

Addendum

Congregational Readiness for Change and Transition

Overview

The number one reason that change and transition efforts fail in congregations is that congregations do not engage in readiness activities before they launch a change and transition process.

External or interpersonal relationship factors too often drive congregational change and readiness activities. External factors include a crisis in the context such as a natural disaster, or a significant change in the demographic patterns such as a change in the socioeconomic or cultural patterns of the new residents moving into the area.

A new denominational initiative or program that looks inviting, or for which there is pressure to participate, can be another reason to launch a change and transition process before readiness is achieved.

Interpersonal relationship factors that jump start congregational change and transition processes include the coming of a new pastor, the leaving of the current pastor, or a major conflict in the congregation. Often a congregation is thrown into these situations without adequate preparation for change and transition.

Readiness may be achieved in two radically different ways. One is instant and the other is incremental. The instant way is that God does something *direct*, *dramatic*, and *divine* in the congregation, which I call the *Triple D*. This usually creates instant readiness as a sense of renewal or revival sweeps through a congregation.

The incremental way is to carefully build a strong foundation for change and transition through four actions this article will explain. These actions are to develop a sense of urgency for change and transition, create spiritual readiness, build leadership readiness, and achieve strategic readiness.

The Numerology of Change and Transition

How many people have to be zealous about change and transition for true readiness to exist in your congregation? It depends. The most significant factor may be the size of your congregation. However, its age, context, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and history of decision-making are also factors. Let's focus on size.

Fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must have at least a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition for a congregation to truly be ready. Quad A's are the **average number of active, attending adults** in the congregation.

For example, if a congregation averages 135 in attendance and 100 are adults, then at least 51 people must have a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition. They must understand why change or transition is necessary, and some of the benefits for their personal spiritual walk, as well as the mission fulfillment of their congregation.

Within this 51 is a stage one leadership community of five to six people, a stage two leadership community of 17 to 18 people, and a stage three leadership community of 51 to 54 people. These numbers are cumulative; that is, the stage two leadership community includes all the people in stage one, and stage three includes all the people in stages one and two.

These leadership communities are integrally involved in the four actions that build a strong foundation for change and transition. The four actions are shared in random order below, and are not listed in priority order of importance or time. Activities may be taking place that impact all four actions at the same time.

Develop a Sense of Urgency for Change and Transition

Change and transition does not generally occur without a strong sense of urgency. Congregations must be passionate about the need for change and transition. This will occur when either they feel that without change and transition some great negative event will happen, or they are caught by the vision for a transformational future.

Too often congregations are complacent and feel that *good enough is good enough*. This commitment to mediocrity dooms a large percent of congregations to a ministry of maintenance rather to one of exciting mission.

The pastor and other initiating leaders need to develop a clear understanding as to why the congregation needs change and transition. This understanding must be communicated to the congregation in a manner and with a message that inspires the congregation to be embraced by change and transition.

Create Spiritual Readiness

It is imperative that a sense of spiritual readiness be present for a congregation to be embraced by change and transition. This spiritual readiness involves the stage three leadership community feeling that God is leading the congregation forward on an exciting spiritual strategic journey.

Specific activities that may be a part of creating spiritual readiness include dialogue, prayer, Bible study, worship services focused on the future of the congregation, learning experiences that focus on inspiring encounters of dreaming about the kingdom potential of the congregation.

One specific vehicle is the use of 100 days of share and prayer triplets. [Note: This concept is discussed in *Congregational Passages Vol. Four, No. Twelve*.]

Whatever method or means is used to create spiritual readiness, *fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's* must feel that something new is happening in their community of faith, and that it involves God's leadership. They do not have to understand all of the particulars, but they must be inspired by the possibility of a renewing spiritual strategic journey.

Build Leadership Readiness

Building leadership readiness involves moving the stages one, two, and three leadership communities to an appropriate level of readiness for change and transition.

The stage one leadership community involves the pastor, any ministerial staff, and key lay leaders up to about five to seven percent of the Quad A's. In a small congregation, this can be three people. In a congregation of 1000 in attendance, this can be almost 50 people.

This stage one leadership community must understand in detail the changes and transitions the congregation could address, and be passionately committed to them. They must be highly knowledgeable about, motivated

by, and accepting of the kingdom potential of the congregation. Most importantly, they must be captivated by the vision of the future towards which God is pulling the congregation.

The stage two leadership community of 15 to 20 percent of the Quad A's is knowledgeable of the changes and transitions that might occur, and are included in the process of readiness through learning experiences. They feel that a future that involves change and transition is one filled with more significant and sacrificial ministry than would be possible without a new spiritual strategic journey.

They are willing to provide some tactical leadership to fulfill the journey through the waves of change and transition because they feel ownership of the future vision of the congregation. They can articulate the vision in their own words, and are willing to align their Christian service in a manner that seeks to fulfill that vision.

The stage three leadership community of at least fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must not be opposed to change and transition. They do not necessarily have to embrace the specifics of the spiritual strategic journey, but they must have confidence in the people who are the leaders and workers in the journey.

As stated earlier, they must understand why change and transition are necessary, and some of the benefits for their personal spiritual walk, as well as the mission fulfillment of their congregation.

Achieve Strategic Readiness

Achieving strategic readiness involves at least two actions. First, the stage two leadership community must have full understanding and ownership of the task and relationship sides of the change and transition process.

They must have engaged in mutual learning experiences where they have created a sense of connectedness with one another as a leadership group of their faith community. They must be able to articulate a common vision, a challenging strategy, and tell a consistent story of the future they feel that God is bringing forth in their midst.

Second, they must be committed to creating time and energy for new tasks and relationship to happen in the congregation by diminishing the controlling aspects of the management systems of the congregation.

They must empower as a part of readiness the beginning of a movement from management to ministry. Only then can the first forward steps of change and transition take place.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

The Numerology of Change and Transition

Overview

Change and transition involves people within a faith community acting and reacting to spiritual leadership, acting strategically to move to the next level of Christian ministry, or reacting to a crisis that threatens their vitality as a congregation.

