**Navigating the Change Process**

***in other words…***

## *Changing Your Church*

## *Without Blowing It Up!*

1. What changes do we need to make?
2. Who do we need to work with?



**Setting the Stage**

So you want to change your church. You know it is not where God wants His church to be and your heart is aching to see this wonderful creation of God become the disciple making movement God intended.

But how do you do this without blowing up the church and hurting people in the process? While not easy, it is possible. God is in the business of transformation. What is impossible for us to make happen, God can perform miracles and bring life from death.

This is a journey not for the faint of heart. But for those willing to take the journey there is an incredible sense of fulfillment when God takes what was broken and uses this to impact people and make disciples.

*Are you ready?*

**The Disciple Making Process**

*"Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."*

1 John 2:6

Minds *(Head)*

If a church is going to change, then the thinking patterns, the mindset of those in leadership and those in the church will need to change.

For most things that happen in the church, at some point there was a reason for something getting started. Perhaps it made sense at the time, but now it doesn't. You realize that what you are doing is no longer making disciples. Paul says we have the mind of Christ *(1 Corinthians 2:16).* If we are going to be the disciple making movement God intends then we are going to have to start thinking like Jesus.

Attitudes *(Heart)*

If a church is going to change then the attitudes, the heart of those in leadership and those in the church will need to change.

People usually have a vested interest in what is happening at the church. Taking something away can create havoc if not done correctly. One problem in many churches is lack of love for those in the community. Churches that are not making disciples will discover a big reason for this is the judgmental attitudes of leaders and people in the church towards those without Christ. And if we do begin to discover a love for those without God the second biggest hurdle is the attitude of "come and see." We expect people without God to come to us rather than obeying what Jesus said, *"go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19).*

Behavior *(Hands)*

If a church is going to change then the behavior, the practices of those in leadership and those in the church will need to change.

Churches that are not making disciples typically have an inward focus rather than the outward focus that God desires. Most of the programming in these churches is for the people already in the church. Few resources like time and money and service are invested outside the church in the community. And the programming these churches do have is not resulting in disciples who make disciples.

We attend "worship" each weekend and hear the Word. But the Bible tells us to be doers of the Word, not just hearers.  *(James 1:22).* Jesus told us that the wise person is the person who hears the words of Jesus and puts them into practice. *(Matthew 7:24).*

**ACTION STEP 2.2**

**Identifying the Changes**

* What changes do you need to make in your church to move towards a more effective disciple making environment?
* Who are the key leaders that need to be with you as you make these changes?
* How will your church be different when these changes are completed?
* What is the first change you sense God wants you to make?
* If you are with a team discuss your thoughts to these questions and choose one change to work with through the rest of this session.

**The Process of Change**

* **UNAWARENESS**

**Mistake # 1: assuming people know what needs to happen.**

*And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.* 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

* **AWARENESS**

Understanding…

* why the change is necessary
* how the changes will be made
* who are the key endorsers of this change
* what will be different when the change is completed
* the hoped for results.

**Mistake # 2: assuming that when people reach this level they are ready to implement.**

* **EMBRACING**

People’s hearts change:

* Attitudes shift from resistance to endorsement
* People are with you
* People are ready to go to work

**Mistake # 3: assuming people know how to make the change happen.**

* **IMPLEMENTATION**
* People begin to put into practice the principles that lead to becoming a disciple making environment.
* People learn and are equipped through modeling, teaching, coaching and mentoring.
* Aware of the blockages and obstacles we may encounter on this journey of change.

**Mistake # 4: assuming we will not encounter difficulty.**

**Mistake # 5: assuming results will come quickly.**

* **RESULTS**

**Mistake # 6: assuming we have now arrived.**

**Navigating Through the Process**

***Moving from* UNAWARENESS** *to* **AWARENESS**:

**EDUCATE**

* Answer the questions people are asking…
  + What are you proposing?
  + Why is this change necessary?
  + How will this change be made?
  + Who is with you in endorsing this change?
  + What will be different when the change is completed?
  + What are the hoped for results?
* Share your heart about what you sense God wants to do and back this up with how you understand the Bible.
* Get people studying the scriptures. God will do more with transforming people to grasp His ways than you ever can. So connect people with God and let God work.
* Use available tools:
* community statistics
* viewpoints of respected leaders
* consultants
* research
* field trips to places where the change has been successfully implemented
* thoughts from the key influencers in your church
* Evaluating when ready to move forward: when people begin to say, *"Okay, we see where you are going."*

**Action Step 2.3**

**Building Awareness**

Take one of the changes you identified in Action Step 6.1 and jot down some thoughts to these questions:

* What are you proposing?
* Why is this change necessary?
* How will this change be made?
* Who is with you in endorsing this change?
* What will be different when the change is completed?
* What are the hoped for results?
* What tools can you use to educate leaders and people in your church?

