Leading Congregational Change

Transformational Model:
- Spiritual and Relational Vitality
- Change Process
- Learning Disciplines

Spiritual and Relational Vitality
- Forms the heart and core of the transformation process
- Spiritual and relational vitality are two dimensions of a single reality -- a consistent teaching of Scripture.
- Fourfold process is built on the fundamental assumption that God's people must live as an authentic New Testament community like the one described in Acts 2:42-47
  + Encountering God's holiness
  + Experiencing God's Grace
  + Embracing our Unity
  + Engaging Community

Laying the Groundwork for Change
- Stage 1: Making Personal preparation
  + Practice Spiritual Disciplines
  + Revisit God's Mission for the Church
  + Conduct an Honest Self-Assessment
  + Be Accountable
  + Proactively Address Problems
  + Find the Right Pace
  + Key Challenge: Carving out the time and space to discern God's voice and direction for the leader's own ministry and for the church, and living with the tension that this creates.

- Stage 2: Creating Urgency
  + Refers to the energy and motivation for change that is generated by contrasting between an accurate perception of reality and God's ideal
  + Urgency should lead to an increased openness to God and a greater willingness to change.
  + The creation of urgency typically has other consequences that many congregational leaders would prefer to avoid - conflict, denial, and resignation.
  + Accurately Assess and Describe current reality
  + Make information widely available
  + Seek assistance
  + Conduct a congregational assessment
  + Make honesty and constructive criticism the accepted and expected behavior
  + Key Challenge: Creating energy for change: being clear and explicit about current reality in contrast to God's ideal.

- Stage 3: Establishing the Vision Community
  + The vision community is a diverse group of key members who become a committed and trusting community in order to discern and implement God's vision for the congregation.
  + Characteristic of vision community membership
    > Diversity reflecting the make-up of the congregation.
    > Standing in the congregation


- Spiritual maturity
- Ability to make a meaningful contribution.
- Wiling to support the right changes.
- Appropriate staff representation.
- Community made up of about 10% of the average attendance but no more than about 25 members.

  + Spend time in selection process
  + Emphasize the importance of diversity and cross-representation
  + Address decision making and leadership issues up front
  + Provide training where needed
  + Take the time to build community
  + Allow members of the vision community to describe their aspirations
  + Key Challenge: Creating an environment in which challenge and diversity leads to genuine collaboration and commitment.

- Stage 4: Discerning the vision and determining the visionpath
  + Starting from the right perspective; process of discerning God's vision for a congregation needs to be grounded in His perspective
  + Find the right setting; setting aside time of prayer, study, worship
  + Seek feedback and refine the document
  + Engage the vision community in dialogue about the vision
  + Prepare a final draft and ask for the vision community's affirmation
  + Anticipate and proactively address resistance
  + Key Challenge: Producing a written description of God's preferred future that is broad and exciting in its direction but clear and explicit in the details.

- Stage 5: Communicating the vision
  + Develop an explicit communication strategy
  + Be creative in communications
  + Enlist the entire vision community
  + Develop terms, phrases, and analogies that have special meaning for your congregation
  + Repeat, repeat, repeat
  + Seek feedback on the vision
  + Key Challenge: Finding creative ways that enable the entire congregation to thoroughly understand God's vision for their future and its implications.

- Stage 6: Empowering change leaders
  + Definition of empowerment: (1) establishing a new model for leadership within the congregation and (2) removing the obstacles that would prevent leaders from serving effectively.
  + Be in the business of cultivating leaders
  + Establish a permission-giving culture
  + Create accountability
  + Understand the current structures
  + Determine which changes are needed based on current priorities
  + Develop prototypes and descriptions of the ideal systems
  + Don't break the rules
  + Key Challenge: Cultivating a broader base of committed leaders and removing the barriers that would prevent them from serving effectively.
- Stage 7: Implementing the vision

  + Be clear about priorities
  + Plan before acting
  + Treat each new initiative as an experiment
  + Measure, Measure, Measure
  + Align gifts with needs
  + Support the individuals who are responsible for new initiatives

  + Key Challenge: Coordinating multiple, concurrent action plans and achieving the right pace for the process -- in consideration of resource limitations, congregational attitudes, and urgency.

