

Proposal to Establish an Administrators Service Team

4/30/2016

Executive Summary

The Administrators signed below propose the establishment of an Administrators Service Team that will work to meet a variety of growing church administration needs across our fellowship of churches. The proposal has been developed and endorsed by a collection of current church administrators and by volunteers who serve on the ACO board of directors.

Background

When the ICOC corporation was dissolved, many of its functions were transferred to the local churches. Due to budget cuts, many talented administrators were lost and in many cases church administration was left in the hands of good hearted, but unqualified personnel.

One crucial function that ICOC provided that couldn't be transferred locally, was the providing of group benefits coverage for many of the churches in our fellowship. In order to keep benefits in place for those churches, a new entity called ACO ("Alliance of Christian Organizations") was formed. Over the past ten years, ACO has continued to provide benefits programs, and has also funded a few collaborative projects between the churches (leadership conferences, songbook update, etc.) Most of the ACO team is involved in helping churches administratively, either as paid contractors, as volunteers or both.

Although there have been initiatives over the years to develop more communication and provide support networks amongst the administrators with varying success, we believe that establishing an official and recognized Administrators Service Team will help our efforts to collaborate more broadly, leverage our resources, and serve our fellowship of churches more effectively.

Current Issues

1. Bylaws. Some of our churches are still using the old bylaws that reflect the legal connection between those churches and the ICOC, which no longer exists in a legal sense; and some of our churches have attempted to update their bylaws but are using borrowed bylaws that don't fit. These bylaws really need to be replaced with new bylaws that reflect the current legal structure and specific governance / leadership structure. If churches just go to a local attorney, they may or may not get good advice in revising their bylaws. The Administrators Service Team would provide a free resource with sample bylaws and tips to help guide our churches through this process.
2. Administration. When we dissolved our world sector structure, many churches lost much of their administrative expertise and found a bookkeeper (or engaged a local CPA firm) to manage their finances. Many of those churches are now realizing they need help. Some of those churches are not designating parsonage allowance for their staff, for example. One employee had to pay the IRS \$16,000 because taxes were not being withheld correctly. New churches are reaching out for help on a regular basis, and the issues we are finding are very concerning.
3. Benefits. The Affordable Care Act is adding a whole new layer of complexity to church benefit programs. Church boards are spending hours trying to figure out what they need to do to comply, and would really benefit from a central resource that could provide input and consultation. We know of more than one church that is providing benefits for its employees in a way that is simply illegal, and several others that are not providing benefits at all. The retirement survey recently presented to the delegates was a step in the right direction, but without administrative resources at the local level many churches will not be able to implement it.
4. Legal Issues. There are ongoing legal issues that continue to affect our churches such as changes in HR laws, complex insurance requirements, the need for youth ministry policies and issues related to professional counseling.

5. Risk Management. Many smaller and midsize churches don't have the expertise or resources to stay current on risk management issues. New laws have been implemented regarding teen drivers and cell phone policies. These laws directly affect youth ministry workers and several churches have been found to be out of compliance with the law. We strive to adhere to 2Corinthians 8:21, "for we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men."

These issues are concerning and are constantly changing. In order to protect our ministers and churches, the Administrators Service Team will develop a hub of helpful resources to be vetted, accessed and utilized by our churches.

Proposal

1. The Administrators (including ACO and non-ACO members) would like to be identified as a vetted ICOC resource for administration and participate in the delegates meetings to provide support in the execution of the decisions and recommendations reached. We are not looking for authority per se, but for recognition so we can contact churches without raising questions of who we are and/or what we are trying to do.
2. With a mandate from the delegates group, our immediate projects would include a survey of churches' administrative needs, coordinating fellowship and training for administrative staff, and providing free resources to all ICOC churches (US and international) to help provide guidance and direction for churches needing more help on the administrative side.
3. We would like to nominate Tom Briscoe to be the Chairman of the Administrators Service Team. Tom received the most votes cast by those who are endorsing this proposal. Tom is known to many and has a long history of serving our family of churches in roles with Administration and HOPE worldwide. We believe Tom will serve this position well. As with the other Service Teams, the Chairmen selects the members of the service team which is to include international members willing to commit to serve.
4. This new service team commits to the [Roles and Responsibilities of Delegates and Service Team](#) members as approved by the ICOC Delegates.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our proposal. We look forward to working with you more closely as we continue to build God's kingdom together!

Proposal Endorsed by the following group:

Connie Beene, Administrator, New York City
John Beene, Administrator, Houston
Jim Blough, ACO, EMS
Tom Briscoe, ACO volunteer
Milton Hammuck, Administrator, Chicago
Vivian Hanes, ACO volunteer
Cheryl Kaplan, Administrator, Northern Virginia
Tom McCurry, ACO volunteer
Adrienne Newsom, Independent Counsel, and ACO General Counsel
Paul Ramsey, Administrator, Columbia, SC; Executive Director, African Missions Association
Keith Rose, Administrator, LA
George Santellan, Administrator, Dallas
Gary Slebodnick, Administrator, Boston
Steve Smith, Independent Administrator, ACO volunteer
Rusty Taylor, Administrator, Phoenix