

## **GUIDELINES FOR UNITY BOARD EFFECTIVENESS**

The elected member of the Board of Trustees of a Unity ministry is, first and last, a Truth student. Having been elected by the congregation to represent their interests is a recognized honor. Feelings of uncertainty about the responsibilities being accepted are natural, and questions of what is expected in this new capacity may arise. Your Unity Worldwide Ministries sets out, in question-and-answer form, guidelines to assist the orderly conduct of the activities of your Board of Trustees. These guidelines have grown and evolved during years of working together, and we share them with you in a consciousness of love and prayer.

### **What is the legal authority in a ministry's structure?**

From the legal standpoint, a Unity ministry exists as a legal entity by virtue of two legal instruments – the charter and the bylaws. In most states, the Articles of Incorporation (or charter) registers the ministry with the state as a religious corporate body. A sample charter form is available through Unity Worldwide Ministries' office. Because of differences in state laws, it is advisable to have legal counsel in the preparation and filing of the charter.

Bylaws are the legal instrument by which the ministry functions as an organization. They should be general enough to set forth the overall purpose and functioning of the ministry, while being specific enough to clearly state the rights and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, Minister and membership. They are subject to amendment by the membership upon proper notice. The development of an adequate set of bylaws is essential to the ongoing operation of the ministry. Unity Worldwide Ministries publishes *Recommended Bylaws for a Unity Ministry* which is the result of many years of working with ministries whose bylaws worked and those whose bylaws did not. These recommended bylaws are available from Unity Worldwide Ministries' office and are published online at [www.unity.org](http://www.unity.org).

Broadly, your bylaws should establish that the ministry is governed as a representative system. Representation along with checks and balances should exist among the membership, the Board of Trustees, and the Minister. The membership elects the members of the Board of Trustees who, with the Minister, set church policy. The duties and responsibilities of the Board and the Minister are set forth along with the rights of the membership in the bylaws.