

# Simplified Accountable Structure



A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness

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# Often in the Typical Church Structure

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structure is driving the mission  
*versus*  
the mission driving the structure!



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# Structure

The design and arrangement of tangible factors in time and space.



**Calendar**



**Budget**



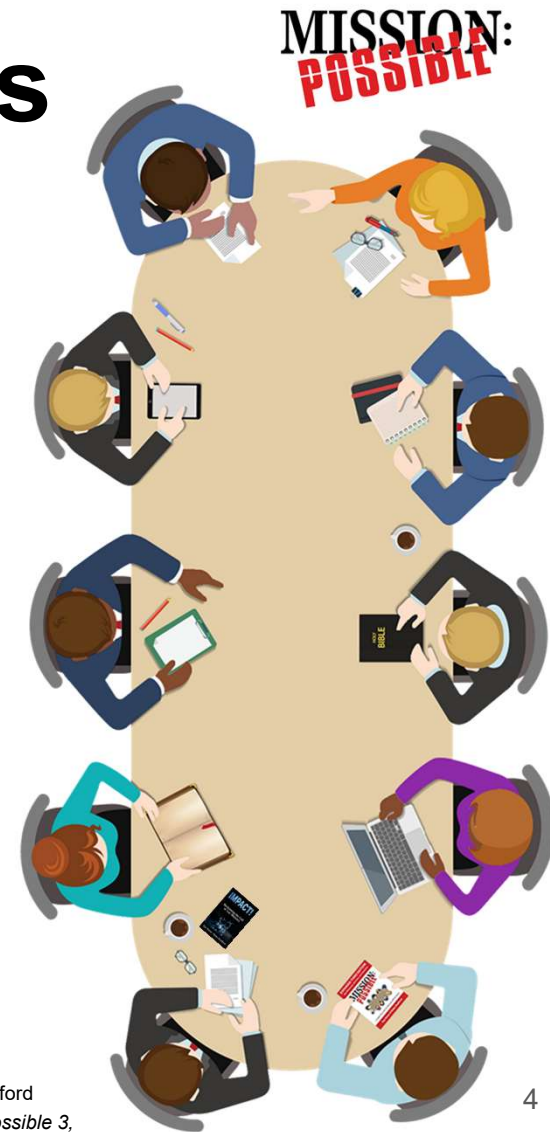
**Facilities**



**Decision Making**

# Problem with most Structures

- ❖ Promotes disunity and enables dysfunction
- ❖ Clear lines of authority...but no clear lines of accountability
- ❖ All responsibility on the pastor, but little or no authority
- ❖ Nearly impossible to make difficult and timely decisions



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# Problem with most Structures:

**Our inherited Structure of  
Administrative Committees**

*(or worse, the dualistic*

*Council on Ministries & Ad Board)*

**are perfectly designed to**

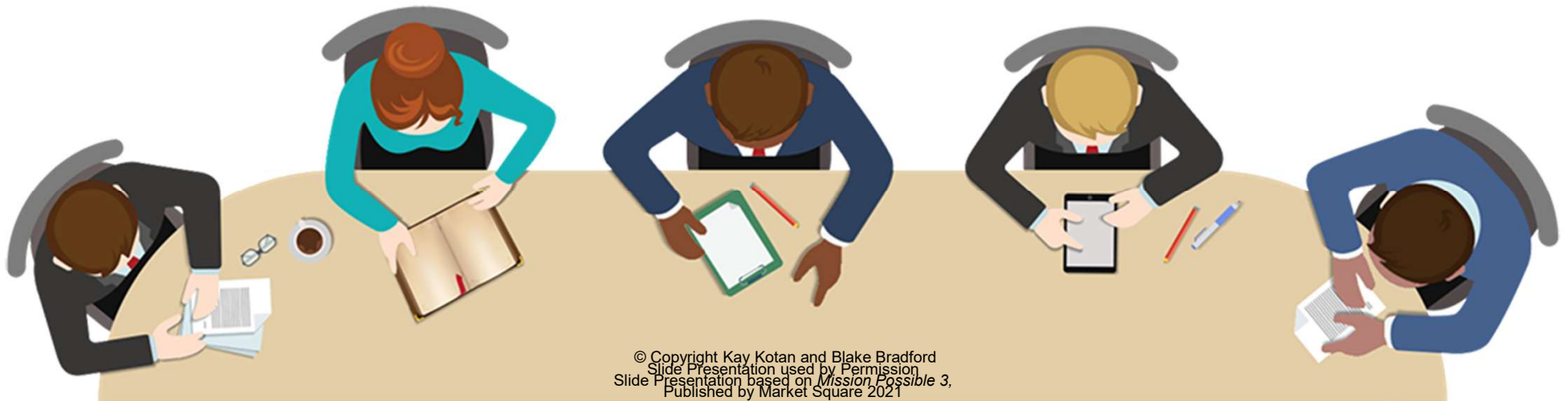
**make sure nothing new happens.**



# There is another way. . .

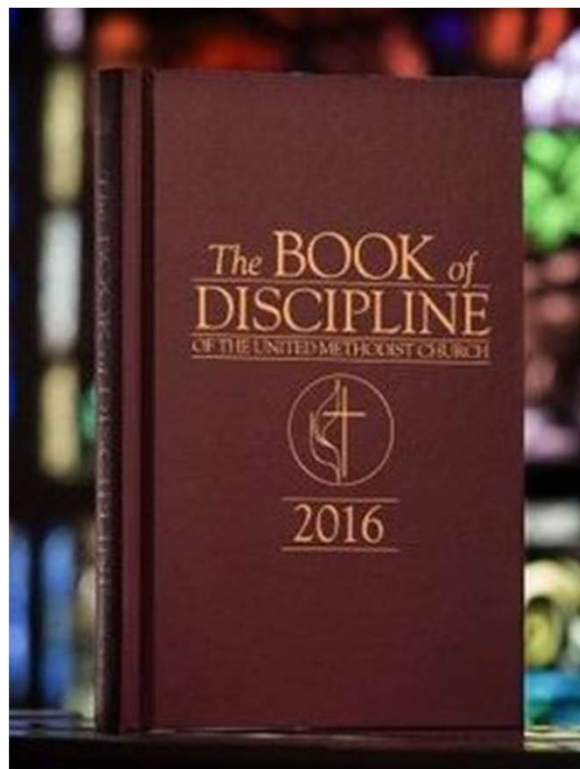
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## Simplified, Accountable Structure



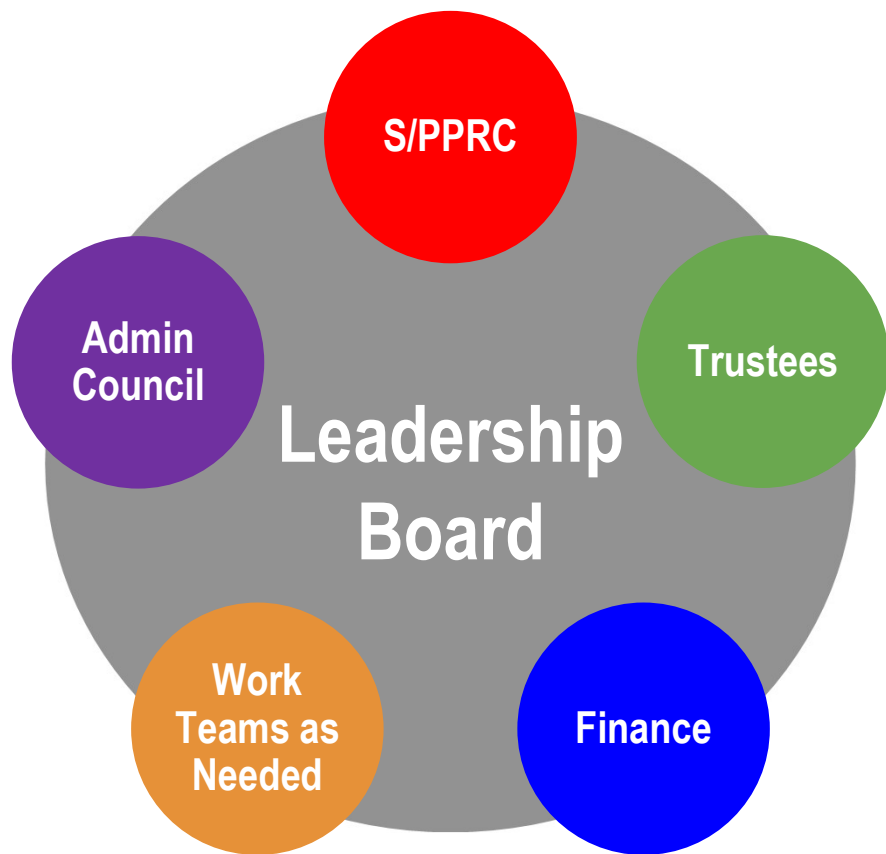
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## ¶ 247.2 “modify the organizational plans”



