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## ABSTRACT

# THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL TRANSITIONING AS A NECESSARY FUNCTION OF LEADERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECOND-ORDER CHANGE IN CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

by

David W. Blackmer

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze leader initiated or managed, emotional transitioning upon the successful introduction and establishment of second-order change. Amid rapid change, desired or imposed, the focus of change has often been on implementing external change. Internal change, however, is the precursor to permanent change.

For this qualitative descriptive study, a semi-structured interview protocol is employed to identify convergent practices of managing the change process, or transitioning. The findings, which focus upon the methods of providing emotive and cognitive bridges of continuity amid discontinuous change, will be used for future training of church leaders.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL TRANSITIONING AS A NECESSARY  
FUNCTION OF LEADERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
SECOND-ORDER CHANGE IN CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

presented by

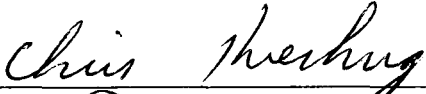
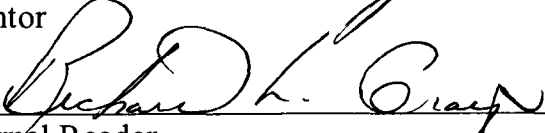
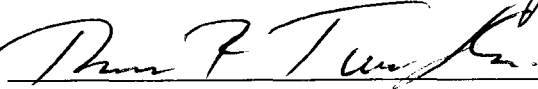
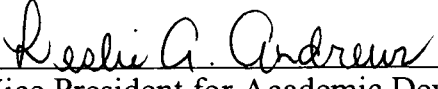
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CHANGE IN CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

A Dissertation

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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

David W. Blackmer

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## CHAPTER 1

### UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

Several years ago while I was living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, I received a phone call from the District Superintendent indicating my Bishop and Cabinet's intent to appoint me to a church in Wausau, Wisconsin. My interview with the Staff Parish Committee went well so I turned to the arduous task of bringing closure to my relationship with the people of the Green Bay congregation, making preparations for the smooth reception of my successor and preparing my family for a major move. My wife and ten year old daughter had expressed their thoughts and emotions verbally, so I had some sense of how they were managing the change. However, my six year old son had been conspicuously quiet, and I wondered how he was processing all that had been thrust upon him.

Following a Wednesday evening service I told my wife that I wanted to ride home alone with my son because I knew then, as now, that he and I get our best talking done in the car. Actually, we had not even begun the ride yet—we had barely sat down in the car—when my son blurted out, “Dad, I don't want to move.” “O.K., why is that?” I asked. He paused for a moment and then replied, “Because here I know everything, ... but there I'll have to change my mind.”

Change is incredibly difficult. Noel Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna said, “Change, whether at the societal, organizational, or individual level, means dislocation and discomfort” (60). Much is happening to intensify this discomfort. The world is changing at breakneck speed. Whether through futurists like Alvin Toffler, business guru-consultants like Tom Peters, or average persons like you and me, the information is

conclusive: We live amid the swirl of change. Globalization, deregulation, market segmentation, urban sprawl, the graying of America, cultural pluralism, technological advancements, demographic shifts, racial blending, polarization, merging and demerging have all contributed to this sense of dislocation (Peters 8-12; Anderson, Dying 2-41; Bolman and Deal 372; Anderson, Church 19-50). The angst of change is quite apparent when we add to such global changes those personal changes we desire, are mandated by our jobs, are thrust upon us by life's circumstances, or are simply a by-product of the vast number of choices available to people.

Not long ago I had lunch with a psychologist who was a parishioner of mine. I wanted to "pick her brain" because I was outlining my preaching schedule for the year. I wanted to make sure that I was thinking about and taking into serious consideration the real life needs that people were facing. "What are the greatest pinch-points and most challenging situations that people are facing today?" I asked. I remember expecting her to say something about some great trauma or grand syndrome, but without even hesitating, she looked me right in the eye and said, "David ... it's change, simple change."

What exacerbates the dislocation and disorientation of simple change, however, is that "everyone and everything is changing at the same time" (Anderson, Dying 10). Both church consultant Lyle Schaller and business consultant Tom Peters concur that the culprit which makes change so overwhelming today is the exorbitant pace of change (Schaller, Change 63; Peters 38). Since change is both unavoidable and accelerating, dealing well with change individually or organizationally is imperative. People must "learn to love change as much as we have hated it in the past" (Peters 56).

Learning to initiate and manage change is an absolutely vital skill because, unless

one is deliberate in dealing with change, one fails to realize misdirected actions, or, in fact, inaction generates other “unintended changes” (Bolman and Deal 370). Without proactive, intentional effort, people become victims, contorted by the tempest of change. This is especially true in organizations. No prosperous organization exists today that is isolated or immune to change (Bennis 106). Indeed, Tom Peters contends, “Today, loving change, tumult, even chaos is a prerequisite for survival, let alone success” (56). Loving change in a way that leads to a radically changed organization is the result of a transformational leader (Lewis 6; Bennis 104). Tichy and Devanna say, “There is something in the nature of organizations and people that makes it difficult for them to change in a fundamental way” (72).

Organizations, including churches, are thus “looking for leaders who will give permission for meaningful change and then point the way” (Anderson, Church 12). Leaders who lead do far more than implement consensus (Dying 188). They are not put off by the resistance inherent to people’s or organization’s corporate reaction to change. Rather, the transformational leader understands the change process and resistant forces and mobilizes the energy needed to overcome them to transform the organization (Tichy and Devanna 72).

As my son so insightfully articulated before our major move, “here I know everything, but there I’ll have to change my mind.” Change agents and transformational leaders intuitively or cognitively realize that managing the internal, psychological process of change is an absolute necessity. Far too often, especially in churches, excessive attention is paid exclusively to the external changes desired. Even visionary leaders tend to speak in the language of behavioral outcome—what changes should look



like, function like, and behave like in an organization's life. That is because the issue is largely resolved for the change agent leader. Often, by the time the visionary change-agent pastor shares the vision for change with the congregation, he or she has had time to process and digest the vision. What is vastly underestimated, however, is the time the congregation needs to emotionally transition. Instead, pastors typically focus on the rational reasons for the change, largely ignoring the emotional terrain that needs to be covered. Pastors do not provide enough "emotional hooks" for congregants to hang their experiential hats on, nor do they provide the kind of bridges that people can walk across from a familiar past to a revolutionary new, albeit desirable, future.

To make matters worse, pastors often use language to cast vision that is inherently divisive. They try to argue people to their senses, again out of a behavioral outcome methodology. External changes are *de facto* cast into camps of winners and losers, for or against, right or wrong, visionary progressives or guardians of the status quo.

Incidentally, this is especially true of the way congregations are transitioned from traditional music to contemporary music. No matter what the permanent, pervasive systemic change, pastors unwittingly build in conflict by focusing almost exclusively on external change rather than internal transitioning. When the fallout begins, they often congratulate themselves for being "faithful to God," when in fact, they are probably being arrogant...and ignorant. Change cannot be successfully managed without attention to the internal psychological room size, as well as, the moving of external behavioral furniture. Transformational change agents, whose efforts result in deep systemic organizational change, need to know how to manage the change process.

In a more recent move, a friend mentioned how well our children were adjusting

to their new environment. Feeling a bit overwhelmed by the circumstances myself, I tried to deflect any praise given to my wife and me and credited happenstance. However, being a persistently affirming person, he would not concede to my account of the events. Instead he said, “It seems to me someone helped them unpack their emotions even before the boxes showed up.” More and more this needs to be the role of pastors in leading their churches to and through change.

While the dissertation gives a cursory treatment to leadership, it occupies itself mostly with the change process and the functional role of leadership in eliciting radical systemic change. The project will result in qualitative research involving interviews with church leaders, lay and clergy, in churches that have undergone major change to determine how cognizant they were of the transition process. The hope is to provide a clearer, more comprehensive picture of how to transition a congregation successfully.