In a previous *Congregational Passages* article entitled *Congregational Readiness for Change and Transition* [Vol. Five, No. Five], four actions for achieving incremental change and transition were introduced.

The leadership communities are integrally involved in the four actions that build a strong foundation for change and transition. As a review, the four actions are to develop a sense of urgency for change and transition, build leadership readiness, achieve strategic readiness, and create spiritual readiness.

A key measuring rod for addressing readiness for change and transition is to understand the numerology of incremental change and transition through building various leadership communities. This article seeks to explain that numerology.

How Many People Does It Take to Achieve Change and Transition?

How many people have to be zealous about change and transition for true readiness to exist in your congregation? It depends. The most significant factor may be the size of your congregation. However, its age, context, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and history of decision-making are also factors. Let's focus on size.

Fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must have at least a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition for a congregation to truly be ready. Quad A's are the average number of active, attending adults in the congregation.

For example, if a congregation averages 135 in attendance and 100 are adults, then at least 51 people must have a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition. They must understand why change and transition is necessary, and some of the benefits for their personal spiritual walk, as well as the mission fulfillment of their congregation.

Within this 51 is a stage one leadership community of five to six people, a stage two leadership community of 17 to 18 people, and a stage three leadership community of 51 to 54 people. These numbers are cumulative; that is, the stage two leadership community includes all the people in stage one, and stage three includes all the people in stages one and two.

The stage three leadership community can be as small as 18 people in a congregation that has 25 Quad A's, and as large as 405 in a congregation that has 750 Quad A's. The key principle remains that fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must lend active support the change and transition movement.

Now let's look at this numerology in greater detail. For change and transition to occur there must be a pastor/leader, in larger congregations a coaching team, and stages one, two, and three leadership communities.

Pastor/Leader

The role of the pastor/leader in a congregational change and transition movement is extremely important. It is not the key to change and transition, but a key along with committed lay leaders.

The pastor/leader must have a sense of urgency for change and transition, a vision of the future that is emerging under God's leadership, the ability to build leadership readiness, the knowledge base to achieve strategic readiness, and the insight to create spiritual readiness

Often congregations are not fully aware of their need for change and transition, and it is up to the pastor to directly or indirectly initiate and sustain a process that creates a sense of urgency.

If the size of the congregation warrants it, the pastor/leader should pull together a coaching team to assist in the change and transition process. Such a coaching team is optional in congregations of 150 to 300 in attendance, and not needed in congregations of fewer than 150 in average attendance.

Coaching Team

The coaching team is used in congregations that average 300 or more in attendance. Frequently this is a staff and key congregational leadership group who meet as an informal team to prepare for the various actions that need to take place in the change and transition movement in large, regional, and mega congregations.

Part of the role of the coaching team is to help the pastor/leader pull together the stage one leadership team that will provide key leadership to the overall change and transition movement.

They need to have feelings of excitement and focused actions in support of the change and transition process. They should be able to integrate the needed changes and transitions into the overall systems of the congregation as a faith community.

Stage One Leadership Community

Stage one leadership community participants are the people who need to share a similar passion as the pastor/leader and the coaching team for the change and transition that needs to occur.

They are the core of the leadership community stages and must have a sense of excitement and readiness for the changes and transition. They need to understand as much about the process as the pastor/leader and coaching team, and have confidence that it can work.

Part of their role is to suggest who are to make up the stage two leadership community that will form the vanguard of the strategic readiness for the congregation.

Stage Two Leadership Community

Stage two leadership community participants need to be led to discover the need for change and transition, and be able to anticipate the greater depth of relationship experiences and programmatic events that will result if the effort is successful. Typically, they will be a part of leading one or more of the change and transition actions.

The stage two leadership community represents the critical mass of change and transition persons who, if chosen because of their influence in the life of the congregation, and for their identification with key affinity groups in the congregation, will function as a highly respected group of people.

They need to understand the learning experiences as well as the strategies and tactics that will be part of the change and transition movement.

Stage Three Leadership Community

Stage three leadership community participants need to be aware that change and transition must take place, but do not necessarily have to understand all that means. However, they will be the leadership community that participates in actions of spiritual readiness such as the 100 days of share and prayer triplets.

Stage three leadership community participants may have some discomfort and doubt about the change and transition process, but they should be led through the share and prayer triplet process to have the opportunity to discover with genuine anticipation the tremendous benefits of congregation that moves in the direction of its full kingdom potential.

What About the Remainder of the Congregation?

The numerology of change and transition is not intended to exclude anyone from the movement. It is only saying that these are minimal numbers for congregations. Often, however, upwards to half of a congregation really does not plug into the change and transition process until new things start to happen.

Their initial response may be one of loss. This loss is sufficiently severe at times that people fear what is happening, and are paralyzed and cannot respond to the change and transition. Once they can respond they initially doubt if the change and transition will work. They may feel resentment towards those who initiated the change and transition, and act in ways that resist the process and impede progress.

One of the reasons why congregations should engage in building the three stages of the leadership community is that the remainder of the congregation are connected by family, friendship, or fellowship ties with numerous people in these stages. They have a primary opportunity to connect with the people of change and transition movement that is created as the numerology of change and transition is unfolding.

Trust is a key currency of change and transition movements. The full congregation must trust its leadership sufficiently that it is willing for both the spiritual climate and the institutionalized culture of the congregation to be transformed by the new movement. It is not the same as God's direct, divine, dramatic intervention, but it is the change and transition process that is likely to occur in 80 percent of congregational situations.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

Develop a Sense of Urgency for Change and Transition

Overview

Readiness may be achieved in two radically different ways. One is instant and the other is incremental. The instant way is that God does something *direct*, *dramatic*, and *divine* in the congregation, which I call the *Triple D*. This usually creates instant readiness as a sense of renewal or revival sweeps through a congregation.

