling out this particular form of obedience and mission. In response to the leading, every member prayerfully works for its completion, all the while trusting that God will accomplish more than they ever imagined (Olsen 1995).

Personal Take-Aways?

Session 5

Session Title

Between Board Meetings – The Chair as Ally of the Pastor
The Chair as Spokesperson

Session Description

This session will explore ways the church board chair can support and partner with the pastor. It will also facilitate a conversation around best practices related to board communication in and to the congregation.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- An appreciation for fostering a strong relationship between the Chair and pastor.
- An understanding of the dynamics of a healthy board/pastor relationship and the specific role of the Chair in that relationship.
- Some ideas of how the church board and Chair might communicate with their congregation in healthy and effective ways.

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Session Content

Welcome and Prayer

1. The Chair as Ally of the Pastor – a relationship with purpose

a. The Importance of a Strong Alliance

An executive director (*pastor*) has **no stronger ally** on the board than the chair...in fact, the relationship with the chair sets the tone for the executive director's (*pastor's*) relationship with the board and serves as a model for the behaviour of other board members toward the director (*pastor*) and staff" (Maureen Robinson).

The chief executive's most important relationship is with the board chair. The two leaders are interdependent. They sink and swim together. A positive constructive partnership signals direction, purpose and excitement about the organization's mission, while a lackluster or confrontational relationship will have a detrimental effect on the board and on the individual member's commitment. Both leaders share the responsibility to develop an effective relationship" (Williams and McGinnis).

"The relationship between the board and the senior pastor has proved to be one of the most important relationships in the church" (Aubrey Malphurs).

"And now friends, we ask you to honour those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with Appreciation and love!" (1 Thessalonians 5:12 The Message)

"Appreciate your pastoral leaders who gave you the Word of God. Take a good look at the way they live and let their faithfulness instruct you, as well as their truthfulness."
(Hebrews 13:7 The Message)

Give a bonus to leaders who do a good job, especially the ones who work hard at preaching and teaching. Scriptures tell us, "Don't muzzle a working ox" and "A worker deserves his pay." Don't listen to a complaint against a leader that isn't backed up by two or three responsible witnesses. (1 Timothy 5:17-19 The Message)

"No single relationship in the organization is as important as that between the board and its CEO" (John Carver).

"Among the most important factors that determine your nonprofit's long term effectiveness and the success of its strategies is the precious codependent bond between your board and its CEO. Therefore maintaining a close, positive, productive relationship between governing board and leader should be a continuing top-tier priority." (Doug Eadie)

b. Responsibilities the Board has to the Pastor

- Selecting the Pastor
- Providing for the Pastor
- Praying for the Pastor
- Protecting the Pastor
- Advising the Pastor
- Setting Policies that Direct the Pastor
- Monitoring the Pastor
- Evaluating the Pastor

Cohort Discussion:

Place a check beside those responsibilities your board is doing effectively.
Place an X beside those responsibilities your board could improve.
What could you as a chair do to start or aid the process?

c. What Do Boards Need from their Pastor? (Larry Osborne)

- First drafts not final proposals. No surprises.
- All the necessary information. Boards work only on what is in front of them.
- To follow the boards' direction if given (respect their authority).
- Regular reporting.

Cohort Discussion:

When and how do pastors get themselves in trouble with their board?
When and how can boards undermine their relationship with their pastor?

d. What Every Pastor Needs

- Spiritual leaders need affirmation and encouragement because inevitably they will face discouragement.
- Spiritual leaders need accountability because inevitably they will face temptation.
- Spiritual leaders need friendship and safe relationships because inevitably they will face loneliness.
- Spiritual leaders need coaching because inevitably they will face obstacles.
- Spiritual leaders need perspective because inevitably they will get caught up in the moment.
- Spiritual leaders need a push now and then because they will inevitably reach plateaus and settle into comfort zones.
- Spiritual leaders need help with pacing and priorities because inevitably they will face burnout.
- Spiritual leaders need prayer and spiritual protection because inevitably they will encounter spiritual opposition.
- Spiritual leaders need someone who will be brutally honest with them because inevitably they will lose self-awareness.
- Spiritual leaders need acceptance for who they are because inevitably they will deal with expectations driving them to be someone they are not.