***Moving from* AWARENESS *to* EMBRACING:**

**ENLIGHTEN**

The danger is trying to implement change too quickly before people are really with you. Changes to the heart come through experiences, not more information. Building awareness is accomplished by sharing information. Embracing is accomplished through interacting with the information.

Creating experiences for interaction with information:

* Allowing people to express opinions and ask questions about the change in a safe environment *(meaning non-judgmental).*
* Hearing stories and testimonies of what the change has accomplished in other places.
* Seeing a need first hand *(like on field trip or someone sharing who is part of the need).*
* Praying together about the need so God can grab our hearts.
* One on one time with leaders so people and leaders can sense each other’s heartbeat.
* Time for people to process the information. Some people resist, not because they are against the proposal but they have not had enough time just to think through all the issues. So giving people time can help alleviate fears and allow God to bring them along.
* Studying scripture related to the need. God's word affects both minds and hearts. Let God work by getting into His word.

Evaluating when ready to move forward: when people begin to say, *"Okay, let's get moving*."

**Key point 1:** people and leaders will reach this level at different rates. Be patient.

**Key point 2:** It is not always necessary to get 100% buy-in before moving ahead. But it is necessary to achieve 100% buy-in from the key influencers in the church. If God wants you to move forward He will perform the miracles necessary for life transformation in the minds and hearts of the leaders. In some cases, leaders may be removed. Let God do the work, don't run ahead of Him. God knows better than us how to keep His mission moving forward.

**Action Step 2.4**

**Moving towards embracing**

Continue your work from Action Step 6.2.

What are some ways you can help your leaders and people in your church interact with the information as they move towards embracing the change God wants you to make? Jot down several ideas.

***Moving from* EMBRACING *to*  IMPLEMENTATION:**

**EQUIP**

Equipping depends on the change.

Examples:

* If its moving into an intentional disciple making environment then the equipping may be helping people understand how to share their faith and then mentoring those that respond.
* If it is the church moving into the community for service and compassion projects then the equipping may be helping people understand how to express love in practical ways, what to do in difficult situations, the resources available in the community they can tap into and serving with wisdom.
* If the change is connecting to God in a more intentional way then the equipping may be providing people with guides for bible reading and prayer, as well as helping them connect to someone who can provide some encouragement and accountability.

Question to ask: *"what do the leaders and people need to successfully navigate this change?"*

Equipping can come through many different kinds of vehicles.

Examples:

* small groups
* one on one
* seminars
* reading
* visiting places where the change has already taken place to see how the other group did it
* coaching

Evaluating when ready to move forward: *when people begin to practice what you have equipped them to do.*

***Moving from* IMPLEMENTATION *to* RESULTS:**

**ENCOURAGE**

**Key point 1:** as people begin to act in new ways it’s important to provide feedback and encouragement. For some, this will be a scary time as they move into uncomfortable new territory.

Ways to encourage:

* Someone being there for them is what most people need to keep going forward.
* Leaders can help people remember that God is always with us, so we can go to Him at any time for direction and encouragement to keep moving in the right direction.

**Key point 2:** It is important to grasp that results are in the hands of God. As you read the Bible it becomes clear that God often moved His people in ways that on the surface did not make sense. And tangible results were often not present. The issue for God was obedience. It still is today. That is success in God's eyes.

**Key point 3:** It is possible to effect change in our own ways and even see some tangible success, like growth in our churches, yet be a failure in God's eyes. The reason is that growth is not the mission of God. Making disciples who make disciples is the mission of God. As we go about being on this mission, some will see remarkable results. Others may not. For some, results may come quickly. For others results may come more slowly. Both can rejoice because we have been obedient to God and are walking in His ways.

**Action Step 2.5**

**Encouraging and Equipping**

Continue your work from Action Step 6.3.

What are some ways you can equip your leaders and people in your church to be able to implement the change God wants you to make? Jot down several ideas.

What are some ways you can encourage your leaders and people in your church as they are making this change? Jot down several ideas.

**EXCEL:**

***continuing to move forward.***

With one change behind you, it is time to be asking God what is the next step. The Bible tells us that God will build His church. As we stay connected to Him, He will reveal to you what is necessary to move forward and continue being On Mission.

Key point:

**The next five years are going to go by anyway.**

Your church will not get healthy overnight. It takes time. But time is going to go by anyway. So start taking little steps toward your goal and you will arrive.

Some churches will be able to do this more quickly than others because they already have some principles in place. Other churches will take longer to put everything in place.

**The time it takes doesn’t matter.**

**What matters is creating a disciple making environment.**

Each step you take you can encourage your leaders with the thought,

*"We are not where we want to be yet,*

*but thank you Lord,*

*we are further than we were!"*

**Action Step 2.6**

Putting it all together

With your team discuss what you have learned from this experience.

Jot down a few action steps on what you need to do to get started.