

## Prelude

April 26, 2019

The following document, *Selecting Individuals for Prominent Roles*, is the first installment in a brief series being developed to aid our churches.

The idea for the series was born out of a collaborative project held in Los Angeles with Steve Staten, Jerry Sugarman [elder], and evangelists Rafael Lua, Ron Quint, Peter Garcia and Steve Morici. Various drafts were presented to the ICOC Teachers Service Team, past and present specialists from HOPE *worldwide*, leaders from the South East Asia (SEA) Region, and others.

This first product benefited from an informal review process with elders, evangelists, teachers, and those serving in churches outside the US. In addition, some of the reviewers possess experience and/or higher education biblical theology, conflict, counseling, risk management, and nonprofit governance.

The overall goal is wholeness and unity of our global faith community. Forthcoming installments will include solid practices on ethical communication, confidentiality, and mitigating serious allegations towards a person or entity in a biblically and legally responsible manner.

In order to circumvent a lengthy process of edits in an attempt to create “official” position documents, we are aiming for brief, straightforward and commonsense templates. These tools may need to be amended for different contexts, and will inevitably be superseded, but it seems to us that we would benefit from placeholders born out of discussions with church leaders and subject matter specialists.

In the spirit of Jehoshaphat’s reforms and selections of officials, and his campaign message “consider carefully what you do” (2 Chr. 19:4-11) we request that the first installment be distributed by the Catalyst Team to Regional Chairpersons and for contemplation in future selection processes.

—*Teachers Service Team*

# Selecting Individuals for Prominent Roles

## Recommended Principles and Practices

The following proposed principles and practices are recommended for selecting individuals whose influence can have cascading influence on the members and resources of the ICOC. These principles were derived from the Scriptures, lessons learned from unsuitable appointments in the past of the ICOC, and from contemplating recent high-profile problems in the “Christian” world.

These recommendations represent general principles for the selection processes - a “descriptive” guideline rather than “prescriptive” checklist. They would apply to the most prominent roles, such as regional chairpersons, leaders of service teams, and leaders/facilitators of official task forces. In the first meeting of a new official task force or at the end of a term, team members are advised to nominate their representative on the basis of team’s needs and general criteria. It is proposed that we keep these principles in mind when selecting individuals for keynote speeches at conferences and other major meetings.

*“... we are making a statement about our collective character and possibly even our future when we select someone for a position of honor and influence.”*

Selecting individuals for prominent roles is one of the most significant decisions that representatives of a body of believers can make. No one would disagree with the assertion that we are making a statement about our collective character and possibly even our future when we select someone for a position of honor and influence.

## General Criteria

The primary voices of our community will be recognized on the basis of a combination of biblical qualifiers related to character and spirituality. These qualifiers include:

- Impartiality (Deuteronomy 1:17, 1 Timothy 5:21)
- Integrity of life, teaching and practices (1 Chronicles 29:17, 2 Corinthians 8:19-21, Titus 2:7)—words, handling church funds, and doctrine
- Character (Ephesians 5:3-6, Hebrews 13:7)—avoiding greed, sexual impurity, and other troubling behaviors, and being generally worthy of imitation
- Experience, Wisdom & Understanding (Deuteronomy 1:15, James 3:17-18)
- Spirituality (Acts 6:3, Romans 12:9-13)— God-reliant, prayerful and Spirit-led
- Competence (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)—as ministers, and pertaining to the specific role
- Commitment to Heavenly Priorities (Matthew 6:21)
- Humble & Relational (Philippians 2:1-5, James 3:17-18)—persuadable, approachable, and demonstrating the ability to peaceably work together
- Commended by Churches/Teams/Regions (Acts 15:24-26)—along with explanations

Leaders in prominent roles are to be especially above reproach, morally and ethically, and otherwise fit for the kinds of pressure associated with the role. Some possible inhibitors include: (1) impaired in making sound judgments because of a wellness condition, (2) history of questionable mismanagement of finances, (3) history of actions or attitudes unbecoming of a Christian leader such as immorality, greed, abuse of power, and (4) relational concerns— intimidation, generally unpersuadable, prone to gossip, involvement in unhealthy controversies, et cetera. Such screening is consistent with protecting employees, members and others from the types of harm legally recognized by many countries—financial, sexual and psychological.

## **Failure**

When assessing if a person can serve in a prominent role, the history of that candidate will be a factor in the minds of observers, whether it is stated by anyone or not. An institution's view of failure becomes important.

A past mismanagement, a failure in ministry leadership or a poorly managed crisis, is not necessarily a disqualifier, especially if these events were noticeably transformed into "lessons learned." A leader's acumen and track record with both success and failure can be established with appropriate inquiry. Some failures are opportunities for growth as long as the individual openly confesses his or her failure, experiences godly sorrow, and seeks additional guidance. In such cases, a ministry mishap can eventually lead to redemption and transformation, as in the case with biblical characters Aaron and Jehoshaphat.

Other failures, those that reveal a deeper pathological issue, are likely to become a stumbling block to the community. Examples include habitual sexual misconduct, schemes involving theft, or any harm related to the misuse of authority. It will be necessary to pursue detached and impartial guidance when making such assessments.

## **General Processes**

The selection process for individuals should allow for the work of the Holy Spirit and prohibit obscured maneuvering (Acts 1:12-26, 6:1-6). Principles underpinning sound process include:

- Open and clear criteria, specific to the roles, decided beforehand
- The process and decisions are to be reasonably documented and available for inquiry
- The processes are to be consistently applied and/or improved over time
- The use of rotations and/or term limits will deter permanent positions
- Steps will be occasionally be taken to improve diversity of representation of any given group

## **Mentoring in Prominent Roles**

As a safeguard that is consistent with longstanding discipling practices, there should be multiple respected individuals involved in the life of those in prominent roles. Those named individuals should be free to communicate with one another about issues while maintaining confidentiality and avoiding gossip or slander. It is recommended that the individual's mentoring group is identified and apprised of their responsibility in supporting the said individual.

The following categories are useful for discussing opportunities and vulnerabilities, and should be fair game for mentors: strengths, blind spots, the occurrence of occasional struggles (i.e. sin, addictions, unresolved relationships, sexual temptations, areas of grief, health, psychological issues, etc.), marriage and family life, the full extent of a candidate's responsibilities and any extended commitments? (income streams, roles, boards that leaders serve on, and other time-consuming efforts), et cetera.