Chair Reflection Exercise:

As you reflect on these needs, what does your pastor need from you at this moment?

- e. What Can Pastors Expect from their Board?
 - That the board will come to them first if there is a concern.
 - Public support for a board decision
 - Confidentiality
 - Clear expectations
 - Have their back
 - Know when to take charge, when to partner and when to stay out of the way (Ram Charam)

- f. What is the role of chair in the pastor/board relationship
 - Liaison
 - Accountability
 - Encouragement
 - First response
 - Coaching

A model for leadership coaching:

- G – Goal What would you like to talk about? What’s your goal this week or month?
R – Reality What is going on currently? Obstacles? What have you tried?
O – Options What are some things you could you do to get to where you want to go?
W – Will When will you do this? What will you need to complete this? Support?

2. The Chair as Spokesperson – Best Practices

- a. Speak the “One Voice” of the Board - be careful about personal commentaries.

- b. Redirect people to the appropriate source when they have a concern. Congregational members may seek to go around or over someone’s head to you as a board chair when they should be speaking to someone particularly. Redirect them.

- c. Reserve comment – you can’t speak on behalf of the board until the board meets.

- d. Don’t jump to conclusions – seek to gather good information and remember the value of two or three witnesses.

- e. Always remain calm and use a calm voice. Speak positively but truthfully.

- f. Be extremely careful with confidential information and conversations.

- g. Guard your reaction and response to letters from the congregation.

- h. Develop a board communication rhythm/plan to inform the congregation regularly of your board work/decisions. What do you use?
- i. Be prepared when chairing congregational meetings.

How do you handle questions at an open meeting?

Options:

1. Answer the question in the board's voice.
2. Redirect the question to the person who has the answer.
3. Honestly declare that you don't know or have the answer and state how you will go about getting the answer and reporting it.
4. State clearly and simply that the answer is confidential.

Cohort Discussion:

Share other best practices with the group when it comes to communicating with and within the congregation.

Session Conclusion:

Personal Take-Aways? Action Steps?

Session 6

Session Title

Between Board Meetings – The Chair as Team Developer

Session Description

This session will explore the process of board development and the role of the Chair in spearheading the process and building strong board cohesion.

Session Outcomes

When this session is complete the participant will have:

- An understanding of the five phases of effective board development and the role the chair plays in the board life cycle.
- Some practical ideas on how to improve board development in his/her local context.
- An appreciation for the chair's role in building board cohesion and trust.

Session Sources

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Session Content

“After being elected to his church board, Tim was surprised to find out that he would receive no training for his new role. He had gone through intensive training to serve as a small group leader and he was expected to go through additional training from time to time to improve his ministry skills in that area. When he had joined his church's greeting team, he had received training. It didn't make sense to Tim that he would be trained for these ministries but not for his ministry as a

church board member. Although Tim was surprised by what he found, this state of affairs is all too familiar. Church board members are typically people of proven faithfulness who possess leadership skills. Yet, few receive more than a brief orientation for this ministry that is so critical to the effectiveness of the church." (*The Leadership Baton*)

Cohort Discussion: How would you assess your board's performance in this area?
Why is board development often a low priority?

1. The Church Board Development Cycle (created by Cressman, 2015)



a. Board Member Recruitment

Identifying and recruiting potential new church board members should be the ongoing responsibility of every current board member, especially the Chair. Ideally when it is time to nominate new members to the board the church should have a pool of potential candidates from which to consider.

Effective recruitment includes:

- **Observation** – current board members should be paying attention to those within the congregation who demonstrate spiritual leadership potential. This could be a point of conversation periodically around the board table.
- **Discipling** – potential candidates should be in a discipling relationship where someone is intentionally helping them to be a growing follower of Jesus.
- **Apprenticing** – a church board might consider adopting an apprentice program. Each year the board might identify one or two potential/future board candidates and invite them to sit in on board meetings to be exposed to life on the board. The apprentice may have a voice but not a vote. Assigning each apprentice to an existing board mentor would also be valuable. This way the apprentice can debrief and process his/her learning.