### **Biblical/Theological Foundations**

God’s people have always been in process: on the move and changing. Arnold Stauffer refers to this as a *pilgrim* metaphor, used throughout the Scriptures to conjure change imagery of God leading his people through time and circumstance to the fullness of life he intends (60). Redemption, then, is a restoration of creation as God designed it to be. Although marred by sin and human disobedience, God’s redemptive action in Jesus Christ is meant to have a pervasively and progressively redemptive influence in all the world.

In shaping the perceptions of the disciples in terms of what it means to be the people of God, Jesus did not exclusively use cloistered, separatist language which merely promotes the private devotion of adherents. Rather, he said,

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:14-16, RSV)

Accompanying these statements, Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?” (Matt. 5:13, RSV). In so doing, Jesus was forecasting his expectation that his followers would be change agents in the commerce of this world’s daily life. Salt cannot fulfill its preserving function until it dissolves and becomes a part of that which it is intended to preserve. The disciples soon learned they would not be cloistered unto themselves, possessing a concern only for their own redemption and relationship with God. Inherent in the call to be a Christ-follower was to be a part of others’ and the world’s redemption. By virtue of being a disciple-follower we are installed as “ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (2 Cor. 5:20, RSV). We are entrusted with “a ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18, RSV). As such, we have become change agents and catalysts of the new birth in our world, heralds of the in-breaking of the kingdom, until that day that God’s reign consummates in the final new creation (Rev. 21:1-5a).

In the meantime, between the inauguration of the new creation begun in the salvific action of God in Jesus Christ until the consummation of that new creation when this earth and the kingdom of God are one, God’s redemptive work is done in the lives of human beings through a process that New Testament writers and present day theologians refer to as sanctification. This is a continuance of God’s saving action. Accordingly, justification is what God has done for us. By virtue of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has broken into history and objectively changed the state of humanity.

We have been justified; nothing a person can do will merit, deserve, or earn God's saving action. Salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 6:23). God's righteousness is imputed, forensically declared on our behalf, and nothing we can do will change that. However, this righteousness is functionally and operationally appropriated by faith. Until that time, it is like an armistice that has not been enacted by the troops. We continue to be at war with ourselves and at war with God. When God's righteousness is received, subjectively accessed, and applied through repentance and trust, the life of faith begins. This new life is a life of progressive, continuing second-order deep change. Theologically, this is called sanctification.

Clear delineation must be made that this new life of ever-increasing glory of God within us and through us is never a matter of obligation, duty, or manipulation. Likewise, sanctification is not a matter of our own production, nor merely for our own benefit. We are called to be agents of change and renewal in the world until that day when sanctification not only culminates in our own perfection in Christ (finally in the kingdom of God), but the entire creation is sanctified in the new creation.

Jurgen Moltmann refers to sanctification as the ministry of the cosmic Christ which continues through the church today (88, 93). According to Moltmann, Christians need to understand the cosmic dimension of Christ's resurrection referred to so prominently in the Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians (83, 88). Resurrection and the consequent resurrection power available to believer-followers via the indwelling Spirit (Rom. 8:11) are never meant to be a "consoling opium" (81). Rather, our experience of resurrection through Christ enlists us in a "living hope" that is meant to continue toward the full redemption not only of individuals but of the entire cosmos (81, 93). "The true

church of Christ is the healing beginning of a healed creation in the midst of a sick world” (93). Because Paul uses the perfect tense in referring to the impact of Christ’s resurrection, we understand that, while our condition has been forever changed from recipients of death to eternal life, from creatures of darkness to light, Christ-followers are nonetheless thrust into the redemptive process of resurrection extending to the entire cosmos (81, 88). Succinctly said, we are called to be instruments of a heaven born “transition...transformation...transfiguration” that is nothing less than a “radical new beginning” in all of creation. Christians are called to be change agents.

Consequently, Christ-followers do not exclusively focus on what is seen or what presently exists. Instead, they focus on the future (Moltmann 130). This future focus is what it means to be born in Christ to a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3; Moltmann 131).

According to Moltmann, Christians do not fear the chaos in our world but rather bring order and change to it, resolving enmity and bringing forth justice (135). It might thus be said that Christians not only participate in change as they are sanctified but in the sanctification of the whole creation.

This process of sanctification, whereby we and all of creation are drawn once again into the fullness of life God desires, is always a matter of grace, the gift of God, enabled by God’s own Spirit. Grace itself produces the climate or milieu conducive to change. The Scriptures often refer to the change wrought in the human heart by the Spirit or grace, which John Wesley used interchangeably. Grace received always elicits change. In his book Practical Divinity, Thomas Langford says, “Grace has changed the affections, the mind, and the will” (36). This change is the great adventure of the faith-grace relationship. Redemption is an ever-increasing restoration of the image of God

within us as well as a restoration of the entire cosmos God created, all by participation in God's grace, revealed in Jesus Christ.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze leader initiated or managed emotional transitioning upon the successful introduction and establishment of second-order change, discontinuous with the past, within five United Methodist Churches in the Wisconsin Annual Conference and one Lutheran church (ELCA) in Burnsville, Minnesota. In addition, a pastor who has previously led three churches through second-order change was interviewed.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were addressed in the study, insofar as possible.

#### **Research Question #1**

How did leaders facilitate the process of change?

#### **Research Question #2**

What is the role of continuity amid discontinuous change, and how does it express itself?

#### **Research Question #3**

How are individual changes, change agents, and organizational change related?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Lay leader*—For purposes of the research, lay leaders are not necessarily those individuals officially designated by the church in accordance with the Book of Discipline. Rather, lay leaders will refer to any non-ordained persons who function in a leadership capacity, official or unofficial, in a way that is seminal to organizational change.

*Second-order change (deep change)*—Second-order change is discontinuous change occurring “when fundamental properties or states of the system are changed” (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 489). Second-order change results in new ways of thinking and behaving that do not have a precedent in past practice within an organization.

### **Methodology**

The study employed a qualitative-inductive rather than a quantitative-deductive methodology in which the role of the researcher was significant in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Through a descriptive study, data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with pastors or leaders within churches that had undergone significant, second-order change. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed to provide a verbatim record. Interviews were conducted in person. Due to a recording failure, three interviews had to be conducted again by means of telephone. The interviews were likewise recorded and transcribed. Each interview attempted to elicit answers that provided insight into leader-instigated or managed change, particularly pertaining to the process of emotional transitioning.

### **Subjects**

The interview population was composed of seven senior pastors at five United Methodist congregations in Wisconsin and one Lutheran church (ELCA) in Burnsville, Minnesota. These churches have undergone significant, second-order change within the last three years. Identified key lay leaders were also interviewed. The bishop or members of her cabinet (district superintendents) identified each congregation and the associated leadership, and indicated their suitability in fulfilling the prescribed study group.

Each interviewee was interviewed independently of others from the church leadership and no responses from prior interviews were shared with participants.

### **Context of the Study**

The Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is comprised of 510 churches distributed in eight geographic areas known as Districts. Of these churches, some are jointly served by one ordained or licensed minister in an arrangement known as a “charge.” The Wisconsin Annual Conference has 368 pastoral charges. The churches are diverse: rural, suburban, downtown and urban. However, the majority of churches in the Conference are designated as rural. Only thirty churches have an average worship attendance over two hundred people each week.

### **Variables**

The dependent variable in this study is the implementation of second-order change in the ongoing life of the congregation to include both the successful and unsuccessful implementation of this change. The independent variables include the leadership tactics, methods, and communication of the change agent(s). The intervening variables included years of experience for the change agent pastor, generational style of communication, denominational particularity of United Methodism, and the time afforded in individual congregations for the full implementation and transition to second-order change.

