

NHBC Reframe – How are we shepherded?

(New churches, Governance & Leadership)

Vision – A movement and network of churches

The current leadership and Eldership team affirm New Heart's church planting efforts becoming a movement and network of churches.

1. What is a church and the scope of its autonomy?

- a) Based on feedback from the previous Reframe conversations the leadership/eldership team have commenced discussions to define with greater clarity; what is a church, basic phases in church planting and when a group transitions to become a church. This will be presented for review in due course.

2. What is our preferred leadership-oversight model and composition (in light of becoming a movement/network of churches)?

- a) What is NH's interpretation of roles and functions for:
 - Elder
 - Pastor
 - Deacon
 - Congregational Leader, etc
 - Are these similar/overlapping? Maybe they should be in certain areas?
- b) How should we structure an overall leadership group so that adequate attention is given to 'network' leadership, spiritual health and corporate/management issues?
 - As new congregations are added to the network it seems that the current leadership configuration may be unsustainable.
 - i. Should congregations have their own set of Elders unique to that congregation?
 - We currently have pastors of congregations, but not an adequate representation of Elders from each unique congregation (despite best efforts). Is there a Biblical norm for every church to have Elders? Acts 14:21-23.
 - ii. Should there be an "assembly of Elders and pastors", from all NH congregations? (including ministry leaders as seen fit)
 - iii. Should certain aspects of church operations be separated or delegated out from Elders or to certain Elder teams?
 - Elders would take responsibility (along with pastors) for various functions:

- Ministry Elders/teaching Elders
 - Managing Elders or business Elders (who oversee admin/legal matters)
 - Church planting or missionary Elders
 - etc
- iv. Or some other composition?
- v. Answers to these questions can determine our fundamental leadership and Eldership configuration.

3. Who can be an Elder?

- It is evident that few people are stepping up to be Elders in NH
- a) Does our Elder role have an image or definition problem?
- i. Is our definition of an Elder too high, not clear, inadequately exemplified, etc?
- b) What is the Biblical definition of an Elder?
- i. 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, Acts 14:23, Acts 15, for example. Elders carry the responsibility to be examples, to oversee churches, to confirm, clarify and guard the truth of the faith.
 - ii. Do we adequately embrace this?

Who:

- c) Congregation leaders (CLs) as Elders?
- d) Young people as Elders?
- e) Female Elders? [see Reader by Leigh Mack, *Women and Men - Shared Destinies in God's Kingdom*]
- f) Do we need to use the word "Elder"?
- i. An overseer, who gives Eldership oversight, is also a Biblical term; Titus 1:7, 1 Tim 3:1-3, Acts 20:28.
 - ii. Are there other terms that could be used and why?
- g) Paid Pastors as functioning Elders?
- i. Should pastors be considered Elders by function (except they are paid)? Some Baptist churches embrace this.

4. Partnership

- a) How do we arrange partnership in light of new congregations being established?
- b) Should individual congregation/churches have their own partner groups, and then NH has an assembly of partners from all congregations?