- **Testing Readiness** – potential candidates could be given a readiness packet, which would include information about serving on the church board, articles to read prior to becoming a board member (See *Serving as a Board Member* by John Pellowe – Chapter 1). Some churches have designed questionnaires to test a board candidate's readiness.

Cohort Discussion: What is your board currently doing in this area of recruitment?
 What is your role as Chair in recruitment?
 What recruitment idea will you review with your board?

b. **Board Member Selection**

Every church has some sort of board member nomination procedure (check your bylaws). The key question is: Is your procedure bringing forth the best candidates?

Cohort Discussion: How does your church currently select/nominate board members?
 What is your role as Chair in the process?
 What elements are important to consider in the selection process?

c. **Board Member Orientation**

No orientation plan often equates to no orientation period. By default, members learn by observing the example of others, for good or not so good. As a result meetings take longer and members take longer to contribute to board discussions.

Effective orientation often includes:

- **A special orientation session(s)**
 Some church boards incorporate orientation as part of their regular monthly meeting soon after the appointment of new members. Others facilitate a special annual orientation event that may include a meal, team building and orientation. This event is separate from the board's monthly meeting.
- **An orientation manual** (recommend digital version)
 New board members need to have access to the mission, vision, values, history, bylaws and policies of the church. They need to have resources that acquaint them with their role and responsibilities as well as the board's relationship to EMCC. New members also need copies of the minutes of the current year, recent reports received from the pastor/ministries as well as financial reports and a copy of the church budget.
- **Mentoring relationships between new and existing board members**
 New board members are matched with experienced board members. Mentoring times may take the form of in-person meetings between or prior to regular board meetings. Telephone or online conversations

could work as well. The purpose of the meeting is for orientation and debriefing. The existing board member should take the initiative to meet and guide the conversations.

Here is a sample six-month schedule:

- Session 1: Goal to get to know one another (share stories) and review the history, mission and vision of the church.
- Session 2: Goal to understand the role and responsibilities of the board. Review issues facing the board.
- Session 3: Goal to discuss how to prepare and participate in board meetings.
- Session 4: Goal to review church bylaws and policies.
- Session 5: Goal to review board member best practices (confidentiality, handling complaints, leading by example).
- Session 6: Answer the new member's outstanding questions.

Cohort Discussion: How do you currently handle new member orientation?
What is your role as Chair in the process?
What elements might you plan to review with your board?

d. Board Member Training

What is your plan for ongoing board training?

Devotionals are important, but not a substitute for intentional board training.

Effective training may include:

- **A training segment incorporated into each monthly board meeting.** The benefit of this approach is that the board has 8-10 bite-size opportunities for development. The challenge for the Chair with this approach is to guard the agenda and plan the training segments in advance.
- **Periodic board training retreats.** Some church boards have discovered the benefits of separating board business from board training and team building. To do so requires commitment to scheduling meetings for times of focused learning and unrushed prayer. Change of venue can be helpful in building community and fostering creativity.
- **Practice scenarios.** The board sets time aside in their regular meetings to consider what they would do if certain scenarios presented themselves. This a proactive means of learning.

There are a growing number of training resources available in various formats.

- See cccc.org (Canadian Council of Christian Charities).
- Contact your Regional Minister.
- Onsite training available through EMCC.

Cohort Discussion: How do you currently handle board training?
What is your role as Chair in the process?
What pattern of training do you think would work best for your board?

e. Board Member Succession

A vast majority of board members serve faithfully and diligently until their term is up and quietly depart from the board. Minimal responsibility is given to succession.

In particular, the former church board chair should take the responsibility to mentor, orient, and coach to the new board chair as he or she orients to the role. This course material may be helpful to review with the new board chair.

Under the direction of the board chair, the outgoing treasurer and secretary should work to orient the incoming person to the role.

Cohort Discussion: How do you currently handle board member succession?
What is your role as Chair in the process?
How might you address this issue with your church board?