### **Instrumentation**

One primary instrument was utilized: a researcher-designed semi-structured interview protocol of twenty questions. Interview questions were pretested in order to improve their intentionality, enhancing their productivity in eliciting responses pertinent



to the research questions and to strengthen the interview format. Feedback from this fieldtesting was incorporated into the final instrument revision. Statistical and biographical data was obtained from the 2001 Journal of the Wisconsin Annual Conference United Methodist Church. Biographic information and statistics were also obtained from the executive secretary of The Prince of Peace Church in Burnsville, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. Additionally, an abbreviated ten-year profile of the United Methodist churches was obtained from the General Board of Global Ministry.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection proceeded along the following steps: (1) Change agent pastors or leaders were identified by means of district superintendents or the bishop of the Wisconsin Annual Conference; (2) All interviews were conducted in face-to-face meetings, not to exceed two hours in length; (3) Interviews were recorded on micro-cassettes; (4) Taped interviews were then transcribed; (5) Three interviews had to be repeated by phone, recorded and subsequently transcribed; and, (6) Analysis of the interview data was assessed according to the research questions, while remaining open to helpful information that arose but was not directly connected to the research questions.

### **Delimitations and Generalizability of This Study**

The hazard in trying to ascertain and measure the impact of intentional emotional transitioning on the implementation of change by a change leader is that some leaders have not been exposed to this paradigm. Some leaders may intentionally transition but do so intuitively rather than from an overt conceptual construct. Therefore, the task in the interview process is how to elicit the opportunity for the change leader to comment on the emotional transitioning aspect of the change process without manipulating or

extracting forced responses that have no factual basis. In this sense, personal redaction that makes explicit an implicit methodology is to be enhanced, rather than inadvertently promoting revisionist history.

With this delimitation in mind, a reasonable assumption is that lay or clergy leaders, who utilized some intentional component of emotional transitioning, intuitively or cognizantly, will nonetheless be able to articulate the importance or negligible value of such a process in establishing second-order change in an organization such as a church. Therefore, the findings can be generalized and useful in providing insight for churches seeking to change in as healthy a fashion as possible. I hope the findings of this study will be useful to the Wisconsin Annual Conference in providing field-tested information for use in training workshops entitled, “How to Effectively Lead Congregational Change.”

### **Importance of the Study**

Churches, like many other organizations, are going through rapid change at the present time. Some of this change is unwanted and a product of living in a time of accelerated change. However, many of the changes are desired and born out of a legitimate and authentic desire to enhance a church’s cultural relevance, contextualization in viably reaching the lost, updating their facilities, or reformulating organizational infrastructure. Yet far too many churches’ change processes and specifically leader directed change are undermined by an inability to perceive the need or methodology for emotional transitioning. When change is derailed, churches emotionally blow up, or behaviorally spoken vision casting drives excessive numbers of potential proponents to the door. Clearly, churches need a better grasp on the issue of establishing continuity

within discontinuous change, that is, emotional transitioning.

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 anchors this study in the current and ongoing related research and literature in “leading change.” A brief consideration of a theology and biblical basis for change has been synchronized with the leading change research. Chapter 3 explains the design of the study and describes how data was collected and evaluated. Chapter 4 reports the significant findings that come out of the interviews conducted with change agents in sample churches. Chapter 5 completes the dissertation with a summation and interpretation of the findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRECEDENTS IN LITERATURE

Most people have a love-hate relationship with change. “Change is alternately welcomed and resisted” (Ratliff 11). Much has been written about people’s apparent innate resistance to change (O’Toole 4; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 4; Keener 1). Mark Twain, the American icon of homespun wisdom, once said, “The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper” (qtd. in Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 459). A recent mushrooming of books on leading change in the business management sector often begins with the premise that all change is disorienting and will be resisted. Add to this the chronicling of accelerated societal change and technologically enhanced rapid change (Bandy, Christian 11), and one can easily see why Tom Peters would contend, “The winners of tomorrow will deal *proactively* with chaos” (Peters XIV).

Yet change is also often desired. On a personal level, change can both energize the individual and bring forth wanted results. William Bridges contends that Americans, in particular, thrive on change (Transitions 2). Indeed, the nineteenth century French social philosopher, Alexis deTocqueville, once said, “The American has no time to tie himself to anything, he grows accustomed only to change, and ends by regarding it as the natural state of man” (qtd. in Bridges, Transitions 3). In a very real sense, change is a part of the DNA of Americans.

So why the difficulties surrounding change, individually and organizationally? William Bridges says, “the pace of change...disorients us” (Transitions 4). Three decades ago, futurist Alvin Toffler said, “Change is avalanching upon our heads and most people are grotesquely unprepared to cope with it” (14).

If change is inevitable and unavoidable, as most rightly contend (Drucker 73; Anderson, Dying 10; Ratliff 11), the key to successful change that does not leave one emotionally hamstrung is managing the process of change. Balancing this “natural process of disorientation and reorientation” is crucial to healthy change that is not debilitating (Bridges, Transitions 5).

Peter Drucker, the senior statesman of effective business leadership in our day is not content to speak simply of managing change. For Drucker, to try to corral and redirect inevitable change is misguided. A truly effective leader amid change needs to be “out front” leading the charge (73). Anything less leaves the leader-executive ineptly riding a treacherous wave he or she cannot control.

Yet Drucker’s emphasis on being a change leader actually coincides quite closely with those who use the common phrase, “managing change.” In both instances, the effective leader is largely regarded as one who functions as a “change agent” and who navigates with informed authority or “manages” turbulent times of change, both desired and imposed. As Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson contend in their cornerstone work, Management of Organizational Behavior, effective leadership amid change (desired and imposed) does not happen haphazardly; neither is it laissez-faire. Individuals effective in change management are able to “develop strategies to plan, direct and control change” (459).

Therefore, to speak of a change manager, change leader, or change agent is essentially to speak of the same person. Nonetheless, change leader and change agent provide the clearest language available since these terms designate a person who initiates and orchestrates change in a proactive sense rather than a reactive sense. As we shall see,

this quality becomes extremely important to “transformational leadership” that affects “deep change,” “second-order” change, and which constructs a “change climate.”

In his book, Leading Change, John Kotter maintains that no greater engine drives change than leadership (x). Management skills generally are comprised of a set of processes meant to keep things running smoothly and assuaging the upheaval or conflict of change. Leadership, conversely, “defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles” (Leading 25). True change agents and change leaders not only harness and manage inevitable change, but they also initiate and instigate it. In so doing, change agents reframe change, not as an obstacle to overcome, but an opportunity to exploit (Drucker 73). John Kotter illustrates this by quoting a CEO of a large European company who maintains that the task of the leader is to, “make the status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown” (“Why Transformation” 5). Succinctly said, change leaders create wanted change.

This change, however, does not happen through the isolated initiative of the change agent. In his book, Diffusion of Innovations, Everett Rogers makes clear that a symbiotic relationship and creative tension occurs between the change agent and those undergoing change (369). Change agents function in an indispensable role whereby change may not otherwise occur without their outside input. Yet, to gain credibility, the change agent must be perceived as competent, trustworthy and empathetic to the client’s needs and problems (337). In this way, he must function like a trusted leader who has been granted permission to lead. The conflict occurs because a change agent is generally perceived to be an outsider while the leader is viewed as an insider (27-28). Nonetheless,

these roles of outsider change agent and insider leader can be embodied by one person if the change agent leader adroitly and intentionally alternates between these functionally distinct roles.

Change agent leadership skills become most noticeable and necessary in enabling an organization or institution to change. This is because organizations, especially the Church, are notoriously aligned with the status quo (Anderson, Dying 110; Tichy and Devanna 72). In the past, most change leadership operated on the level of a transactional relationship (Ford 21; Lewis 6-7). This leadership promises a kind of exchange of rewards for desired performance. However, we live in an age when such transactional leadership cannot possibly keep up with a “period of rapid, large-scale and discontinuous change” (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 519). What has emerged is the need for “qualitatively different ways of thinking and doing” (519). Transforming an organization demands transformational leadership. James MacGregor Burns, an early pioneer of scholarship on leadership practice, was one of the first to speak of transformational leaders (22). Transformational leadership deals with far more than the external environment. Such leadership “includes realignment of the mission, strategy, structure, and systems, and it requires re-creation of the culture and behavioral processes of the organization as a whole” (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 521).