**The charge conference, the district superintendent, and the pastor shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the policies and plans herein set forth. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans, provided that the provisions of ¶ 243 are observed.**

# What is Involved?



**One Leadership Board is responsible for leadership and governance.**

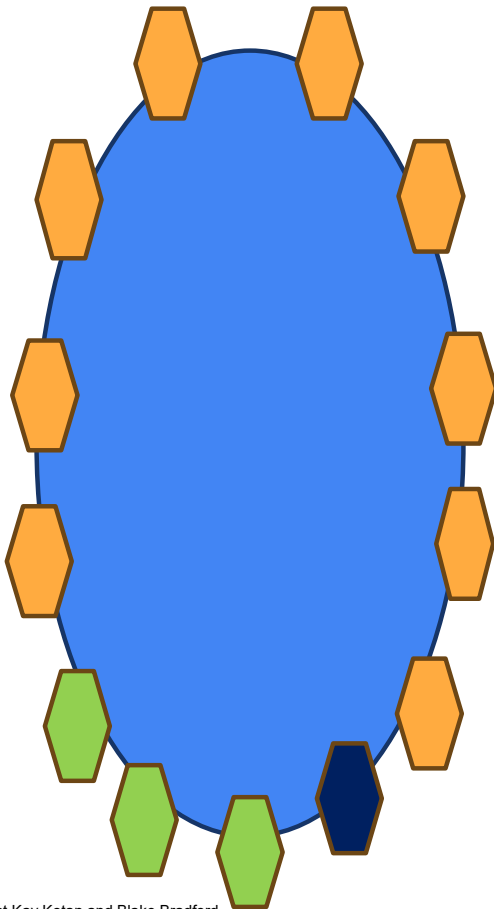
**All administrative committee responsibilities and functions are vested in the Leadership Board.**

**Existing Ministry Teams continue.**

**Separate Nominations Committee**

**Leadership Board = Ad Council + SPPRC + Finance + Trustees**

# What is involved



Orange- Leadership board  
Dark Blue- Pastor  
Green- Mentors  
Term- 3 years on the team + 1 year mentoring the new members



# Four Responsibilities of Governance

**Stewardship** • Tending to the fiduciary responsibilities and alignment of God's people and resources

**Generative** • Discerning God's dream and working to set the congregation's next steps

**Strategic** • Leveraging the resources to be aligned with congregational priorities

**Accountable Leadership** • Setting a culture of well-aligned impact-focused ministry

**Leadership Board  
sets the Guiding  
Principles  
DOES NOT  
manage the  
the day-to-day operations  
or ministries of the church**

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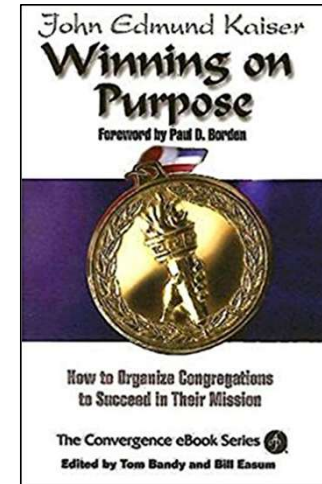
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## Accountable Leadership

**Do you want the mission to succeed?**

“Are you prepared to stake everything, change anything, and do whatever it takes — even if it means altering long familiar habits, redeveloping precious programs, and redeploying sacred assets?”

