

Understanding the Proposed Governance Structure

A More Detailed Explanation of ACAC's Proposed Model



www.acac.net

The Proposal in One Sentence*

ACAC is proposing to combine the current Board of Elders and Board of Operations into a single Governing Board that integrates spiritual, legal, strategic, and fiduciary oversight.

The board would delegate defined responsibilities to an Executive Committee and ministry committees, all operating under clear charters and accountability.



Why the Current Model Was Created

- Alliance permits churches to use either one governing board or two.
- ACAC's two-board model separated spiritual oversight from financial, legal, and operational governance.
- The structure helped preserve a distinct role for elders while creating broader opportunities for lay service.
- Over time, the separation also created gaps, overlaps, and additional coordination requirements.
- ACAC is not required by Scripture or Alliance polity to retain two boards.



Current Governance Structure

Challenges in the Current Model

- **Separated Authority**
Spiritual oversight and legal governance sit in different bodies.
- **Repeated Review**
Some issues move through several committees and boards.
- **Overlapping Participation**
The lead pastor, elders, officers, and committee leaders may attend multiple meetings concerning the same matter.
- **Mixed Focus**
Boards can spend time on tactical administration rather than spiritual, strategic, and fiduciary oversight.
- **Unclear Ownership**
It may not always be obvious which group has final responsibility.
- **Large Participation Structure**
The system requires a significant number of elected and appointed leaders, not all of whom have equally meaningful roles.



Governance Versus Management

Governance

- Protects biblical faithfulness
- Establishes mission and strategic direction
- Holds senior leadership accountable
- Approves major policies and priorities
- Monitors church health and performance
- Ensures legal and fiduciary responsibility

Management

- Leads day-to-day ministry
- Implements approved direction
- Supervises staff and volunteers
- Develops programs and processes
- Manages routine operations and expenditures

The proposed structure is intended to help the Governing Board spend more time governing and less time managing day-to-day activity.



Proposed Governance Structure

Governing Board (Spiritual + Operational = Missional Focus) - 15



Committees (Management Focus) - 57



* Members of Executive Committee | ^ Lead Pastor + 6 Governing Elders + 7 Care Elders

What we gain:

- Unified Leadership
- Structure
- Integrated
- Decision-Making
- Clarified Focus & Priorities
- (Strategic/Tactical)
- Accelerated Impact &
- Stronger Ministry Support
- Increased Accountability
- Elevated & Empowered
- Lay Leadership (72)



Role of the Governing Board

The Governing Board would:

- Safeguard biblical and theological faithfulness
- Approve strategy and major ministry priorities
- Monitor church health and ministry performance
- Hold the lead pastor accountable
- Exercise the governance responsibilities established by Alliance polity and nonprofit law
- Establish committee charters
- Call or request the resignation of the lead pastor in accordance with Alliance processes
- Conduct the affairs of the church between congregational meetings
- Call special congregational meetings when necessary
- Oversee fiduciary and legal responsibilities
- Delegate defined authority to the Executive Committee and other committees

Biblical oversight. Strategic direction. Legal accountability.



Why an Executive Committee?

A smaller committee for delegated, time-sensitive work. The Executive Committee would:

- Be a committee of the Governing Board, not a separate board
- Operate only within authority specifically delegated by the Governing Board
- Address selected matters that require greater frequency, focused review, or timely action
- Report its actions back to the Governing Board
- Refer matters beyond its authority to the full board
- Help preserve the Governing Board's focus on spiritual, strategic, legal, and fiduciary oversight

The Governing Board retains final governance authority.

Executive Committee Composition

- Executive Pastor or Lead Pastor's designee, serving as chair
- Head Elder
- Board Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary



How Decisions Would Flow

1. A ministry opportunity or need is identified.
2. Staff or the appropriate committee develops a recommendation.
3. The recommendation goes to the appropriate decision-making body:
 - Staff, if within management authority
 - Executive Committee, if within delegated limits
 - Governing Board, if strategic, fiduciary, theological, or beyond delegated limits
 - Congregation, when bylaws or polity require congregational action
4. Decisions and outcomes are documented and reported appropriately.



The Proposed Elder Model

A clearer distinction in elder responsibilities. The proposal envisions two primary areas of elder service:

- **Governing or Ruling Elders**

- Serve on the Governing Board
- Participate in strategy, oversight, accountability, and church-health evaluation
- Help ensure that the board remains elder-led as required by Alliance polity

- **Shepherding or Care Elders**

- Focus on member care, pastoral care, membership matters, discipline, prayer, counseling, and spiritual health
- Participate in theological and pastoral responsibilities entrusted to elders

- **Shared Responsibilities**

All elders would:

- Guard doctrine and mission
- Pray for and shepherd the church
- Address theological concerns
- Participate in commissioning and significant spiritual matters



Why Fewer Elders?