Being a change agent that leads transformational change requires more than describing a desired behavioral outcome. Much has been written in leadership literature about a clearly formulated and articulated vision that serves as a plan or script for the desired future of an organization (Bennis and Nanus 89; Reed 143-44; Barna 32; Nanus 8, 27; Kouzes and Posner 95; Malphurs, Strategic 141-42). However, even this can

remain very much on the surface. To truly effect change that enables and facilitates the thorough acceptance of new paradigms, one must know how to emotionally “transition” people, not merely “change” external behavior. Standardized, denominational, or organizational programs are not sufficient (Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 4). One must understand the principles of transitioning for effective change.

### **The Process of Change**

According to William Bridges, the most formidable challenge to effective organizational change is not outward, but inward.

#### **The Key: Transition, Not Change**

“Change” is situational: a new location, a different boss, a revised vision, a new policy but “transition” is the psychological process that people must go through in order to come to terms with a new situation (Bridges, Managing 3). So, when a great idea, which seems to be widely accepted falls flat, or people in an organization seem to undermine a needed change, what has not transpired generally is transition. Bridges says, “Unless *transition* occurs, *change* will not work” (Managing, 4). People need to be reoriented and make a major internal shift before any external change will be lasting.

The additional challenge is that most change agents have a natural propensity to focus heavily on the demonstrative outcome that change will produce (Bridges, Managing 4). Consequently, not enough is done to help people understand or emotionally prepare for change (Keener 2). This is exacerbated by the fact that inward psychological transition happens at a much slower rate than external situational change (Bridges, Managing 5). To be an effective change agent, one must understand that change and transition are two very different things; “change is external, transition is internal” (3).



## Transitioning

People are often surprised to find that effective transitioning does not begin with what is new but with what is old. All transitions begin with an ending (Bridges, Transitions 11). Whether people cognitively recognize it or not, people intuitively know that change involves loss (Bolman and Deal 394; Keener 21). To move to another part of the country involves a separation from a familiar area. A career change often necessitates the severing of regular daily relationships. Retirements discontinue patterns that were reliable, predictable, and which may have supplied feelings of affirmation and bolstered self-esteem. The birth of a first child, as wanted as it may be, marks the end of the way things once were, including personal freedoms.

After all, not only unwanted change elicits an ending that one must transition through but also desired change. When one marries after years of loneliness, or when children grow beyond their fussy, dependent toddler days—individuals grieve. They grieve because their “old life is gone” (Bridges, Transitions 11). People identify themselves with the circumstances of their lives, “both those we like and those we do not” (13). Facilitating transitions always begins, then, with the hard work of helping people recognize that they have to let go of the past before they can move into the future. Though it may seem that this is common sense, it is often obscured and camouflaged. The change agent who wants to move too quickly through this stage preempts the emotional preparation necessary to equip people to release the past and stand in the in-between before the future can possibly be realized. Additionally, William Bridges notes that some of the feelings people experience today “have nothing to do with the present ending, but come instead, from old associations” (15). This inner distress that is stirred

up by endings is resolved in three stages: disengagement, disidentification, and disenchantment

Disengagement is the process whereby a person is separated from a familiar place, social order, or habit (Bridges, Transitions 92). Some explicit event “triggers the transition: someone dies, someone is fired, someone moves” (Tichy and Devanna 64). People are cut off, willingly or unwillingly, from “the activities, the relationships, the settings or the roles that have been important to us” (Bridges, Transitions 93). Even though the events may be described by an outside observer as trivial, incidental, or purely symbolic, trying to persuade people experiencing disengagement that their loss is inconsequential is futile. All that a person knows viscerally, emotionally, or, on rare occasions, cognitively is that he or she has been cut off from the context or “cue-system which served to reinforce ... roles and patterns of behavior” (95-96). As long as a system is familiar and working, no matter how poorly, says William Bridges, imagining a “an alternative way of life and an alternative identity” is difficult (96).

The second stage of endings, disidentification, is not nearly as overt or easy to recognize as disengagement. In this stage, a person is internally reckoning with disruption to one’s identity. When a job ends, a spouse dies, a divorce ensues, the part of a person’s identity that was shaped and defined by work or marriage must be “recast to fit the new reality” (Tichy and Devanna 64). Being “Clyde’s wife” or a “bank manager” may no longer be valid or apt ascriptions. The process of disidentification is often long and laborious. It involves comparing the new relationship with the one that was lost. The more central a change is to a person’s identity, the more time the process of disidentification consumes. When churches begin a new service of worship with a

different style or format, often what follows is conversation about “how things used to be.” This is a clear indicator that the process of disidentification is not complete (Tichy and Devanna 64).

Feeling separated from one’s old identity and old situation but not quite acclimated to the new, ushers in the third dimension of ending called disenchantment. The third stage is the part of ending that has one feeling stuck, floating free in “a kind of limbo between two worlds” (Bridges, Transitions 98). People are generally emotionally unsettled because they still carry the assumptions and expectations of their former situation with them even though it is no longer operative. Consequently, a mood of disenchantment pervades. While this is normally uncomfortable and is perceived to be an indicator that something is wrong, it actually is “the signal that things are moving into transition” (101). Without this awareness, a person can miss the point and become pervasively disillusioned. Bridges says, “The disenchanted person moves on, but the disillusioned person stops and goes through the play again with new actors” (101).

While disenchantment may feel negative and, therefore, can be readily squashed by a change agent, it comprises a very important component of ending, by which healthy transitioning takes place. Refusing to acknowledge and come to grips with one’s losses and the austere pain of letting go is to pretend that past enchantments can be recaptured or recreated (Tichy and Devanna 65). Whether the change event is wanted or unwanted, one can never fully go back to the way things were in the past.

The second stage of transitioning, disidentification, has been referred to as “The Neutral Zone” (Bridges, Transitions 112). This stage is the unfamiliar stretch between what was and what is to be. There are times, especially in the business world, when the

demands and pressure to move rapidly into new frontiers preempts this stage. In an impatient society, personally and organizationally, people think all that is needed is the addition of external changes. “Let’s get on with it,” “forget about the past,” “let bygones be bygones” are the mantras of our day (Tichy and Devanna 69). Moreover, in a day of compulsive doing, this apparently unproductive time of being “between dreams” and “in a place without a name” is suspect of being unproductive (Bridges, Transitions 112, 114). According to Noel Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, authors of The Transformational Leader, organizations that desire transformation and revitalization cannot ultimately do this without a neutral zone (70).

At this stage an individual or organization learns to feel good about being “removed from the old connections, bereft of the old identities, and stripped of the old reality” (Bridges, Transitions 112). At this stage people and organizations can truly leave the past behind and learn new habits. The climate for innovation is most pronounced (Managing 6).

Such a place, however, is not only filled with excitement about what might be but also the fearfulness of how to get there. The frightening nature of the neutral zone has been compared to “standing in the middle of a busy highway with the traffic going in both directions” (Tichy and Devanna 70). According to Bridges, people who have understood this stage best are religious organizations, human service agencies, and non-Western countries. They realize that “transformation is essentially a death and rebirth process rather than one of mechanical modification” (Transitions 119). Not rushing the apparent chaos of this stage allows time for sufficient energy to germinate for a new beginning.