~ Tom Bandy  
From the foreword of  
*Winning on Purpose*



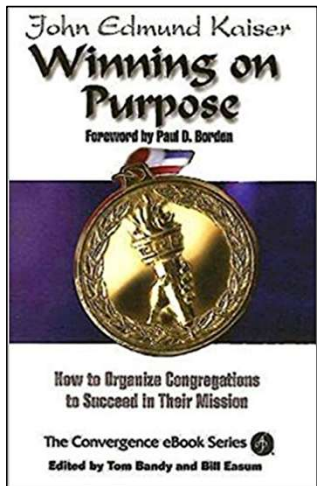
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# Typical Church Leadership Styles

- Bureaucratic-Large group Driven
- Autocratic-Driven by one Person
- Committee-Based or Consensus-Driven
- Pastor-Centered or Personality-Driven
- Accountable



# Accountable Leadership

**Responsibility:** A duty or obligation to satisfactorily perform or complete a task by one person

+

**Authority:** The power to give direction and/or make decisions

+

**Accountability:** An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

=

**Safe AND Effective**



EXPANDED THIRD EDITION!

New Resources, Activities, and Checklists

# MISSION: POSSIBLE



A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness

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“ **The Focus Changes**  
*Changing to a simplified,  
accountable leadership  
structure is more than  
reducing the number of  
people at the table; it is about  
changing the work and  
conversation at the table.* ”

# Who Should Adopt?

**ALL CHURCHES**     Accountable  
                                 Leadership

**SOME CHURCHES**     Simplified Structure  
                                 & Accountable Structure

**NO CHURCHES**     Simplified Structure  
                                 without Accountable Leadership



# Why Simplified Accountable Structure?

## Common Motivators:

- Desire or need for fewer nominated leaders
- Desire for fewer meetings

## The Real Potential:

- Technical AND Adaptive Changes
- Accountability
- Missionally Focus & Alignment
- Nimble Adaptability and Possibility for Revitalization



# Three Phases to SAS

## Discerning

- 3-6 Months, beginning in the first quarter of the year
- Approval of Council to explore the model
- Conversations in the local church
- DS Request
- SAS Coaching begins
- Discernment of the DS, congregation, and its leaders if this is the right model in the right season for the church

## Equipping

- Begin mid year, with training of Nominations before Church/Charge Conference
- Coaching continues in a training capacity
- Training Nominations Committee is critical
- Training the new Leadership Board to begin service January 1
- Annual equipping of new leaders is crucial

## Implementing

- First year of using SAS
- Coaching as resourcing, redirecting, and reflection
- Creating the initial guiding principles, leadership covenant, policies and procedures
- First strategic ministry planning retreat with SAS coach
- Living into both the technical and adaptive leadership changes of this model
- Training Nominations to continue the model



# Simplified, Accountable Structure Discernment Steps

1. Church Council votes to explore SAS after assessing the “why”
2. Letter from Council Chair and Pastor to DS seeking permission to explore
3. Approval from DS to explore and assignment of Certified SAS Coach
4. SAS Coach works with leaders to establish a SAS Prayer Team and SAS Discernment Team to lead in learning, listening, organizing, and communicating the SAS discernment process.
5. The SAS Discernment Team implements communication and information plan and provides feedback to Council
6. Based on congregational feedback and leadership discernment, the Council submits letter to DS to approve moving to (or not) SAS
7. DS reaches out to Certified SAS Coach for feedback and makes decision
8. DS approval via letter (church conference timing)
9. Coach begins to work with Nominations Committee and continues to work with church leaders on communication strategies (See Equipping Phase)
10. Church Conference to approve SAS model
11. Nominations completes their work
12. Church/Charge Conference to approve Nominated Leaders

*Note: After completing the Discernment Phase, move into Phase Two: Equipping and then onto Phase Three: Implementation.  
We **highly recommend** partnering with a SAS certified coach through all three phases for the most effective and healthiest outcome!*

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## **SIMPLIFIED ACCOUNTABLE STRUCTURE (SAS) SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION**

### **JANUARY 2026 - RESET**

- Retreat with Blessing – January 10th
- Church Conference for Confirmation – Date to be determined

### **FEBRUARY TO MAY 2026**

- NLD creates nomination list for SAS Board members – 12 each
- Charge Conference approves SAS Board selections

### **JUNE 2026**

- Charge Conference to Approve moving forward

### **JUNE TO DECEMBER 2026**

- New SAS Board practices the process in concert with current managing structure.
- Current CLC Board mentors the new SAS group on institutional knowledge.

### **JANUARY 2027**

- Retreat - Date to be determined
- SAS Board begins full operational management of VBUMC
- Retirement of current governing structure.

