

ALC

GOVERNANCE

FAQs

What is the governing body of ALC?

“6.1 The Voters' Assembly shall be the governing body of this congregation and shall be empowered to administer and manage all its affairs. The establishment and conduct of the Church Council and all organizations and societies within the congregation shall be subject to the approval and supervision of the voting members.” *[ALC Constitution]*

“7.2 Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated may at any time be altered or revoked.” *[ALC Constitution]*

What is the role of the Council?

“6.3 Council shall act for and on behalf of the Congregation in all matters delegated to it by the Voters' Assembly. The Church Council shall have the duty of preparation of the agenda for the Voters' Assembly. It shall ratify all appointments made by Congregational officers of governing boards and shall meet at least quarterly at such time and date as determined by a majority of members at the prior meeting.” *[ALC By-laws]*

“8.4.1 The Treasurer shall pay all bills authorized by the Church Council” *[ALC By-laws]*

“7.2 Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated may at any time be altered or revoked.” *[ALC Constitution]*

What is the role of the President?

“8.0 DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

8.1 President

8.1.1 The President shall be a male voting member and shall not hold any other Council Ministry Board positions.” *[ALC Bylaws]*

“6.2 The President of the Congregation shall act as Chairman of the Council.” *[ALC Bylaws]*

“1.4.2 Questions of parliamentary procedure not covered by this Constitution and Bylaws shall be resolved according to Robert's Rules of Order.” *[ALC Bylaws]*

“7.2 Congregational officers or committees, whether elected or appointed, shall have no authority beyond that which has been conferred upon them, and whatever authority may have been delegated may at any time be altered or revoked.” *[ALC Constitution]*

What is the role of the Pastor?

The office of the Pastorate (unlike many other offices commonly found in churches) is a non optional, specifically Biblical office commanded by God, himself. Therefore, all the Biblical passages describing what a Pastor is to do for his people and how the people are to treat their Pastor are unquestionably binding in God's church. In addition to the Pastor's commonly known roles as preacher, teacher, caregiver, discipler, trainer, instructor, nurturer, missionizer, and example to the congregation, he is "overseer of the Congregation and all its activity. Accordingly, he shall be an ex officio voting member of all Ministries, committees, boards, groups, auxiliaries, and task forces of the congregation and will not excluded from any of their meetings (official or unofficial). He shall supervise the duties, hiring, termination and/or discipline of all staff." *[ALC Bylaws 4.2]*

Therefore, the Voter's Assembly and the District/Synod constitutional commissions have officially ruled that full voting participation of the Pastor in all "groups" (official or unofficial) is within the Pastor's role as overseer of the Congregation and all its activities. It can never constitute an unchristian conflict of interest.

What is the role of the Executive Committee?

It is not mentioned in the ALC constitution or bylaws. The Voter's Assembly has never conferred any power upon it. At times the Council has asked it to do specific, temporary, assigned tasks. Its members have included various combinations of the following: the Pastor, President, Vice-president, Administrative Director, and/or Treasurer.

What are the restrictions placed upon the President in his participation in the Council meetings or the Voter's Assemblies?

“The chairman of an ordinary deliberative assembly, especially a large one, should, of all the members, have the least to say upon the merits of pending questions.” [Roberts Rules § 58]

“The chairman sometimes calls a member to the chair and takes part in the debate. This should rarely be done, and nothing can justify it in a case where much feeling is shown and there is a liability to difficulty in preserving order. If the chairman has even the appearance of being a partisan, he loses much of his ability to control those who are on the opposite side of the question. There is nothing to justify the unfortunate habit some chairmen have of constantly speaking on questions before the assembly, even interrupting the member who has the floor. One who expects to take an active part in debate should never accept the chair, or at least should not resume the chair, after having made his speech, until after the pending question is disposed of. The presiding officer of a large assembly should never be chosen for any reason except his ability to preside”. [Roberts Rules § 58]

“Though the Speaker (Chairman) may of right speak to matters of order and be first heard, he is restrained from speaking on any other subject except where the House have occasion for facts within his knowledge; then he may, with their leave, state the matter of fact.” [Jefferson's Manual, sec. XVII.]

"It is a general rule in all deliberative assemblies, that the presiding officer shall not participate in the debate or other proceedings, in any other capacity than as such officer. He is only allowed, therefore, to state matters of fact within his knowledge; to inform the assembly on points of order or the course of proceeding when called upon for that purpose" [Cushing's Manual, §202.]