The incremental way is to carefully build a strong foundation for change and transition through four actions. These actions are to develop a sense of urgency for change and transition, create spiritual readiness, build leadership readiness, and achieve strategic readiness. This article focuses on the first of these four actions, developing a sense of urgency for change and transition.

Congregations that seek to engage in a change and transition process without first developing a strong, passionate sense of urgency, are likely to fail in that effort.

Without a strong, passionate sense of urgency, congregations tend to be passive, without focus, and grasp for fixes rather than solutions.

Develop a Sense of Urgency for Congregational Change and Transition

Change and transition does not generally occur without a strong sense of urgency. Congregations must be passionate about the need for change and transition. This will occur when either they feel that without change and transition some great negative event will happen, or they are caught by the vision for a transformational future.

Too often congregations are complacent and feel that *good enough is good enough*. This commitment to mediocrity dooms a large percent of congregations to a ministry of maintenance rather to one of exciting mission.

The pastor and other initiating leaders need to develop a clear understanding as to why the congregation needs change and transition. This understanding must be communicated to the congregation in a manner and with a message that inspires the congregation to be embraced by change and transition.

To develop a sense of urgency for change and transition congregations must first determine the current level of urgency, figure out why the congregation may still be complacent about the need for change and transition, and then choose the appropriate methods for developing a sense of urgency.

Determine the Current Sense of Urgency for Change and Transition

Creating an urgency for congregational change and transition is a formidable task in an organism that focuses on creating stability and assurance in response to an eternal Heavenly Father, and a Savior who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The vast majority of people in the typical congregation do not perceive a need for change and transition in response to a new generation of challenges they may be facing. They are seeking stability and acceptable predictability, not what could appear to be chaos and unacceptable predictability.

Complacency is generally high and has multiple sources in many congregations. Here are ten examples of the reasons or occasions for complacency. **First**, in the absence of a major crisis or a highly visible demon there is little motivation for change.

Second, congregations generally do well at enabling the construction of beautiful buildings. With such a visible sign of success why should change be considered?

Third, many congregations have low expectations. They are comfortable with a congregation that meets their basic spiritual, fellowship, and cultural needs. Mediocrity is confused with excellence.

Fourth, laypersons are rewarded for doing specific service jobs in the congregation and never look at the whole congregational system. They know their small group and their accountability areas.

Fifth, congregations measure success based on programs or budget achievement goals, and often these goals are being met in the eyes of leadership and the silent majority of supporters. Spiritual growth is not being measured.

Sixth, it may surprise some people to know, but often a few key leaders control the performance measurements in congregations. They put a spin on the figures that lead people to feel complacent about any perceived threats to the vitality of the congregation.

Seventh, leaders treat people who criticize the performance of the congregation like lepers. When they get frustrated and leave the congregation, no one goes after them. Leaders may verbalize expressions of pleasure about their leaving.

Eighth, many people simply deny that the congregation is not reaching its God-inspired potential. This is particularly true if they are already experiencing numerous life stresses and are codependent on the congregation as it currently exists.

Ninth, in more congregations than most people would like to admit, the pastor, staff, and key lay leaders value morale over mission. As such, they engage in what John Kotter of Harvard University calls *happy talk*. Such rhetoric is used to drown out what are called the voices of discontent.

Tenth, hardwired into the culture of many congregations that are more than a generation old is the core value that maintaining the status quo in honor of the founders is a virtue. This founding fix is more powerful than many change agents perceive.

Methods for Developing a Sense of Urgency

Secular models for creating urgency for change and transition have both ethical and unethical methodologies. Both are also seen in congregations. In the following suggestions, both are illustrated.

Congregations will reveal their spiritual values, ethics, and approaches to change and transition by the methods they use to create urgency. In some cases, the methods chosen produce a healthy congregation and other produce an unhealthy or dysfunctional congregation.

First, create a crisis if one does not exist. Set up a demon that needs to be destroyed. Magnify a sin that needs to be eliminated. Exaggerate the scale of an evil to fight.

Second, allow the congregational facilities to get into disrepair. Reallocate a significant amount of budgeted funds for needed major repairs and renovations. Take away perks, privileges, and fringe benefits from the pastor and staff in response to the resulting short-term cash flow problems.

Third, cast a transformational vision that cannot be fulfilled with actions that represent business as usual. Call for radical discipleship and commitment on the part of all core leaders and supporters.

Fourth, raise the level of accountability, and set measurable goals that require a new class of leadership actions. Help people to see how improvements in their areas of accountability can have a positive impact on the overall mission performance of the congregation.

Fifth, share the actual measurements of success, without the editing of spin-doctors, with a large percentage of the active members and attenders in the congregation. Point out the places where real time performance does not match the perceived image of success.

Sixth, set up exit interviews with people who leave the congregation to join other congregations in the same area, or otherwise join the ranks of the inactive. Share the results with appropriate leadership groups.

Seventh, use outside speakers, consultants, or congregational coaches to inject new information, knowledge and wisdom into the congregational culture that will help the congregation to realize their potential.

Eighth, engage in more honest communication in the congregational fellowship about the reality of the congregation's present and future situation. Challenge the *happy talk* morale with some Kingdom-focused mission discussion.

Ninth, saturate the communication channels in the congregation with information on future opportunities and the inability of the congregation to address these opportunities without making significant changes and transitions.

Tenth, build a spiritual exploration movement within the congregation focused on individual, small group, and corporate prayer. This movement can focus on finding God's will for the congregation, spiritual awakening in the fellowship, or discovery of where God is at work in the congregation and its target communities.

[Parts of this article are based on material developed by John Kotter and published in the book, *Leading Change*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996.]

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

Creating Spiritual Readiness for Change and Transition

Overview

Readiness for change and transition in congregations, or other Christian faith-based organizations, is different from readiness in non-faith-based organizations.

The primary and obvious difference is that in non-faith-based organizations there is no need to spend time creating spiritual readiness, whereas in congregations, or other Christian faith-based organizations, creating spiritual readiness is an essential first step.