The final stage of transitioning is making a new beginning. In a culture preoccupied with external, demonstrative, immediate change, this third stage is often presumed to be the first. Our mechanistic society inclines us to believe that change occurs with the flip of a switch or the turn of a key ( Bridges, Transitions 134). Organizations in particular are most egregious at this. More often than not they preempt necessary endings, deny neutral zones, and then “wonder why people have so much difficulty with change” (Managing 6). The transition process, however, involves an inner realignment and renewal of energy that requires both an authentic grieving of losses as well as a purposeful consideration of future possibilities. Then, as Noel Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna maintain,

The individual has made the necessary adjustments to changing circumstances and is able to release the energy needed to deal with the new situation. People are truly excited about the possibilities. They have managed to unhook themselves from behaviors, patterns, and attitudes that need to be left behind, and they have started to write new scripts that contain new behaviors and attitudes. (71)

According to William Bridges, distinguishing between a real, new beginning and a simple defensive reaction to an ending is important (Transitions 144). Genuine beginnings arise from within a person even when they are elicited by external occurrences (145). Such beginnings include a thoughtful understanding of one’s own resolve as well as identification of the source of one’s resistance. The steps to making a new beginning include,

1. *Stop getting ready to act.* Of course, to launch any new habit or endeavor preparations are necessary. However, a new beginning is distinguished by the resolve to actually commence and discontinue preparations. From a cautionary standpoint, one

must understand that one form inner resistance takes is to make “just a few more (and then more and more) preparations (Transitions 145);

2. *Identify yourself with the final result of the new beginning.* Imagine what the desired outcome will look and feel like. This step is a kind of rehearsing of the outcome desired. In so doing, a person is able to intentionally integrate a new identity;

3. *Avoid a preoccupation with results.* This may sound in conflict with the previous step, but is meant to mitigate the temptation to be so goal-oriented that one cannot incorporate the more mundane steps that it takes to reach one’s goal; and,

4. *Finally, diffuse one’s purpose and transfer it from the goal to the process of reaching the goal.* At the point of action, external conduct may obscure the fact that internal “identification and engagement occur slowly” (Transitions 148). When the outer change is complete, the inner beginnings are still going on.

### **Deep Change and Organizational Change**

In his book Deep Change, Robert E. Quinn suggests that when most people talk about change, they are referring to incremental change that is the result of rational analysis and the planning process (3). Such change is often the result of a strategic plan, and while desirable, is often limited in scope and reversible. Incremental change does not always change or disrupt established patterns and may often be a logical extension of the past.

Deep change, however, seeks the kind of change that results in “new ways of thinking and behaving” (Quinn 3). Deep change is “major in scope, discontinuous with the past and generally irreversible” (3). Such change often involves usurping existing patterns of conduct, taking risks, surrendering control and feeling on the surface that one

is making a “terrifying choice” (3). In their acclaimed book, Built to Last, authors James Collins and Jerry Porras attempted to ascertain the “timeless principles” that separated exceptional, visionary companies from other good and even outstanding companies (17). Among the principles they discovered were “learning organizations” that institutionalize continuous improvement and learning. In this sense, such companies have institutionalized deep change. They are capable not only of incremental, planned, and strategic change, but they have created an environment that is able to reinvent, reengineer, and rethink itself.

In the past this was often referred to as the difference between first-order change and second-order change. First-order change has to do with continuous change within “a stable system that itself remains unchanged” (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 468). In the words of church growth consultant Lyle Schaller, it has more to do with tinkering than deep systemic change (Strategies 90). Second-order change occurs, however, when “the fundamental properties or states of the system are changed” (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson 469). Second-order change is far more than adaptive, incremental and evolutionary change. Such change might be described as revolutionary, metamorphic, and a kind of quantum speciation. Simply said, such deep change allows an existing organization to give birth to a new way of thinking, being and behaving that is unencumbered by the past.

In essence, second-order change is “change of change.” That is, the methodology of how change transpires is altered (Watzlawick, Weakland, and Fisch 11). According to Quinn, deep change ceases to originate from the outside and top-down and begins to emerge from the inside bottom-up (8). At the same time, “an important link between

deep change at the personal level and deep change at the organizational level” begins to take place (9).

### **Change Agent and Transformational Leader as Linkers**

At this point, during the change of change, a transformational leader’s role within an organization becomes most pronounced. Change agents usually differ from the organizations or clients they serve. Such peculiarity is called heterophily (Rogers 346). The change agent himself has become adroit at deep change. As many have espoused, change begins with the change agent (Quinn 8). Whether from the temperament and skill-set of an innovator or early adapter, the change agent is a leader and creator of change (Rogers 262). Consequently, the change agent possesses many of the skills and attributes necessary to implement deep change: an ability to take substantial risks, to think outside and deviate from the prescribed rules, policies, procedures, assumptions, rules and paradigms (Quinn 4-5, 7), development and presentation of a compelling vision (19), decisive confrontation of difficult situations (21), courageous commitment to personal change (33), abandonment of the reflexive need for stability and predictability (43), and an ability to realign one’s paradigm or action-path (46).

According to Everett M. Rogers in his book, Diffusion of Innovations, the primary role of the change agent is to be a “linker” (336). That is, the change agent must have “one foot in each of two worlds” (336)—the prevailing way things are done and deep change necessary for a vital future. This corresponds directly with the observation made by Peter Drucker in his book, Management Challenges for the 21st Century. One of the primary functions a change agent has in facilitating deep, systemic, organizational and second-order change is to become a kind of bridge between continuity and change



(90). In this way, the change agent not only provides the impetus for needed deep change but also simultaneously addresses the need for continuity, which enhances people's ability to transition. Drucker says, "Change and continuity are thus *poles* rather than opposites" (90). This balancing act of providing bridges between continuity and change may be thought of as the greatest challenge for a change agent as he attempts to successfully enhance another's ability to transition effectively, particularly in established organizations. In the case of the Church, Lyle Schaller asserts that "the unprecedented degree of discontinuity with the past," between 1958 and 1998, has been the Church's greatest challenge (Discontinuity 17). Thus, the strategies to accomplish this "bridging" require an ability to reach into the past for continuity yet evoke the kind of change that is not only perceived as, but is in actuality, discontinuous, second-order change.

### **Transition Strategies**

Strategies for assisting individuals and organizations in the process of transitioning, facilitating deep change, is a tricky matter. This is because the change agent must dynamically balance the need to be practically helpful without formalizing any methodology in such a way that it inhibits future change. According to Christian Schwarz, this can happen when "anachronistic behavior that has become established is implicitly or explicitly made into a standard for all" in such a way that reliable, useful traditions become entrenched traditionalism (Paradigm Shift 153). Because mechanistic organisms and organizations rather than learning ones are spawned in these instances, deep change is suffocated not enlivened. To use Drucker's analogy, change leaders need to inspire change yet provide continuity (90).

Knowledge becomes one of the most useful tools of the "linking" change agent.

Drucker maintains, “people need to know where they stand. They need to know the values and the rules” (90). Indeed, Drucker asserts that the edge of balancing change and continuity requires continuous dissemination of information. Information is absolutely critical especially when change is not incremental, when change is more than improvement, and when something is truly new. Anyone hoping to be effective as a change leader must realize that the first rule is “no surprises” (92).

### **Values-based Leadership**

In times of deep change discontinuous with the past, people need to affirm continuity of core values in their change initiatives. In his book, Values-Driven Leadership, Aubrey Malphurs asserts that values help to define an organization or church’s identity assuaging “change overload” (14, 20). “People can only handle so much change over a short time before it leaves them feeling emotionally impotent” (20). Indeed, rapid change can actually result in individuals feeling physically ill especially when it involves people or matters very important to them (20; Ratliff 12). Malphurs says, “Core values serve as the glue and guiding force” that hold visionary organizations together in the midst of transition (Values-Driven 20).

Thomas Bandy warns that core values must be carefully identified and scrutinized. After all, core values make normative behavior “predictable” (Moving 144). However, core values must not be presumed to be just “ideals toward which ... participants strive, but real preferences,” demonstrated in how individuals and organizations actually behave (144). Once core values become clear, they serve as the “constants” amid unprecedented change (Malphurs, Values-Driven 34).