2. Church Board Cohesion

The Chair has a responsibility to foster a culture of trust and cohesion.

The Eight Pillars of Trust (The Trust Edge, David Horsager)

- Clarity – People trust the clear and mistrust the ambiguous.
- Compassion – People put faith in those who care beyond themselves.
- Character – People notice those who do what is right over what is easy.
- Competency – People have confidence in those who stay fresh, relevant and capable.
- Commitment – People believe in those who stand through adversity.
- Connection – People want to follow and be around friends.
- Contribution – People immediately respond to results.
- Consistency – People love to see the little things done consistently.

Cohort Discussion: How can the Chair build trust and cohesion in the board?

Conclusion

THANK YOU!

Final Thoughts. Time to pray for each other.

Appendix 3: PRE-COURSE EVALUATION

Pre-Course Participant Interview

1. How long have you been the chair of the church board?
2. Tell me about any deliberate training you had prior to coming into this position.
3. Tell me about any deliberate mentoring you have had prior to coming into this position.
4. Tell me about any previous chairing experience you have had previously?
5. Describe your chairing experience?
6. What do you understand to be your responsibilities as chair of the board?
7. What do you find most challenging as chair of the board?
8. In what aspect of your role as chair do you feel most competent?
9. Where do you need help in your role as chair?
10. How would you currently rate yourself as a chair on a scale of 1-10?
1 = struggling/ineffective 10 = highly effective in all areas of my role.

Pre-Course Participant Self-Assessment

To be completed by the Chair Participant prior to the Church Board Chair Course
Facilitated by John Cressman, DMIN Candidate, Tyndale Seminary

Chair's Name _____ Date _____

1. List five personal qualities that you believe are essential for a Chair of a church board to possess. Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

2. What do you think are the key skills that all effective Church Board Chairs possess? Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

3. In your role as Church Board Chair rate your confidence level in the following areas. Circle the response that best reflects your feelings according to this scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Not Confident		Gaining Confidence		Confident

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Speaking on behalf of the board | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Managing our regular board meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Preparing for our regular meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Engaging everyone in the conversation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Leading the group toward discernment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Leading the group toward consensus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Working collaboratively with our pastor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Finding ways to encourage board members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. Following up with board members who have assignments from the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Addressing concerns with individual board members who are not fulfilling their role | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. Remaining objective during discussions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| l. Leading by example | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m. Keeping board discussions on track | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n. Time management in our board meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| o. Preparing the board meeting agenda | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| p. Knowing how each board member contributes to a conversation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| q. Being aware of my own biases during board discussions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| r. Mentoring other board members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| s. Supporting the one taking minutes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| t. Ensuring board agenda and reports are circulated in advance of the meeting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| u. Taking responsibility for board evaluation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| v. Active listening during board discussions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| w. Chairing congregational meetings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| x. Fostering a sense of team on the board | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| y. Handling conflict situations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| z. Taking responsibility for board development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

List the questions you found confusing (e.g. 3v)

Pre-Course Participant Peer-Assessment

To be completed by Board Members and Senior Pastor
at the beginning of the EMCC Church Board Course
Facilitated by John Cressman, DMIN Candidate, Tyndale Seminary

Chair's Name: _____ Date: _____

This information will be kept anonymous. Overall results will be shared with your Chair in a one-on-one meeting with John Cressman. No names will be shared. Of course, you are welcome to share your answers directly with the Chair if you so desire. It is acknowledged that your church governing board may use a different term than "church board" like Elders' board or Deacons' Board or Ministry Council. For the sake of this research we will use the term "church board chair."

Part 1: Church Board Chair Research

1. List five personal qualities that you believe are essential for a Chair of a church board to possess. Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. What do you think are the key skills that all effective Church Board Chairs possess? Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Part 2: Assessing My Church Board Chair

A. General:

1. What specific strengths does your Chair possess that you believe makes your church board operate more effectively?

2. Your Chair has expressed a desire to grow and learn. Where could your Chair improve?

B. My Chair's Impact on Board Performance:

Leadership is defined by action. With your Chair in mind, consider how his or her actions have contributed to your board's performance. Circle the response that best reflects your opinion.