The current elder structure can range from approximately 21 to 33 members and has sometimes become difficult to engage meaningfully.

The proposed model would establish a smaller, more active elder body so that:

- Responsibilities are clearer
- Participation expectations are higher
- Meetings are more manageable
- Elders can contribute more meaningfully
- Additional qualified members can still serve in care, prayer, teaching, visitation, committees, and ministry without needing the title or office of elder

The goal is not less ministry. The goal is clearer oversight and more effective deployment of gifted people.



Essential Ministry Functions Continue

→ Finance

- Continues financial review, planning, and recommendation
- Works under a clear charter
- Brings appropriate matters to the Executive Committee or Governing Board

→ Missions

- Continues guiding ACAC's missions priorities and funding recommendations
- Retains representation within the new governance structure

→ Trustees

- Continue bringing facilities and property expertise
- Function primarily as an advisory and service committee rather than a governing body

→ Deacons

- Continue administering benevolence and care-related responsibilities
- Bring matters exceeding delegated limits to the appropriate governance body

These ministries are not being eliminated. Their relationship to governance is being clarified.



What Changes for Other Roles

- The Building Committee would be incorporated into or handled through the Trustees structure.
- The Head Trustee and Head Deacon would no longer automatically occupy Governing Board seats.
- Qualified trustees, deacons, and other members could still be nominated for at-large or elder positions.
- Committee membership and leadership would continue to provide significant lay-service opportunities.
- Committee terms and structures may be standardized for greater continuity.
- Each committee would operate from a clear charter.



Congregational Authority and Accountability

What Remains Subject to Congregational Authority

→ The congregation would continue to:

- Elect elders, officers, deacons, and other positions established by the bylaws
- Vote on proposed bylaw amendments
- Participate in calling a lead pastor as required by polity and bylaws
- Receive appropriate reporting
- Exercise the authority reserved to the membership

→ Additional accountability:

- The Governing Board holds the lead pastor and, through him, the staff accountable.
- The Lead Pastor serves as board chair under Alliance polity.
- A lay Vice Chair provides independent leadership when appropriate.
- The Governing Board retains an elder majority.
- Executive Committee authority is limited and delegated.



What Is Not Changing

- ACAC's mission and theology
- Congregational election and voting rights
- Biblical qualification standards
- Elder spiritual oversight
- Lead-pastor accountability
- Lay participation
- Finance, missions, trustees, and deacons ministries
- Commitment to racial, gender, generational, and ministry diversity
- ACAC's denominational relationship with the Christian and Missionary Alliance



Major Benefits

→ Integrated Authority

- Spiritual and legal oversight reside in one governance body.

→ Clearer Accountability

- Roles, responsibilities, delegation, and reporting are more explicit.

→ Greater Strategic Focus

- The board can spend more time on mission, church health, and long-term direction.

→ More Responsive Support

- Routine or time-sensitive matters can be handled within delegated authority

→ Stronger Continuity

- Longer or staggered terms may improve organizational memory and consistency.

→ Better Use of Lay Leaders

- People can serve closer to their gifts rather than occupying board seats primarily because of a committee title.



Questions You May Be Asking

1. Does one board concentrate too much authority?
2. Is the Executive Committee effectively another board?
3. Why reduce the number of elders?
4. Do governing and shepherding elders create two classes of elders?
5. Does this reduce lay participation?

Each of these questions has been carefully considered throughout the development of this proposal and is addressed in our presentations, FAQs, and supporting materials.



Adoption and Transition

If the congregation approves, implementation would include:

- Finalizing the transition from two boards to one
- Determining initial terms and staggered rotations
- Identifying Governing (Ruling) and Shepherding (Care) Elders
- Establishing the annual organizational meeting
- Adopting Executive Committee and ministry committee charters
- Orienting and training new board and committee members
- Communicating implementation progress to the congregation



Timeline and Next Steps

Review. Discuss. Pray. Participate.

- **August** Introduction, video, presentations, and online resources
- **September 13** Congregational Information Meeting
- **September 20** Annual Congregational Meeting with Vote on Proposed Bylaw Changes



Next Steps

**Learn more. Ask questions. Pray with us.
Participate in the congregational vote.**

A simpler structure is not the final goal.

The goal is faithful, accountable, unified leadership
that better supports ACAC's mission.

→ **Call to action**

Review all of the governance materials, submit questions, attend
the information meeting, and pray for wisdom and unity