“[The Chair as a person] Under ordinary circumstances, your only participation in discussion is to supply information not possessed by anyone else. As a rule, refuse to cast a vote unless your vote is in a secret ballot or is needed to make or to break a tie. Take particular care to avoid the criticism that you favor a certain viewpoint or a certain clique. Be fair.” [Conducting Church Meetings, Parliamentarian / Professor John E. Baird, 19-20]

“The Chair offers no opinions on the motion. His job is to keep order.” [Baird, 43]

What is Policy Governance?

Policy Governance is the most well-known modern theory of governance worldwide. It is the model repeatedly used, in one form or another, by top performing missional churches and non-profit organizations. It is the model of governance upon which ALC is based.

Regarding conventional governing boards consider the following:

Board members are usually intelligent and experienced persons as individuals. Yet boards, as groups, are mediocre. "Effective governance by a board of trustees is a relatively rare and unnatural act . . . trustees are often little more than high-powered, well-intentioned people engaged in low-level activities" (Chait, Holland, and Taylor, 1996, p. 1). "There is one thing all boards have in common . . . They do not function" (Drucker, 1974, p. 628). "Ninety-five percent (of boards) are not fully doing what they are legally, morally, and ethically supposed to do" (Geneen, 1984, p.28). "Boards have been largely irrelevant throughout most of the twentieth century" (Gillies, 1992, p. 3). Boards tend to be, in fact, incompetent groups of competent individuals.

An extraterrestrial observer of board behavior could be forgiven for concluding that boards exist for several questionable reasons. They seem to exist to help the staff, to lend their prestige to organizations, to rubber stamp management desires, to give board members an opportunity to be unappointed department heads, to be sure staffs get the funds they want, to micromanage organizations, to protect lower staff from management, and sometimes even to gain some advantage for board members as special customers of their organizations, or to give board members a prestigious addition to their resumes. (*[“The Policy Governance Model in Nonprofit Organizations” by John Carver and Miriam Carver]*)

What is the relationship between the board and the staff in Policy Governance?

“Happily, it is not necessary for the board to tell the staff what means to use. In Policy Governance the board tells the staff or—more accurately—the CEO/*Pastor* what means not to use!

Therefore, it is the board's job to examine its values/theology to determine those means which it does not want in its organization, then to name them. The board can then tell its CEO/*Pastor* that as long as the Ends are accomplished and the unacceptable means do not occur, the CEO/*Pastor* can make all further decisions in the organization that he or she deems wise. It is in this way that extensive, albeit explicitly circumscribed, authority is granted to the CEO/*Pastor*. Effectiveness demands a strong CEO/*Pastor*; prudence and accountability to the board demand that the CEO/*Pastor's* power be bounded.

This unique delegation technique has a number of advantages. First, it recognizes that board interference in operational means makes ends harder and more expensive to produce. Therefore, delegation which minimizes such interference is in the board's interest.

Second, it accords to the CEO/*Pastor* as much authority as the board can responsibly grant. Therefore, there is maximum empowerment inside the organization to harness for ends achievement.

Third, it gives room for managerial flexibility, creativity and timeliness. Therefore, the organization can be agile, able to respond quickly to emergent opportunities or threats.

Fourth, it dispels the assumption that the board knows better than the staff what means to use. Therefore, the board does not have to choose between overwork and being amateurs supervising professionals.

Fifth, in this system all means that are not prohibited are, in effect, pre-approved. Therefore, the board is relieved from meticulous and repetitive approval of staff plans.

Sixth, and perhaps most importantly, by staying out of means decisions, except to prohibit unacceptable means, the board retains its ability to hold the CEO/*Pastor* accountable for the decisions that take place in the system.

Thus, when we say a board is responsible that its organization works, we simply mean that the organization (1) accomplishes the intended results for the intended people at the intended cost or priority—expressed in the board's Ends policies; and that it (2) avoids unacceptable methods, conduct, activities, and circumstances—unacceptable means expressed in the board's Executive Limitations policies.” [*“The Policy Governance Model in Nonprofit Organizations” by John Carver and Miriam Carver, 9 italicized added*]

What about advice giving?