In his book, Leading Change: The Argument for Values-Based Leadership, James

O' Toole asserts that effective change leadership must be moral and values-based never situational or contingent (12). Not only does this brand of leadership elicit trust and thereby generate the most effective long-term change leadership, but it does so because it is inherently cohesive (14). Values-based leadership provides continuous cohesion amid discontinuous change in several ways:

1. Creates a moral bond with followers (15);
2. Inspires those being led to involvement, until they become the leaders of the desired change (emotional enlistment) (14);
3. Does not demean those most directly affected by change by only acknowledging that the change is the “right thing to do.” Rather, values based leadership acknowledges personal losses but also illuminates individual benefits (13); and,
4. Provides a “values-based umbrella large enough to accommodate the various interests of followers but focused enough to direct all their energies in pursuit of a common good” (xi).

### **Paradigm Shifting**

Another information sharing methodology for bridging discontinuous change with people's need for continuity is to make the paradigm shift explicit. In his book, Paradigms, Joel Arthur Barker defines paradigms as a set of rules and regulations that establish or define boundaries which tell individuals how to behave (within the boundaries) in order to be successful (32). The word paradigm comes from the Greek *paradeigm*, meaning “model, pattern, example” (31). Everyone operates on the basis of a paradigm, whether by his or her worldview or accepted job practices. People may or may not be aware of the paradigms by which they live. Organizations can be explicit or

implicit about their paradigmatic expectations, but they will operate on the basis of paradigms.

When a person or organization switches to another paradigm possessing new boundaries and consequent expectations for behavior, it is called a “paradigm shift” (Barker 37; Murren 72). Such shifts can be continuous with the past, but often they are discontinuous such as the most revolutionary manufacturing paradigm shift of this century, from planned obsolescence to “quality-control and continuous-improvement” (Barker 129). These paradigm shifts usually result from the influence of a change agent or, according to Barker, an “outsider” (55). Such outsiders do not necessarily have to be from outside an organization but rather outside the confines of thinking (or paradigm) of the organization. Four archetypes depict such outsiders from within an organization:

1. A young person fresh out of training,
2. An older person shifting fields,
3. A maverick insider who understands the present paradigm but is not restricted by it, and
4. Tinkerers who unknowingly shift paradigms by attempting to solve the functional problems that change presents (57-65).

According to Barker, leadership is integral to paradigm shifting. While a manager might be able to improve the climate of receptivity to a paradigm shift, a leader elicits followers. “A leader is a person you will follow to a place you wouldn’t go by yourself” (163). Consequently, the change agent leader provides the explicit cognitive bridge between operative paradigms. Barker says, “You manage within a paradigm. You lead between paradigms” (164).

This becomes enormously important because, as Adam Smith said in his book Powers of the Mind, a paradigm is “a shared set of assumptions” (19). Thus, by presenting the new paradigm, a change leader provides the cognitive-informational model, which is often discontinuous with the past, while explicitly providing a set of shared assumptions that provides emotional cohesion continuous with the past. In the book, The Tactics of Change, any conceptual map is understood to be “provisional” or “a tool to help someone find his way from one place to another” (Fisch, Weakland, and Segal 7). Even in the personal-therapeutic relationship, one of the “metaview” roles of the therapist is to successfully enable the client to switch maps or paradigms which more progressively approach the truth (10-11), but the emotional bridge necessitates the acknowledged change of one map to another.

### **The Genius of “AND”—The Language of Unity**

Deep change and paradigm shifts can be strident departures from past practice. As previously established, while deep change does contribute to future viability, it also contributes to cognitive dissonance. In other words, paradigm shifting deep-change tends to inherently cause feelings of emotional disjointedness. However, in their book, Built to Last, James Collins and Jerry Porras conclude after six years of research that the companies most effective at reinventing themselves and implementing deep change do not get into an “either or mentality” (43). Ironically, their paradigm shifting does not include the assumption that many companies make, that one paradigm is “against” another. Collins and Porras document how such a presumption can inhibit or preclude the needed paradigm for second-order change. For instance, the following paradigms have long been represented as mutually-exclusive aims:

- You can have change OR stability,
- You can be conservative OR bold,
- You can have low cost OR high quality,
- You can have creative autonomy OR consistency and control,
- You can invest for the future OR do well in the short-term,
- You can make progress by methodical planning OR by opportunistic groping,
- You can create wealth for your shareholders OR do good for the world, and
- You can be idealistic (values-driven) OR pragmatic (profit-driven) (43-44).

However, what began in the 1950s when Edward Deming introduced the concepts of “quality control” and “continuous-improvement” to Japanese manufacturing, was the awareness that a paradigm shift could be both/and not just either/or (Barker 129; Collins and Porras 44). Consequently, the “Tyranny of the OR” was abdicated for the “Genius of the AND” (44). Integration of formally presumed opposite axioms was now functionally possible. Short-term and long-term goals were no longer presumed to be adversarial nor a matter of incremental balance (44). Companies discovered that these seemingly divergent aims could not only be cohesive and coterminous but complementary:

- Purpose beyond profit AND pragmatic pursuit of profit,
- A relatively fixed core ideology AND vigorous change and movement,
- Conservatism around the core AND bold, committing, risky moves,
- Clear vision and a sense of direction AND opportunistic groping and experimentation,
- Big hairy audacious goals AND incremental evolutionary progress,

- Selection of managers steeped in the core AND selection of managers that induce change,
- Ideological control AND operational autonomy,
- Extremely tight culture (almost cult-like) AND ability to change, move, and adapt,
- Investment for the long-term AND demands for the short-term performance,
- Philosophical, visionary, futuristic AND superb daily execution, “nuts and bolts,” and
- Organization aligned with a core ideology AND organizations adapted to its environment (44).

Thus, the continuity within discontinuous change sometimes happens by a process of developing a paradigm that is a product of the genius of the AND. In their book, Growing Spiritual Redwoods, William Easum and Thomas Bandy identify this characteristic of change processes as one of the features of successful twenty-first century churches (23). Likewise, such a methodology for providing continuity amid discontinuous change has been mentioned in regard to individual therapy. Thomas Keeney asserts, “Many of the distinctions therapists argue about are actually the two sides of a complementary relationship” (3). Consequently, what is needed is a bridge for “dichotomies too long considered opposites” (3). From a theological standpoint, Hans Kung maintains that “*several* theologies are possible within a *single* paradigm” (Kung and Tracy 215).

Easum and Bandy demonstrate the genius of the AND in a comparison of

“Deadlocked Christendom” churches with what they refer to as twenty-first century “Creative Spiritual Redwoods” churches (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1**  
**THE GENIUS OF AND**

<i>Deadlocked Christendom</i>		<i>Creative Spiritual Redwoods</i>	
<b>Either</b> “liberal”	<b>or</b>	“conservative”	Faith-sharing activists
<b>Either</b> the human Jesus	<b>or</b>	the divine Christ	The mysterious paradox of the incarnation
<b>Either</b> traditional	<b>or</b>	nontraditional worship	Indigenous, multitruacked worship
<b>Either</b> bureaucracy	<b>or</b>	anarchy	Creative Chaos
<b>Either</b> committees	<b>or</b>	task groups	Cell groups and ministry teams
<b>Either</b> clergy	<b>or</b>	laity	Multiple, equipped lay ministries
<b>Either</b> leaders	<b>or</b>	followers	Leadership events
<b>Either</b> dictators	<b>or</b>	enablers	Spiritual midwives

Source: Growing Spritual Redwoods, William Easum and Thomas Bandy (209)

The cohesive value of this approach has long been known in linguistics. G. B. Caird identifies five purposes of words: (1) Informative, (2) Cognitive, (3) Performative or Causative, (4) Expressive or Evocative, (5) Cohesive ( Caird 7). Cohesive language inherently builds rapport.

Visionaries typically use performative or causative language because it tends to be more precise in describing what a behavioral outcome should look like. However, such language, according to Caird, inherently communicates validity or invalidity, rightness or wrongness (8). No wonder so many churches get hung up instituting change



when they describe services of worship as progressive, contemporary, or traditional.