A second and perhaps not so obvious difference is that in congregations the flavor of spiritual readiness is distinctively Christian. Some non-faith-based organizations do pursue spirituality as a basis for the values of their organization. However, their spirituality may not necessarily be distinctively Christian in nature.

Third, in congregations the Christ-centered spiritual readiness must permeate all that is happening in congregations. It is not simply a launching pad for exploration, but a continual part of the spiritual strategic journey. The theology, history, and culture of congregations are continually shaped during the spiritual journey of congregations.

Creating spiritual readiness is only one of four concurrent actions that must be taking place to adequately prepare congregations for change and transition. The other three are developing a sense of urgency for change and transition, building leadership readiness, and achieving strategic readiness.

Spiritual readiness is created when fifty *plus one percent of the Quad A's* feel that something new is happening in their faith community, and that it involves God's leadership. They do not have to understand all of the particulars, but they must be inspired by the possibility of a renewing spiritual strategic journey.

[Note: For reference, the *Quad A's* are the average number of active, attending adults present in worship in a congregation during a typical weekend of services.]

Many paths exist to creating spiritual readiness in congregations. It is spiritually myopic to suggest that there is one right way to create spiritual readiness. At the same time, there is a need to suggest some of the essential actions that might need to take place for spiritual readiness to occur.

Some of those actions are, 1) spiritual preparation of the pastor and other initiating leadership, 2) rediscovery of the theology, history, and culture of the congregation, 3) exploration concerning the kingdom potential of the congregation, and 4) involvement of the congregation in a spiritual discovery and exploration process that creates a feeling through the faith community that God is in the process of doing a new thing in their midst.

Regardless of how it is accomplished, it is imperative that a sense of spiritual readiness be present for a congregation to be embraced by change and transition. This spiritual readiness involves the full leadership community feeling that God is leading the congregation forward on an exciting spiritual strategic journey.

Specific activities that may be a part of creating spiritual readiness include dialogue, prayer, Bible study, worship services focused on the future of the congregation, learning experiences that focus on inspiring encounters of dreaming and storytelling about the kingdom potential of the congregation.

Spiritual Preparation of the Pastor and Other Initiating Leadership

The pastor and other initiating leadership of the congregation must spend quality time building spiritual community in preparation for leading the congregation in creating spiritual readiness.

The initiating leadership is the stage one leadership community who must be united and passionate about the future of the congregation for truly transformational change and transition to occur. Unless a group that is size appropriate to the attendance of the congregation is able to be spiritually united around a future toward which God is drawing the congregation, then attempts at a spiritual strategic journey will fail, or be a fix rather than a solution.

Obviously the role of the pastor in initiating the spiritual preparation process is extremely important. As such the pastor may need some personal time of preparation. This can occur through attendance at learning experiences, participation in a peer learning group, a personal spiritual retreat, and other similar ways.

In a postmodern world where leadership is best expressed in community rather than through the individual effort, the pastor must as soon as possible gather this first stage leadership community together and begin walking them through a similar spiritual pilgrimage.

Rediscovery of the Theology, History, and Culture of the Congregation

For many people spiritual readiness will emanate from study and reflection on the theology, history, and culture of the congregation. This will generally be reflected in the mission, purpose, and core values of the congregation.

Congregations need to engage in knowledge building experiences that allow them an opportunity to rethink or rediscover the overarching mission of New Testament congregations. Upon reflection on the mission of congregations in general, they then need to renew their understanding of the specific purpose for which this congregation was founded, and clarify that founding story for themselves.

Finally, they need to test the past to present culture of the congregation through examination of the enduring core values of the congregation. This is to see if the practice of the congregation is consistent with its understanding of mission and purpose.

Exploration Concerning the Kingdom Potential of the Congregation

Spiritual readiness does not involve simply a willingness to engage in change and transition activities, it involves the willingness to make a transformational difference in how the congregation serves in the midst of God's kingdom.

It involves a willingness for the entire faith community to be transformed by God, and drawn toward a future that God is unfolding before the congregation. It involves understanding the unique purpose of the congregation, and what form the congregation might take if it reaches its kingdom potential.

It involves an understanding of the people who the congregation is best gifted, skilled, and willed to nurture in their faith journey. It involves a radical commitment to discipleship that embraces the idea that God might even do something that is revolutionary through the congregation.

Therefore, as a part of spiritual readiness the pastor and the various stages of leadership communities need to engage in some preliminary exploration concerning the Kingdom potential of the congregation. This can happen at a spiritual retreat, through brainstorming sessions, or by trying to tell the story of the future of the congregation in words, concepts and frameworks that are genuine, meaningful, and exciting.

Involvement of the Congregation in a Spiritual Discovery and Exploration Process

While it is not necessary for the entire congregation to be as spiritually passionate about the change and transition that can lead to transformation as are the various stages of leadership communities, it is important to engage the active congregation in exercises of spiritual discovery and exploration.

These can be experiences in which everyone who desires to can participate. Examples would include a series of worship services that focus on the spiritual strategic journey of the congregation, and what the congregation might look like if it reaches its full kingdom potential.

Another would be a congregational learning experience with an outside leader that focuses on helping the congregation to think about itself now and in the future, and what its spiritual strategic journey might be if it reaches its kingdom potential.

Third, is a series of directed Bible studies that might be used in Christian education or discipling experiences such as Sunday School classes or small groups. Such Bible studies could look at the early church through frameworks provided by The Acts of the Apostles.

Prayer is an extremely important component on which to build a common sense of spiritual strategic passion for change and transition. One specific vehicle is the use of 100 days of share and prayer triplets. [Note: This concept is discussed in *Congregational Passages Vol. Four, No. Twelve.*]

The essence of this approach is that people are asked to form share and prayer triplets that agree to meet ten times over 100 days for 100 minutes each time. In these triplets they share about their personal spiritual journey, their journey in relationship to this congregation, and talk and pray about the future of their personal and congregational journey.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

Building Leadership Readiness for Change and Transition

Overview

Four things need to happen to construct a strong foundation for congregational readiness for change and transition. They are to develop a sense of urgency for change and transition, create spiritual readiness, build leadership readiness, and achieve strategic readiness.