The rating scale for each statement is: 1-No impact at all; 2-Minimal impact; 3-Some impact; 4-Considerable impact; 5-Significant Impact

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. My Chair's leadership has helped the board become aware of its role. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My Chair's leadership has helped the board become more efficient in how board work is conducted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. My Chair's leadership has improved our board meetings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. My Chair's leadership has helped board members become more engaged in board discussions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. My Chair's leadership has helped the board discern God's will when making decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. My Chair's leadership has helped the board in handling conflict. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. My Chair's leadership has strengthened the board's relationship with our pastor. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. My Chair's leadership has helped us be cohesive as a team. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. My Chair's Leadership has helped us to develop as church leaders. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. My Chair's Leadership has helped us build trust with the congregation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

C. How satisfied are you with your Chair's overall performance in his/her role?

Not at all satisfied		Satisfied		Extremely Satisfied
1	2	3	4	5

D. How would you characterize the quality of your relationship with the Chair?

Check all that apply.

- We are good friends.
- We don't really know each other very well.
- We interact mostly at board meetings.
- We respect each other.
- We work well together.

E. Rating your Chair's Confidence Level in his/her Role

As you consider the leadership of your Church Board Chair rate your perception of his or her confidence level in the following areas.

Circle the response that best reflects your feelings according this scale:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not Confident		Gaining Confidence		Confident
a. Speaking on behalf of the board	1	2	3	4	5
b. Managing our regular board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
c. Preparing for our regular meetings	1	2	3	4	5
d. Engaging everyone in the conversation	1	2	3	4	5
e. Leading the group toward discernment	1	2	3	4	5
f. Leading the group toward consensus	1	2	3	4	5
g. Working collaboratively with our pastor	1	2	3	4	5
h. Finding ways to encourage board members	1	2	3	4	5
i. Following up with board members who have assignments from the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
j. Addressing concerns with individual board members who are not fulfilling their role	1	2	3	4	5
k. Remaining objective during discussions	1	2	3	4	5
l. Leading by example	1	2	3	4	5
m. Keeping board discussions on track	1	2	3	4	5
n. Time management in our board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
o. Preparing the board meeting agenda	1	2	3	4	5
p. Knowing how each board member contributes to a conversation	1	2	3	4	5
q. Being aware of his or her biases during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
r. Mentoring other board members	1	2	3	4	5
s. Supporting the one taking minutes	1	2	3	4	5
t. Ensuring board agenda and reports are circulated in advance of the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
u. Taking responsibility for board evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
v. Active listening during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
w. Chairing congregational meetings	1	2	3	4	5
x. Fostering a sense of team on the board	1	2	3	4	5
y. Handling conflict situations	1	2	3	4	5
z. Taking responsibility for board development	1	2	3	4	5

Which questions did you find confusing? _____

Appendix 4: POST COURSE EVALUATION

Post-Course Participant Interview

1. Describe how this training experience has added value to your role as chair.
2. What elements of the training course were helpful to you?
3. Assess the helpfulness of the curriculum.
4. What adjustments would you make to the course?
5. What was missing from the curriculum that you would like to see added?
6. What impact did the facilitator have on the effectiveness of the course?
7. What changes have you made in the way that you chair as a result of this training course?
8. What changes have you seen in your board's effectiveness that you could attribute to this training?
9. What have you discovered are the competencies you must develop as a chair?
10. What recommendations would you have to improve the whole experience?
11. Any other comments you would like to add?

Post Course Participant Self-Assessment

To be completed by the Chair Participant after the EMCC Church Board Chair Course
Facilitated by John Cressman, DMIN Candidate, Tyndale Seminary

Chair's Name _____ Date _____

For the past six months you have participated in a training course designed to strengthen your chairing skills. Please reflect on the past six months and respond honestly to the following questions. Give specific examples where appropriate. Your response will be kept anonymous and used to assess the effect of the EMCC Church Board Chair Cohort Course.

