DelCon - Your Congregational CEO
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DelCon is an information System specifically for churches of Christ built upon the capabilities of the Microsoft Access program. DelCon is an acronym for the term "greater **DEL**egation with better **CON**trol. It is intended to operate something like a CEO of your congregation. The program is sponsored by the OCCG Think Tank and is offered free to churches of Christ.

KEY WORDS:

DelCon

Information System

GLOSSARY:

Information System: The combination of a user friendly interface plus a data storage program.
CEO: Chief Executive Officer

REPORT:
The congregational organization specified in the scriptures is generally:

1. Shepherds in charge of everything, with shepherding as their primary function,
2. Deacons in charge of the administrative tasks in the church, and
3. All members involved in doing the Great Commission.

Shepherds are selected for shepherding skills and are frequently not experienced managers. As congregations become larger, some management skills are certainly appropriate.

The typical congregational implementation of the scriptural plan is for the Shepherds to take turns being the Chairman of the Shepherds for monthly or quarterly periods. Certainly makes sense as you don't want to have a dominant Shepherd. As Shepherds have different focuses, they tend to have a different agenda of good things to accomplish during the period they are in charge.

What this looks like to the average Deacon or member is a different boss each month or quarter with a different agenda. Frequently, if one wants to get something done, you need to wait until a Shepherd with a sympathetic point of view becomes the Chairman, as the Chairman controls the agenda.

This situation is frequently compounded by the fact that multiple Shepherds are managing a congregation with verbal instructions. Because of memory and scope drift on verbal instructions, typically delegees will not be doing what a delegator thought was delegated after a few months, and both will be disappointed at the result.

It is a typical result in churches of Christ that the second or third generation Shepherds tend to neglect shepherding in favor of micromanaging their congregation. They seem to become so frustrated with Deacons and members getting anything done that they find it is easier to just do it themselves.

NO BUSINESS WOULD OPERATE LIKE THIS!

As a consequence of this, there tends to be a widening gap between the Shepherds and the Deacons/members. As the Shepherds age, there tends to be few qualified to join the ranks of being a Shepherd, so the Shepherds micro-manage harder. No business would attempt to operate under these conditions, and if they did they would not last long.

The scriptures give minimal requirements on how to implement the Shepherd / Deacon / member organization. The details on how to accomplish the scriptural requirements are left to us, and will vary by congregational size, ethnic makeup, affluence, location, and any other of a number of factors.
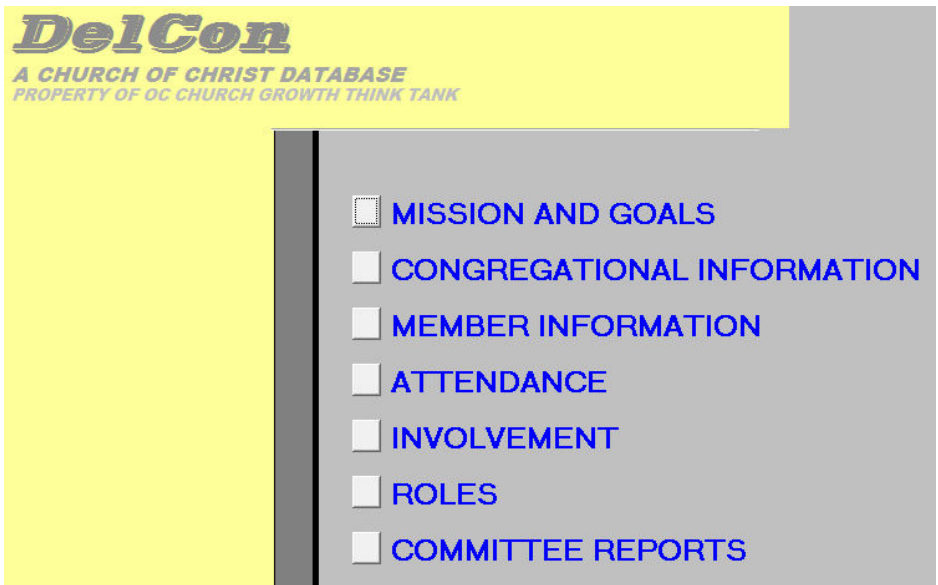
A business would get a single person in charge of the business as chief executive officer or CEO. The philosophies of the Board of Directors would be focused through the CEO. The CEO would be responsible for implementing the instructions and reporting back to the Board. In a small company, the owner is the CEO and the Board, but the centralized function would still exist.