People are inherently divided. One church, instead, talked about using “the full language of praise,” or “a varied diet of music,” and most people did not identify “their music” and “mine” (Wesley UMC, Wausau, WI). Both/and paradigms as well as language can provide continuous familiarity and cohesion in the midst of discontinuous change.

### **Empowerment**

In his book, Leading Change, John P. Kotter maintains that contrary to some popular belief, change does not come primarily from “a single larger-than-life person” (51). Rather, effective change agents galvanize support into a guiding coalition which then elevates transformation beyond a solo effort into “a powerful force required to sustain the process” (Kotter, Leading 51; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 47). Ken Blanchard, John P. Carlos, and Alan Randolph contend that such a principle of “empowerment” unleashes the “internal motivation to accomplish tasks for the organization” in individuals (x). Calvin Miller adds that such a strategy establishes a “chemistry of Oneness” (53). Thus the continuity amid change expresses itself in “Three Varieties of Corporate Oneness:”

- Leadership Oneness—We Stand With the Leader,
  - Community Oneness—We Stand with the Corporation, and
  - Spiritual Oneness—We do not stand with anyone. We belong to each other
- (54).

James Kouzes and Barry Posner in The Leadership Challenge similarly assert that change leadership “isn’t about imposing the leader’s solo dream; it’s about developing a shared sense of destiny” (124). When this happens, vision for change extends beyond

any one individual and is owned by many, elevating group dynamics to what some have called a kind of “communion,” whereby trust and openness are substantially increased, thus “facilitating change processes” (Kanfer and Goldstein 517). From an emotional standpoint, individuals are more than cajoled or enlisted. They are voluntarily enrolled (Kouzes and Posner 124). Consequently, “their own interests and aspirations are aligned with the vision and can thereby become mobilized to commit their individual energies to its realization” (124). Empowerment then becomes far more than a set of techniques. It is “partnership” that by its very nature possesses a cohesive quality (Block xv). Indeed, Donald Seibert contends that in the church, “autocratic leaders” consolidate ministry in their person thereby making continuity difficult, particularly for successors (Shelley 226-27). However, those who empower others by developing the common vision, strategies, and plans avert unnecessary conflict (225-26). Robert Quinn refers to such enthusiastic teams which “work cohesively in trusting relationships” as those who sustain “the transformational cycle” (161).

### **Establishing a Change Climate**

Empowerment is a potent force for change. Change itself is so emotionally draining and inherently disorienting that it can seldom be accomplished alone in a way that has a lasting impact on an organization (Senge xv). Indeed, “it can occur only within a community of learners” (Senge xv). Yet even a community may not be enough. Douglas Walrath maintains that in an organization such as the Church, a new set of procedures or a new program may take years to “penetrate deeply” into the ongoing experience of the Church (123). As Leith Anderson says, “All institutions have a natural tendency to resist change, especially religious institutions” (Dying 110; Lewis 130). This

is because change, by its very nature, will “alter the institution” (Anderson, Dying 112). Self-preservation settles into organizations whether they are aware of it or not. A morass of obstructionism and resistance can prevail even amid institutions peppered by change agents...that is, unless change itself can somehow be “institutionalized.”

John Kotter maintains that for transformational change to extend beyond a change agent, a guiding coalition, and even the deep change reconstituting the way an organization thinks and behaves, change must be anchored in the culture (145-58). This is what Richard Beckhard and Wendy Pritchard refer to as “changing the essence” of an organization until regular fundamental change is seen as normative and conditions exist in the corporate milieu to reinforce change (46-48, 94-95). A learning organization becomes a change organization (14).

Many people have long decried “change for change sake,” rightly asserting that not all change is progress. However, in an organization with a change culture, the former axiom is erroneous. Organizations with frequent, recurrent change foster and institutionalize a mindset that is receptive to change (Anderson, Dying 145-46). Keith Taylor refers to this as the “fresh paint” mentality. Change cultures develop an “expectancy” that some kind of change will regularly occur—at the very least, a fresh coat of paint.

John Kotter asserts that such anchoring in a change culture should not be underestimated. Without it, corporations frequently relapse and regress (Leading 148). Yet a change culture can only arise “at the end,” after deep change results in altered behaviors and attitudes (156). In relation to churches, Thomas Bandy describes this as a “systemic change” that enables churches not to fear, manipulate, control, and bemoan

ever accelerating change but to seize and surf chaos (Chaos 16, 11-12).

Churches that develop a culture that is “change-friendly” possess distinguishing characteristics (Murren 85). These organizations foster innovation not just invention (Schaller, Change 53). Organizations that are inventive, as positive as that quality is, generally are reactive in remedying problems. Innovative organizations possess an “open-ended view of the future” which elicits new unforced strategies (53). These new ways of thinking and behaving germinate spontaneously in an environment that is future-focused and perpetuates change (55). Peter Senge refers to this as an organization that institutionally makes it “safe” for people to create visions (172). Such a value is distinguished as part of the culture because it is continually reinforced.

Lyle Schaller contends that organizations with a change-culture also know how to “freeze the change,” that is institutionalize new behaviors and attitudes (Change 114-18). Kotter refers to this as a replacement of an old culture with a new one (Leading 154). Senge speaks of a new dogma that institutionalizes the value of continual learning and a willingness to adopt new mental models that more capably address any situation at hand (181). However, this new dogma is characterized by an implicit and explicit openness to change and innovation. Thus, a healthy syncopation is established between “freezing” and “unfreezing” change (Beckhard and Pritchard 14).

Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal in their book, Reframing Organizations, also offer some distinguishing characteristics of organizations that are capable of reframing change:

1. They never invest in change without collateral investments in training (376);
2. A systems or holistic approach toward change is embraced. It is never assumed that changes for one will not mean changes for another (381, 401);

3. Divisive issues are turned into shared agreements by bringing them out into the open, or *arena* (387); and,

4. Powerlessness, confusion, conflict, and loss due to change are openly acknowledged and “blessed” through rites of mourning or transition rituals (391, 397).

John Kotter likewise offers distinguishing characteristics of anchoring change in a culture:

1. Comes last, not first: Most alterations in norms and shared values come at the end of the transformation process;

2. Depends on results: New approaches usually sink into a culture only after they clearly work and are superior to old methods;

3. Requires a lot of talk: Without verbal instruction and support, people are often reluctant to admit the validity of new practices;

4. May involve turnover: Sometimes the only way to change a culture is to change key people; and,

5. Makes decisions on succession crucial: If promotion processes are not changed to be compatible with the new practices, the old culture will reassert itself (Leading 157).

### **A Theology of Change**

While the Bible nowhere treats change as a theological entity, change is everywhere present in the pages of scripture.

#### **The Bible, Change, and the Nature of God**

God calls Abraham to a covenant relationship with these words, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you” (Gen.12:1, NIV). God was asking Abraham to change, as a venture of faith, and move

from what he knew to what was unknown. Abraham was invited to leave his homeland, familiar customs, and extended family and travel to an unknown land. When the people of Israel accepted the Ten Commandments from the hand of Moses on God's behalf, they were codifying normative behavior as well as distinguishing themselves (as a matter of identity) from neighboring peoples: in essence, changing (Hals 65). When the prophets spoke for God, they did so not only to affirm the people as God's chosen ones but more often to implore them to "repent," to turn away from behavior that was offensive and egregious to God (Buttrick 897). They were being told to change.

Jesus frequently pronounced, "You have heard it said, but I say to you" (Matt. 5:38, RSV). In so doing, he was announcing that what people valued and focused on was not fully aligned with God's priorities and, therefore needed to change. Jesus was not willing to simply "settle for external compliance with the Decalogue" (Dale 52). Moreover, Jesus' invitation to follow him often included the implicit suggestion that such an endeavor would alter people's standard way of relating to profession or family (Matt. 4:19, 8:22).