1. Where specifically have you demonstrated marked improvement in your role as Chair?

2. What chairing skills have you been working on since the course began?

Check as many as apply.

- Listening skills
- Meeting management
- Time management
- Preparing for meetings
- Facilitating productive conversations
- Leading the board toward discerned decisions
- Working with the pastor
- Speaking with clarity for the board to the congregation
- Handling tough issues
- Responding appropriately to concerns/complaints
- Developing existing board leaders
- Raising up future board leaders
- Personal awareness
- Fostering cohesiveness among board members
- Getting to know board members
- Leading by example
- Following up on board meeting assignments
- Other _____
- Other _____

Give one or two specific illustrations where you have improved in your role as Chair over the past six months as a result of this training.

3. In your role as Church Board Chair rate your confidence level in the following areas. Circle the response that best reflects your feelings now after the Church Board Chair Course according to this scale:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not Confident		Gaining Confidence		Confident
a. Speaking on behalf of the board	1	2	3	4	5
b. Managing our regular board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
c. Preparing for our regular meetings	1	2	3	4	5
d. Engaging everyone in the conversation	1	2	3	4	5
e. Leading the group toward discernment	1	2	3	4	5
f. Leading the group toward consensus	1	2	3	4	5
g. Working collaboratively with our pastor	1	2	3	4	5
h. Finding ways to encourage board members	1	2	3	4	5
i. Following up with board members who have assignments from the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
j. Addressing concerns with individual board members who are not fulfilling their role	1	2	3	4	5
k. Remaining objective during discussions	1	2	3	4	5
l. Leading by example	1	2	3	4	5
m. Keeping board discussions on track	1	2	3	4	5
n. Time management in our board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
o. Preparing the board meeting agenda	1	2	3	4	5
p. Knowing how each board member contributes to a conversation	1	2	3	4	5
q. Being aware of my own biases during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
r. Mentoring other board members	1	2	3	4	5
s. Supporting the one taking minutes	1	2	3	4	5
t. Ensuring board agenda and reports are circulated in advance of the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
u. Taking responsibility for board evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
v. Active listening during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
w. Chairing congregational meetings	1	2	3	4	5
x. Fostering a sense of team on the board	1	2	3	4	5
y. Handling conflict situations	1	2	3	4	5
z. Taking responsibility for board development	1	2	3	4	5

3. Rating your Chair's Confidence Level in his/her Role

As you consider the leadership of your Church Board Chair rate your perception of his or her confidence level in the following areas over the past six months.

Circle the response that best reflects your feelings according to this scale:

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not Confident		Gaining Confidence		Confident
a. Speaking on behalf of the board	1	2	3	4	5
b. Managing our regular board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
c. Preparing for our regular meetings	1	2	3	4	5
d. Engaging everyone in the conversation	1	2	3	4	5
e. Leading the group toward discernment	1	2	3	4	5
f. Leading the group toward consensus	1	2	3	4	5
g. Working collaboratively with our pastor	1	2	3	4	5
h. Finding ways to encourage board members	1	2	3	4	5
i. Following up with board members who have assignments from the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
j. Addressing concerns with individual board members who are not fulfilling their role	1	2	3	4	5
k. Remaining objective during discussions	1	2	3	4	5
l. Leading by example	1	2	3	4	5
m. Keeping board discussions on track	1	2	3	4	5
n. Time management in our board meetings	1	2	3	4	5
o. Preparing the board meeting agenda	1	2	3	4	5
p. Knowing how each board member contributes to a conversation	1	2	3	4	5
q. Being aware of my his or her biases during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
r. Mentoring other board members	1	2	3	4	5
s. Supporting the one taking minutes	1	2	3	4	5
t. Ensuring board agenda and reports are circulated in advance of the meeting	1	2	3	4	5
u. Taking responsibility for board evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
v. Active listening during board discussions	1	2	3	4	5
w. Chairing congregational meetings	1	2	3	4	5
x. Fostering a sense of team on the board	1	2	3	4	5
y. Handling conflict situations	1	2	3	4	5
z. Taking responsibility for board development	1	2	3	4	5

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