“Policy Governance boards refrain from giving advice or allowing their members to give advice unless advice is requested. This protects the board's ability to hold the CEO/*Pastor* accountable for his or her own decisions. The CEO/*Pastor* and any of the staff can request advice if they need it, and they can request it from wherever they wish.

Traditional boards frequently create committees to assist or advise the CEO or staff, such as committees on personnel, finance, program, property maintenance, and other such staff means issues. In Policy Governance, such committees are illegitimate. They constitute interference in the CEO/*Pastor*'s sphere of authority and accountability, and damage the board's ability to hold the CEO/*Pastor* accountable.

The wisest route is for the board to govern and leave advice and advisory mechanisms to the staff's own initiative. This way the staff gets all the advice it needs, role clarity and accountability are maintained, and board members are frequently spared unnecessary work.”

“Board meetings occur because of the need for board members to learn together, to contemplate and deliberate together, and to decide together. Board meetings are not for reviewing the past, being entertained by staff, helping staff do its work, or performing ritual approvals of staff plans. As a result, many board meetings may not look like traditional board meetings at all, but learning and studying sessions or joint meetings with other boards, particularly in communities where boards rarely talk with each other.” [*Carver, 14 & 17 italicized added*]

How are decisions be made in the local church.

This is a huge question that cannot be exhaustively answered in this format, but the following truths are important to keep in mind.

Decisions are to be made by seeking God's will and not human preferences. Our Lord is clear that His ways are not man's ways; that the way that seems right to men leads to death; that human wisdom is foolishness to Him. God's will is both counter intuitive and counter cultural. This can make things difficult for many because as the old saying goes, "When you're a hammer, everything is a nail." Business people want to do things the business way; military people the military way; government people the government way; etc.

God's will is found in what He is *saying* and what He is *doing*. What He is saying is found in Scripture, both in the prescriptive commands and promises as well as in the descriptive examples of how God's church has worked. Scripture is the only infallible rule of faith. The question is always, "What are the transferable truths that can be applied to our circumstances?"

God's will may also be sought in what He is *doing*. Rather than asking God to bless what we are doing, we need to do what He is blessing. This means researching what God is blessing in each ministry area in the church at large today. In doing this, we need to remember that God's blessing is always qualitative, but not always quantitative (beware the "theology of glory numbers game"). The question again is always, "What are the transferable truths that can be applied to our circumstances?"

Seeking God's will rather than man's preferences is not the easy path. Searching the Scriptures (what God is saying) and what is working in the church today (what God is doing) often involves long hours, hard work and spiritual discernment, however, we can do no less. Souls are at stake!

What does God say about the relationship between a pastor and his people?

PASTOR which means SHEPHERD

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.
Ephesians 11-12

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me." John 10: 11-15, 27

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." John 21:15-18

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. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Acts 20:28-29

TEACHER

"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. Matthew 10:24-25

"Go and make disciples of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you."

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers. James 3:1

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. 2 Timothy 1:11

OVERSEER

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Acts 20:28

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer,¹ he desires a noble task. 1 Timothy 3:1

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-3

FATHER

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel 1 Cor. 4:14-15

ELDER*/ RULER

(* Note that in the New Testament church the term “elder” always refers to ordained clergy and never to lay officers.)

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.” Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 1 Timothy 5:17-19

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Heb. 13:17

A bishop must be ... one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 1 Timothy 3:4-5

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. James 5:14

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 1 Peter 5:1

The elder. To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. 3 John 1:1

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. Revelation 4:4

Specially Protected by God

Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses' authority saying, *"They said, "Is Moses the only one the Lord speaks through? Doesn't he also speak through us?"* (Number 12:2). The Lord reacted by saying, *"You should be afraid to speak against my servant Moses. The Lord was very angry with them ... suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow.* (vs. 8 ff)

Korah led another challenge: *"Two hundred fifty other Israelite men, well-known leaders chosen by the community, and challenged Moses. They came as a group to speak to Moses and Aaron and said, "You have gone too far. All the people are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. So why do you put yourselves above all the people of the Lord?"* (Numbers 16:2-3) God answered, *"You and your followers have joined together against the Lord. Your complaint is not against Aaron."* (vs. 11). The Lord then killed Korah, the 250, and over 14,000 of their supporters.

There are numerous other passages (e.g. Elijah, Elisha, Peter, Paul, etc.) of God's special protection of His ministers and His anger against those who would unjustly challenge those whom He calls His gift to the church (Ephesians 4).