

Central beliefs or Faith Statement

As important as agreement is among the leadership of a church in the areas of mission, vision and values, it is just as crucial, if not more so, that all the leaders be unified at the most foundational level of what makes the church a church; the focus of faith and the basis of belief. Those biblically-based convictions which the church upholds as central and non-negotiable in order for a person to be a Christian and a group of Christians to be a church should be embodied in a statement of faith that serves as the first and most central

set of criteria for leadership. Each and every person selected for leadership must, without question, embrace the faith statement of the church as reflecting their own.

As obvious as this criteria for leadership may seem, it cannot be overlooked as is often the case. Many times churches are derailed from fulfilling their mission, vision and values because of fragmentation due to disagreement among their leaders at this fundamental level of basic belief.

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Commitment to the church or church membership

Another essential basal criteria for leadership sometimes deemed unnecessary is church membership. This is often the case for churches suffering from a shortage of leaders to fill vacant positions in their leadership structure. This tendency is typical for churches either small and declining or those expanding so fast that their formal membership and leadership development are not keeping pace with their growth. In either case, it is a mistake to select leaders who are not yet members. This is like saying it is all right for an engaged couple to go ahead and have sex because it is assumed they are eventually going to get married. Many don't.

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In fact, it is a good idea to ask people being considered for leadership to recommit to membership in the church before selection. People become members at various times in the history of the church and at different stages in life. When they first joined, the terms of membership, if there were any, may have changed significantly since then.

Also, they might have joined when very young, with reasons for becoming a member quite different from their present understanding of what it means to be a member. It is just sound, pragmatic sense to make sure that each person being considered for leadership shares and is committed to the same understanding of what is expected of church members as the other leaders in the congregation.