This is the fifth in a series of *Congregational Passages* occasional papers on this subject. Previous occasional papers have dealt with an overview of readiness for change and transition, the numerology involved in this effort, and spiritual readiness.

This occasional paper deals with building leadership readiness, and the next paper will address achieving strategic readiness.

To understand building leadership readiness it would be helpful to review the numerology of change and transition.

How many people have to be zealous about change and transition for true readiness to exist in your congregation? It depends. The most significant factor may be the size of your congregation. However, its age, context, socioeconomic and cultural factors, and history of decision-making are also factors. Let's focus on size.

Fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must have at least a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition for a congregation to truly be ready. Quad A's are the average number of active, attending adults in the congregation.

For example, if a congregation averages 135 in attendance and 100 are adults, then at least 51 people must have a minimal awareness and acceptance of change and transition. They must understand why change or transition is necessary, and some of the benefits for their personal spiritual walk, as well as the mission fulfillment of their congregation.

Within this 51 is a stage one leadership community of five to six people, a stage two leadership community of 17 to 18 people, and a stage three leadership community of 51 to 54 people. These numbers are cumulative; that is, the stage two leadership community includes all the people in stage one, and stage three includes all the people in stages one and two.

These leadership communities are integrally involved in the four actions that build a strong foundation for change and transition. The four actions are shared in random order below, and are not listed in priority order of importance or time. Activities may be taking place that impacts all four actions at the same time.

Building leadership readiness involves moving the stages one, two, and three leadership communities to an appropriate level of readiness for change and transition.

Stage One Leadership Community

The stage one leadership community involves the pastor, any ministerial staff, and key lay leaders up to about five to seven percent of the Quad A's. In a small congregation, this can be three people. In a congregation of 1000 in attendance, this can be almost 50 people.

This stage one leadership community must understand in detail the changes and transitions the congregation could address, and be passionately committed to them. They must be highly knowledgeable about, motivated by, and accepting of the kingdom potential of the congregation.

Most important, they must be captivated by the vision of the future towards which God is pulling the congregation. They must have an urgency for change and transition, be strategically ready, be prepared to provide necessary leadership, and be spiritually ready.

They are the initiating leadership community who will be called on to cast a captivating vision for the congregation. They will help the pastor in clarifying and casting vision.

They will assist in identifying and recruiting people who need to be part of stages two and three leadership communities. Not all of these people in congregations with 150 or more Quad A's will be people who hold official leadership roles in the congregation. Some will be key influential people who seem to be able to see the future that God is nurturing within the congregation.

Laypersons who are a part of the stage one leadership community are giving a minimum of ten hours per week to the activities and leadership roles in their congregation. This time commitment includes the time they are in worship, discipleship learning experiences, and fellowship experiences.

On the average they will recruit two other people who will help form the stage two leadership community. They will also be a part of the stages two and three leadership communities.

Stage Two Leadership Community

The stage two leadership community of 15 to 20 percent of the Quad A's is knowledgeable of the changes and transitions that might occur, and are included in the process of readiness through learning experiences. They feel that a future that involves change and transition is one filled with more significant and sacrificial ministry than would be possible without a new spiritual strategic journey.

They are willing to provide some tactical leadership to fulfill the journey through the waves of change and transition because they feel ownership of the future vision of the congregation. They can articulate the vision in their own words, and are willing to align their Christian service in a manner that seeks to fulfill that vision.

Laypersons who are a part of the stage two leadership community are giving between five and ten hours per week to the activities and leadership roles in their congregation. This time commitment includes the time they are in worship, discipleship learning experiences, and fellowship experiences.

So, they have leadership readiness and spiritual readiness. The stage two leadership community includes the people who are part of the stage one leadership community. On the average they will recruit two other people who will help form the stage three leadership community.

Stage Three Leadership Community

The stage three leadership community of at least fifty plus one percent of the Quad A's must not be opposed to change and transition. They do not necessarily have to embrace the specifics of the spiritual strategic journey, but they must have confidence in the people who are the leaders and workers in the journey.

As stated earlier, they must understand why change and transition is necessary, and some of the benefits for their personal spiritual walk, as well as the mission fulfillment of their congregation.

Generally, they are a part of some type of intentional spiritual development process such as share and prayer triplets. Through this type of experience they have made a spiritual commitment to the future of their congregation with full awareness that some changes and transitions may be necessary with which they are at first uncomfortable.

Laypersons who are a part of the stage three leadership community are giving between three and five hours per week to the activities and leadership roles in their congregation. This time commitment includes the time they are in worship, discipleship learning experiences, and fellowship experiences.

What is a Coaching Team, and When is it Necessary and Useful?

When a congregation has at least 300 Quad A's, it is beginning to move to a size where the initiating leadership role of the pastor and ministerial or program staff becomes more important. Also, the size dynamics of the congregation calls for a team of people who are able to give almost daily coaching to the change and transition process.

Generally this coaching team is composed of the pastor, ministerial and program staff, and a few key lay leaders. Their role is to provide correlation to the change and transition process, and to initiate new input to the various stages of leadership communities on a regular basis.

A Concluding Word

Throughout the occasional papers that have dealt with this issue of readiness for change and transition, one theme that has been repeated often is that true change and transition that transforms a congregation cannot happen unless a congregation is ready. All parts of readiness are important.

However, change and transition involves people making changes and accepting the transition in their personal lives and the culture of the congregation that results from the changes.

No issue is bigger in the change and transition process than having a critical mass of leadership prepared to enthusiastically embrace the changes and transitions. The amount of time this takes varies. Patience is crucial!

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

Achieving Strategic Readiness for Change and Transition

Overview

Four things need to happen to construct a strong foundation for congregational readiness for change and transition. They are to develop a sense of urgency for change and transition, create spiritual readiness, build leadership readiness, and achieve strategic readiness.