- Stage 8: Reinforcing momentum through alignment

  + Recast the vision
  + Take time to celebrate wins
  + Identify and implement new high-leverage action plans
  + Align existing ministries with the vision
  + Establish internal monitoring posts
  + Address specific pockets of resistance
  + Create an eye on the community
  + Define the ongoing role of the vision community
  + Never stop

  + Key Challenge: Creating an environment in which widespread commitment to follow God's vision routinely overshadows fears of continuous change.

Learning Disciplines

- Generating and sustaining creative tension

  + Discerning and describing a shared vision
    > Change leaders should be clear about the relationship of personal vision to shared vision.
    > Where personal visions and congregational vision are not aligned, individuals will not be fully committed.
  + Getting to commitment
    > Clarify your personal vision
    > Teach the congregation about shared vision
    > Encourage the church to establish a vision community
    > Enlist an intercessory prayer team
    > Communicate the vision
    > Continually monitor the commitment level
  + Communicating a clear picture of current reality
    > Practicing discernment
    > Publicly acknowledging reality
  + Processes that sustain creative tension
    > 1st is of God's vision for the congregation
    > 2nd is an accurate depiction of current reality
    > Acknowledge that tension is necessary
    > Allow others to share the tension
    > Develop conflict management skills
    > Continue to clarify the vision
  + Make time for personal renewal and reflection
Harnessing the power of mental models

+ The power of mental models
+ Mental models of the church
+ Recognizing and acting on mental models
  > Self-disclosure
  > Empathic listening
  > Critical thinking
  > Transformational Planning
    ^ Identify critical assumptions
    ^ Identify key interdependencies
    ^ Create a safe environment
    ^ Develop alternate scenarios
    ^ Ask questions
    ^ Treat the plan as a living document
+ An application of new mental models

Enabling team learning

+ The nature of teams
  > A definition of learning: learning expands a group's capacity to achieve its desired results
  > Learning in teams: "the process of aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire"
  > Teams versus working groups
    ^ Teams have significant, shared performance goals.
    ^ Working groups have each individual member being responsible for his/her own performance
    ^ In a team a common goal is set
    ^ In working groups, each person is responsible to a supervisor.
    ^ In a team each individual is responsible to the rest of the team
+ Keys for team learning
  > Commitment to teams
  > Commitment to learning
+ The skills of team learning
  > Team building
  > Establish values to guide team interactions
  > Appreciate differences in gifts and styles
  > Practice good communication skills
  > Identify and address defensive routines
  > Establishing performance challenges
  > Dialogue
    ^ Participants agree to describe their assumptions
    ^ Participants agree to treat one another as colleagues
    ^ A facilitator holds group members to their commitment to dialogue

Systems thinking

+ Congregational systems
  > Spiritual and human social systems
  > Complex organizations
  > Connected parts and layers
Events
Trends
Structure
Mental models
Constant change
Components of a congregational system
Seven major congregational systems (Congregational bodylife)
Mission and values
Boundaries
Context
Heritage
Leadership
Ministry
Feedback
Dynamic qualities of congregational systems
Congregations have personality
Every change changes everything
The past is always present
Congregations walk their talk
Congregations change in order to stay the same
"Solving" a problem can make things worse
Strategic points of leverage exist within systems

The Art of Transformational Leadership
Realities of transformational dynamics
Spiritual and relational vitality drives transformation
Congregational transformation requires transformed leaders
Transformation occurs through intentional processes
Each transformation process is unique
Congregational transformation requires specific skills
Even healthy change takes time

Challenges of transformational leadership
Calls for responsive initiative
Involves nonanxious assertiveness
Practice masterful learning

"Leading Congregational Change" by Herrington, Bonem, Furr
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