A congregation might consider hiring a good CEO to fill this function. It would be perfectly scriptural for the Shepherds to hire such a person to organize the administration in a church. In some cases the pulpit minister acts in this role, but it wouldn't need to be the pulpit minister.

A problem with this is that good CEOs are expensive and hard to find, even for big budget businesses. A person talented enough to be a quality CEO would be of concern to most Shepherds in their being able to exert too much influence on a congregation and challenge the Shepherds on some issues. The typical pulpit minister is talented to be an evangelist, not a business manager. This paper presumes you are not going to be able to find a CEO who would be acceptable in quality and cost, however, we will continue to discuss the role of the CEO.

The CEO receives the instructions from the Shepherds, allowing the Shepherds to focus on shepherding. The CEO communicates with the Deacons and other members (to members through the Deacons?) to get things done. The CEO gets regular reports from Deacons / members, summarizes it, and presents it to the Shepherds for review. The Shepherds are quickly informed of the progress of the congregation, can give guidance when needed, and then get back to shepherding.

This paper is about DelCon, a computer based information systems specifically designed to play

DelCon
A CHURCH OF CHRIST DATABASE
PROPERTY OF OC CHURCH GROWTH THINK TANK

☐ MISSION AND GOALS
☐ CONGREGATIONAL INFORMATION
☐ MEMBER INFORMATION
☐ ATTENDANCE
☐ INVOLVEMENT
☐ ROLES
☐ COMMITTEE REPORTS

the role of a CEO for your congregation.

DelCon is a computer program which is totally controlled by the local Shepherds. It provides them with a tool to allow greater **DEL**egation of functions in the congregation, with better involvement, accountability, and **CON**trol.

As a summary, DelCon:

1. Collects minimal congregational historical information, including historical attendance and goals / mission.

2. Contains policies, procedures, and specific instructions of your congregation, created by the local shepherds.

3. Provides written job descriptions for all tasks that are all linked back to the congregational goals / mission.

4. Provides monthly reports from all leaders so the Shepherds are always aware of the progress of the programs. The reports include providing information on predetermined topics for ready review plus anything unusual.

5. Schedules regular meetings of all committees.

6. Schedules regular meetings between liaison Shepherds.

7. Schedules regular meetings of Shepherds (Typically suggesting fewer and shorter)

8. Provides involvement preferences from all members.

9. Provides actual activity level of all members.

10. Schedules regular review of the included information to keep it up to date.

11. Provides membership directories, including a flash card (4 to a page) directory for learning names.

12. Provides a SHEPHERD CONFIDENTIAL function of the database which collects Shepherd information on his Shepherdees solely on his personal computer.

13. SHEPHERD CONFIDENTIAL provides a field for the Shepherd to indicate if each of his Shepherdees has a friend in the congregation (Sign they are more likely to stay)

Would your congregation be easier to shepherd and administer if this information was automatically provided?

What this means is:

1. Decisions will need to be made only once and documented. The written job descriptions and policies can be reviewed annually.

2. Delegees will be recruited to clear accountable written job descriptions.

3. All leaders will be well aware of what the congregational goals are and their part in achieving them.

4. All leaders will have regular reporting and accountability.

5. Shepherds will be notified when their shepherdees have no role and/or congregational friends, as a sign they are at risk of falling away.

CONCLUSION:
It you are a Shepherd over a typical church of Christ congregation, things are likely not going as well as you would consider reasonable. Instead of accomplishing the Great Commission, on the average we are in decline.

It is the conclusions of the OC Church Growth Think Tank that primary reasons for congregations becoming lukewarm are leadership is overloaded, leadership problems exceed leadership capacity, and encumbrances exceed management capacity.

If you feel this reflects some of your challenges, consider utilizing DelCon to help boost your congregation's organization to the next level. It is not a tool for after you get organized, it is a tool to help you get organized.

It is distributed by the OC Church Growth Think Tank at no charge. For more information, contact us at info@thearray.org.