This is the sixth in a series of *Congregational Passages* occasional papers on this subject. Previous occasional papers have dealt with an overview of readiness for change and transition, the numerology involved in this effort, spiritual readiness, and leadership readiness. This occasional paper deals with achieving strategic readiness.

Achieving strategic readiness involves the deepest, most passionate, and most knowledgeable actions by the stage one leadership community.

The Role of the Stage One Leadership Community in Achieving Strategic Readiness

The stage one leadership community involves the pastor, any ministerial staff, and key lay leaders up to about five to seven percent of the Quad A's. In a small congregation, this can be three people. In a congregation of 1000 in attendance, this can be almost 50 people.

This stage one leadership community must understand in detail the changes and transitions the congregation could address, and be passionately committed to them. They must be highly knowledgeable about, motivated by, and accepting of the kingdom potential of the congregation.

Most important, they must be captivated by the vision of the future towards which God is pulling the congregation. They must have an urgency for change and transition, be strategically ready, be prepared to provide necessary leadership, and be spiritually ready.

They are the initiating leadership community who will be called on to cast a captivating vision for the congregation. They will help the pastor in clarifying and casting vision.

They will assist in identifying and recruiting people who need to be part of stages two and three leadership communities. Not all of these people in congregations with 150 or more Quad A's will be people who hold official leadership roles in the congregation. Some will be key influential people who seem to be able to see the future that God is nurturing within the congregation.

Laypersons who are a part of the stage one leadership community are giving a minimum of ten hours per week to the activities and leadership roles in their congregation. This time commitment includes the time they are in worship, discipleship learning experiences, and fellowship experiences.

On the average they will recruit two other people who will help form the stage two leadership community. They will also be a part of the stages two and three leadership communities.

Understanding the Tasks and Relationships of Achieving Strategic Readiness

Achieving strategic readiness involves at least two actions. First, the stage one leadership community must have full understanding and ownership of the task and relationship sides of the change and transition process. Some of the learnings and actions that need to take place are the following:

1. They must have engaged in mutual learning experiences where they have developed an understanding of the change and transition process in congregations. Such a learning experience must help them understand readiness for change and transition in congregations, the length of time that change and transition may take, and the roles they must play as an initiating leadership community.
2. They must feel a sense of urgency for change and transition, be spiritually ready, have skills as a leader, and have a long-term commitment to the congregation. A long-term commitment of five to seven years is essential for lay and clergy leadership to be present throughout the change and transition process.

One huge factor that negatively impacts a change and transition process is the leaving of crucial leaders in the midst of the process. Certainly, other skilled leaders can take their place. The issue is that these new skilled leaders may not have been involved in the experiences of the journey to this point and have the necessary experience base to continue the journey with meaning and passion.

3. They must have engaged in mutual learning experiences where they have created a sense of connectedness with one another as a leadership group within their faith community. This connectedness must symbolize a multi-year journey.
4. They must be able to articulate a common vision, a challenging strategy, and tell a consistent tale of the future they feel that God is bringing forth in their midst.

The common vision must be an evaluation filter used to consider the value of various actions. Actions that do not help the congregation fulfill the vision should be evaluated as to whether they need to be done. Often they should be because they contribute to the basic foundation of congregational life. However, they should not be seen as high priorities, but as basic services.

5. They must work with the stage two leadership community to develop a road map for the spiritual strategic journey of the congregation that is appropriately challenging and will help the congregation fulfill its vision.

In some congregations, this road map will involve strategies that are consistent with the past practices of the congregation. This fits in situations where a mild rate and pace of change and transition is sufficient to bring about the necessary transformation.

Generally, this is in congregations who are growing or developing both qualitatively and quantitatively, or who are in Adulthood or Maturity.

In other congregations, the road map will involve strategies that are discontinuous in regard with the past practices of the congregation. This fits in situations where a significant rate and pace of change and transition is needed to bring about the necessary transformation.

Generally, this is in congregations who are aging and find themselves in the Empty Nest or Retirement stage.

In a third group of congregations, this road map will involve strategies that are radical in regard to past practices of the congregation. This fits in situations where congregations must make a dramatic change in their direction or they may not exist with vitality for much longer.

Vitality is the key word. It does not mean that death of the congregation is close, but only that its vitality and ability to be recaptured by vision is threatened.

Creating the Time and Energy for Achieving Strategic Readiness

The stage one leadership community must be committed to creating time and energy for new tasks and relationships to happen in the congregation by diminishing the controlling aspects of the management systems of the congregation.

1. They must empower as a part of readiness the beginning of a movement from management to ministry. Only then can the first forward steps of change and transition take place.

Often congregations are stuck in old patterns. Particularly if they are on the aging side of their life cycle, they are controlled by the management systems of the congregation. Management systems may dominate the time and energy of leadership.

In many congregations the way that management systems control the congregation is that they absorb the financial resources, the leadership resources, the time resources, and the spiritual energy of the lay leaders with what are perceived to be necessary actions for the survival of the congregation.

Because there is often no vision in the congregation, the managers of the congregation are afraid to give up control because they feel the congregation will fail if things are not done right. Also, over the years they fall into patterns where they feel that the management work is the work of the congregation.

2. The stage one initiating leadership community, jointly with the stage two leadership community as supporters, must determine ways to diminish the controlling aspects of management to create new time and energy for new actions. In a 24/7 world, there is still only 168 hours in a week. We cannot create new time.

The stages one and two leadership communities need to discuss all that the congregation does. Each thing must be evaluated in terms of whether it needs to continue or be stopped. Then they need to consider the new actions that need to be started that will allow them to move in new directions.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

22-44 Ministry Mobilizers and Ministry Mobilization Teams

Overview

How does a congregation know when to add a staff person? My strategic insight would be that a congregation ought to have one full-time staff person equivalent for every 100 people in average attendance. This formula applies to ministerial and program staff, but does not include clerical and custodial staff.

Does this formula include the pastor? No, the pastor is considered foundational staff. This is talking about staff beyond the pastor. At first it may seem like a high number until several other factors are considered later.

This formula holds true if the congregation desires to grow qualitatively and quantitatively. If qualitative and quantitative growth are not relevant issues, then a lower ratio of staff to attendance will suffice.

The key word in the staff-to-attendance ratio pattern is *equivalent*. To achieve the ratio does not mean that full-time permanent staff must be obtained. Part-time staff, contract staff, volunteers working with a formal covenant agreement, and perhaps even outsourced services, can meet the requirement.

One of the best ways to fulfill the staffing needs of a congregation is to use *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers*.

What Are 22-44 Ministry Mobilizers?

22-44 Ministry Mobilizers is a concept that relates to part-time staff. They are lay ministers who work 22 hours per week for 44 weeks per year focusing on a specialized part of the disciplemaking process, or a targeted program, ministry, or activity of the congregation.

The 22 hours per week includes their involvement in Sunday activities, and other regular services and program times in which they participate.

The 44 weeks per year is a key concept for this type of part-time lay minister. It allows them the opportunity to take breaks during the year for holidays, family vacation, and other times and reasons for being away.

Examples would be someone to handle the preschool and children ministry, someone to coordinate the evangelism and new member recruitment, or someone to coordinate assimilation activities.

Depending upon the salary and benefits structure in a congregation, three to four *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* can be employed for the same cost as one full-time, permanent staff minister.

Usually these people come from within the membership of the congregation. They are people who already believe in the congregation, and its spiritual strategic direction.

Who are 22-44 Ministry Mobilizers?

Typical candidates for these positions include spouses who have children at home so they are not working full-time. They would like to work in a congregational ministry position, and can work the schedule around school hours.

Retired persons are often candidates for these positions. Persons who have retired early for various reasons, but would still like to work, and are committed to ministry within their congregation, make excellent *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers*.

Bivocational ministry also fits the *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* concept. Many people have secular jobs that are confined to certain hours, and a certain number of hours. They can work a second, part-time job and would like to do this in ministry in their congregation.

Persons who teach school often can service as *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers*. The reality is that they probably work less than 22 hours per week during the school year, but may be full-time during most of the summer.

Special Issues Concerning 22-44 Ministry Mobilizers

22-44 Ministry Mobilizers should be thought of as people who do essential work of ministry, and not as people who hold a job in the congregation. As such, several principles should guide the *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* system in any congregation.

First, all *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* positions are fluid, dynamic, and temporary. *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* positions are put together to meet a real need for a specified time. Thus, no *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* position should be considered permanent, the person in the position is not entitled to a permanent job, and no permanent job description should exist.

Second, *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* and their team leader should develop a written covenant that spells out their relationship with the congregation for the fulfillment of a clearly defined ministry assignment for a defined number of months or years.

Third, *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* positions should be for six months to three years in length. Even within this time span should be checkpoints where the ministry team leader and the lay minister can evaluate the viability of continuing the ministry position, and the desire of both for this person to continue in this ministry position.

Fourth, at the end of the covenant period several things can happen. The covenant relationship may conclude and the lay minister moves on to the next challenge in their life. The ministry team leader may renew the covenant with this lay minister. Or, the ministry team leader may significantly change the covenant with the lay minister and ask them to take on a new ministry challenge.

Fifth, *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* must seek to identify and coach three to five people who could fulfill their current ministry assignment. Many *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* will actually work themselves out of a *job*, and thus be ready to take on the next challenge.

What Are Ministry Mobilization Teams?

The idea of *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* may work best when they are part of a *Ministry Mobilization Team* coached by a full-time ministerial staff person, or ministry team leader. A *Ministry Mobilization Team* may include a full-time minister as coach, two to six *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* and a team administrative assistant.

Applications of the 22-44 Ministry Mobilizer and Ministry Mobilization Teams Concept

Smaller Membership Congregation [less than 80-85 in average attendance]: *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* would include any music or program staff. Often even congregations of this size have a person who directs music and a person who leads their youth/teenager program.

MidSize Membership Congregation [85 to 350 in average attendance]: This size congregation often needs staff assistance to help create and sustain quality programming in two to three areas of focus, but cannot afford a full-time staff person, much less a full-time staff person for each of the very diverse areas. Also, the areas of program focus may be very different and even if they could afford a full-time staff minister it would be unlikely the person would do quality work in each of the very diverse areas.

One congregation of around 300 in attendance has put together a staff that includes an associate pastor, a preschool and children director, a youth director, a music director, and an adult programs director who are all *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers*.

Larger Membership Congregation [350 to 750 in average attendance]: In these congregations the concept of the Ministry Mobilization Teams made up of a full-time staff minister, or ministry team leader, and two to six *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* begins to become a reality.

An example would be a full-time minister for Christian education who has a *22-44 Ministry Mobilizer* on a team of lay ministers who do preschool programming, children programming, youth programming, singles programming, senior adults programming, and one who does lay mobilization.

This whole team of *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* can be put together for less than the cost of two full-time staff ministers, and have much more flexibility.

Mega Membership Congregation [750 or more in attendance]: This size congregation may begin to have Ministry Mobilization Teams that focus on age group specialties. One example would be a full-time minister to young adult families who has *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* serving as a preschool coordinator, a children coordinator, and a weekday early education coordinator.

Another example would be a full-time minister of adult discipleship development who has a team of *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* who cover the areas of evangelism and new members recruitment, care ministry, discipleship development, and lay mobilization and involvement.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.

An Overview of Staffing Patterns for Effective Congregational Leadership

Overview

Staffing patterns for effective congregational leadership are changing. Like many factors impacting congregations, staffing patterns are getting more complicated. It is no longer possible to give a simple answer to the question of how many staff persons a congregation ought to have, or which staff persons they ought to be. So often the only appropriate answer is, *It depends!*

It use to be that the answer given to the question of how many staff persons congregations need would be figured by the number of persons present in average weekly attendance. That is still a guideline for beginning a conversation, but most conversations cannot end there.

Other guidelines may relate to things such as the socioeconomic level of the congregation, or the context in terms of a rural to urban setting. One set of guidelines would relate to whether the congregation wants to be growing, plateaued, or declining. High expectation congregations would have different guidelines than low expectation congregations.

Permission-giving congregations have different expectations than controlling congregations. Seven-days-per-week, full-service, family/household focused congregations have different guidelines than Sunday and midweek only congregations.

Congregations who insist that all of their staff have a seminary education have different guidelines than congregations who simply want people who are prepared to minister, or who have gifts, skills, and a willingness to help the congregation address issues related to being an effective congregation.

Congregations who focus their energies on visionary leadership and relationship experiences have different guidelines than congregations who focus their energies on programmatic emphases and accountable management.

So, answering the question of how many staff persons a congregation ought to have, or which staff persons they ought to be, really can only be answered by the statement, *It depends!*

This article seeks to suggest three patterns with variations on each. The three patterns are (1) staffing patterns organized around the programs of the congregation, (2) staffing patterns organized around an adult discipleship development emphasis, and (3) staffing patterns organized around family or household definitions.

The variations are (1) average worship attendance of congregations, (2) permission-giving congregations, and (3) congregations who focus on vision and relationships. Permission-giving congregations are those who seek to empower laity in ministry rather than controlling the ministries in which they are involved. Congregations who focus on vision and relationships are future-oriented rather than preserving past programs and management styles.

Staffing Patterns Organized Around the Programs of the Congregation

Traditionally many congregations develop staffing patterns around the programs of the congregation. There is a pastor, a music director, a youth director, and a program director staffing outline in many congregations.

[Note: the program director position is often called the director of education or director of Christian education.]

Average Worship Attendance: In smaller membership congregations of less than 85 in average weekly attendance, typically a pastor is present, and a part-time or volunteer music director and, perhaps, a youth director.

In midsize membership congregations of 85 to 350 in attendance, the roles of music director, youth director, and program director begin to emerge as part-time, and, perhaps later, full-time positions are created, or a combination of these assignments fulfilled by a full-time position.

In larger membership congregations of 350 to 750 in average attendance, congregations have traditionally had one full-time staff person equivalent for every 100 in average weekly worship attendance in a growing congregation, one for every 125 in a plateaued congregation, and one for every 150 in a declining congregation. The pastor not is counted as one of these full-time equivalent positions.

In mega membership congregations, staff positions for each life stage and target group *from womb to tomb* are developed. There may be a minister or director of preschool, children, youth or students, single adults, senior adults, married adults, and one or more specialized target groups.

Permission-Giving Congregations: In these congregations, the program director becomes a lay mobilization director with a focus on empowering laity in ministry. Less staff, whether full-time or part-time, are needed in these situations since laity are empowered to lead.

These congregations may make good use of *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* [discussed in *Congregational Passages* Vol. Five, Number Eleven].

Vision and Relationships Driven Congregations: In these congregations, the program director becomes a director of discipleship development. The emphasis is on helping adults make progress in their spiritual strategic journey as disciples.

Staffing Patterns Organized Around an Adult Discipleship Development Emphasis

Staffing patterns organized around an adult discipleship development emphasis involve addressing the issues of evangelism, new member recruitment, assimilation, care and fellowship, spiritual growth, leadership development, and missional involvement.

Average Worship Attendance: Traditionally this type of emphasis has been program driven in congregations. In the 21st century one-on-one accountability relationships and the building of relationships within community will drive this type of emphasis.

Smaller membership congregations and larger and mega membership congregations will tend to emphasize one-on-one relationships and small groups. Midsize congregations may focus more on using programs to accomplish the same thing.

Permission-Giving Congregations: These congregations will see the discipling process as a vehicle to empower laity for ministry that fits their gifts, skills, and willingness.

Vision and Relationships Driven Congregations: These congregations will see that it is the discipling process that is flavoring and navigating the spiritual strategic journey of the congregation.

Staffing Patterns Organized Around Family or Household Definitions

Staffing patterns organized around family or household definitions involve a focus on the different types of families or households congregations may be seeking to include in their spectrum of ministry. A classic organizing of this approach might include an emphasis on young adult families, median adult families, empty nest families, senior adult households, young single adult households, single again households, and other special target groups within a spectrum of ministry.

The idea would be that programs, ministries, and activities, and the staff that support them, would be organized around the make-up of the various families or households with the whole family or household unit in mind.

For example, instead of having a program that focuses exclusively on preschoolers or children, there would be a program, and any necessary staff support, which focuses on families with children under twelve. If a staff director or minister is identified, it would be a minister to young adult families.

Average Worship Attendance: Smaller membership congregations are unlikely to be able to organize in this manner. Midsize congregations will be able to differentiate various adult family and household groups, and will want to organize around this concept. Larger membership and mega membership can organize programs and staff around this concept.

All sizes can make significant use of *22-44 Ministry Mobilizers* to staff this approach.

Permission-Giving Congregations: Permission-giving congregations will want to empower people who feel called to work with these various family, household, or target groups.

Vision and Relationships Driven Congregations: Vision and relationship driven congregations have an excellent opportunity to use this staffing pattern to be responsive to the needs of various generations. Adult discipleship development approaches can be differentiated according to the generation identification of the various adult groups.

For example, differentiation can be made for Builders, Boomers, Busters, and Blasters. [Note: Blasters is another word for the emerging Millennial or Generation Y.] Also, both modern and postmodern approaches can be addressed.

For more information on this subject or to inquire about conference, consultation, or coaching assistance for your congregation or denominational organization, contact George Bullard, Hollifield Leadership Center and Lake Hickory Learning Communities, 6692 Valwood Road, Conover, NC 28613-8759, Voice: 828-256-2126, Fax: 828-256-4989, E-mail: BullardJournal@cs.com.