Jesus stated that "unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom" (Matt. 18:3-4, RSV). To Nicodemus, Jesus said, "You must be born anew" (John 3:7, RSV). In both instances, Jesus' words reflect a change or turn that constitutes a new beginning or a new birth not of human origin. Of course, Paul encouraged the Corinthians by speaking of the ultimate and final change of our frail, imperfect, perishable bodies into glorious resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15). John likewise envisioned a day when "a new heaven and a new earth" would consume all the transience of this life (Rev. 21:1, NIV).

Change is found everywhere in the narratives of Scripture. Indeed, in his process-theology book, God and Change, J. Van der Veken contends that change is the tension woven throughout Scripture. While God may be referred to as changeless and immutable, the functional reality is that God must “change” in order to be personalistic, that is, to relate didactically to people (226). This is the only way to reconcile a biblical witness that claims both, “For I the Lord do not change” (Mal. 3:6, RSV) and “The Lord will repent of the evil which he pronounced against you” (Jer. 26:13, RSV). In one instance, the Scriptures speak of the essential nature and character of God, and in another they reflect God’s relationship with fickle humanity (Douglas and Tenney 853; Wood 1007).

At first this may appear contradictory. However, process theologian Charles Hartshorne refers to this as “God’s dipolarity” or “dual transcendence” (qtd. in Van der Veken 227-28). In other words, God’s person possesses both an abstract and a concrete quality. “Neither can be comprehended apart from the other” (226). Moreover, “the concrete aspect *includes* the abstract and not the other way round” (226). In part, this dichotomy is a result of the restrictiveness and inadequacy of human understanding and communication; however, it is more than that. “The distinction is ontological: God *is* [original emphasis] dipolar, not just our way of referring to him” (227). This is consistent with the classical theistic belief in the transcendence of God. Yet it acknowledges, functionally, that we serve a living God who is not abstract, who relates to frail, mutable, inconsistent and sinful people in a transient world. Consequently, the changelessness and transcendence of God is expressed in ways that reveal God’s accompanying didactic personalism and immanence.

In a more concrete way of expressing this, Ver der Veken points to how “the universe keeps changing, yet we can refer to its changeless activity” and how individuals undergo numerous changes yet retain a coherent identity with the past (226). So, in the Scriptures we see evidence that God ordains, desires, and blesses change, a reality substantiated in God’s own character that is always personal, never impersonal.

### **Natural Change and Life-Cycles**

Change is a part of the natural created order. Life cycles are created by God. In the book of Ecclesiastes the wisdom writer proclaims, “To everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die” (Eccl. 3:1-2, RSV). His poetic wisdom reflects a truth begun in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden, it inaugurated a cycle that is common to all of life. Having eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, humanity was prevented from partaking of the tree of life and thus from living forever (Gen. 3:22). Consequently, beginnings and endings, life and death, are endemic to our existence. Between the endcaps of our lives we struggle, grow, and subsist. Even of Jesus the Gospel writer said, “he *increased* [emphasis mine] in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52, RSV). J. Bill Ratliff asserts that change is an “organic part of creation” (13). To have beginnings and endings means that change, or growth, was built into the creative order by God’s design. Change, therefore, is an instrument God uses to deepen, strengthen, and impart life to us. Jesus spoke of loving the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The Scriptures attest to the truth that those who are in vital relationship with God are also those who are growing in grace. God “creates, sustains, guides and renews us” (13). Therefore, we need not fear change. Change is a



part of the natural life cycle created by God.

Organizations also have cycles (Senge 23). Changes are, thus, often a part of the phase or cycle that an organization is undergoing. Such change is incremental, ongoing, and inescapable. Leith Anderson in his book, A Church for the 21st Century, states that the Church also has life-cycles (241). Understanding these cycles will enable the Church to effectively manage the conflict of unavoidable change.

### **Transitioning Change**

The Scriptures are also replete with stories of those who had to make internal, emotional transitions to accompany external change. For them, as for us, the transitioning consisted of endings, a neutral zone, and new beginnings. Perhaps the most vivid example of this transition involved the Exodus. The people of Israel were stuck and enslaved in Egypt. Their entrance into Egyptian life, however, was not through slavery. During the time of a great seven-year famine in all the lands, the Hebrews came to Egypt in a quest for food (Gen. 42). Without knowing it, the sons of Jacob negotiated with their brother Joseph, who they had previously sold into slavery. God used this most ironic turn of events to confirm a dream that had been given to Joseph and as a means of providing sustenance for the Hebrew people.

The Scriptures report that “there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph” (Exod. 1:8, RSV). The Pharaoh, unacquainted with Joseph, was threatened by the size and strength of the children of Israel. Therefore, he put above them heavy-handed taskmasters and increased their burdens. The Israelites were enslaved. Moses heard the despondency of the people who “groaned under their bondage, and cried out for help” (Exod. 2:23, RSV)

While the people desperately wanted to leave Egypt, once the ending had taken place and Moses led them to the brink of the Red Sea, they were no longer sure they wanted to persist. The Scriptures report the people of Israel asking Moses,

Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. (Exod. 14: 11-12, RSV)

This is the classic grieving, immobilization, anger, second guessing and bargaining exhibited by those who are dealing with loss—even a loss of something they did not like (Conner 132-34). People begin idealizing the familiar over the unfamiliar even when they are desperately trying to change.

The Israelites, upon passing through the Red Sea, are jubilant. They believe, like us, that change only requires a simple transaction of one thing for another. They underestimate the neutral zone, or a wilderness. While the Israelites are in the wilderness, they vacillate numerous times between wanting to return to what they had versus the desired outcome or change embodied by the Promised Land (Exod. 16:3, 17:3). Although their time in the wilderness is prolonged by their disobedience in refusing to trust the report of Caleb and Joshua, in the wilderness the people finally let go of their yearning for the familiar Egypt in favor of their yearning for an unfamiliar Promised Land.

J. Bill Ratliff contends that the Scriptures repeatedly use the wilderness as a place of transition between an ending and a new beginning (64). The wilderness was a place of refuge and reflection as Jesus wrestled with “questions of personal identity and personal vocation” (64; Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13). Elijah also ventured into the

wilderness at a time when he was angry with the people of Israel and worried about Jezebel's threats to kill him (1 Kings 19). Moreover, the Apostle Paul spent time in the desert following his Damascus road conversion (Acts 9).

The wilderness is used repeatedly in Scripture as an "in-between" place (Ratliff 64). As such, it is a place where disrupted routines accentuate unresolved issues that can be dealt with, or a person or people can be purged of the old and primed for the new. Robert Cohn, in his book, The Shape of Sacred Space, refers to the biblical use of wilderness as "a typical metaphor for the liminal phase of rites of passage" (13). From a negative standpoint, the wilderness refers to an unruly place filled with treacherous adversities, from nomadic outlaws to wild animals. However, the wilderness, though desolate, is "also the site of divine protection and favor" (14). Precisely "this combination of positive and negative characteristics makes the wilderness period ... typical of phenomena of transition" (14).

By the time the Israelites entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, they had transitioned sufficiently through an ending and a neutral zone and they were now energized for the new beginning at hand. Perhaps only this transitioning equipped them to fight so vigorously for the land, or be prepared to employ such unconventional methodologies of battle (Josh. 6). Effective internal transitioning, and not merely external change, generally occurs in this way.

### **Deep Change and Regeneration**

The Scriptures also speak of personal change that might be characterized as deep change. Theologically, this change is referred to as "regeneration." While the word regeneration itself only occurs twice in Scripture (Wood 1005), biblically such change is

articulated as a “new birth” (R. Taylor 445; Wood 1005; Douglas and Tenney 851). A variety of other phrases are also used to communicate the same truth: “to beget,” “to give birth to,” “to beget again,” “to bring again to birth,” “to make alive with” and “a new creation” (Wood 1005). Such change is not “change by reformation” and gradation (Adams 8). Rather, regeneration is the reconstituting of people’s affections, outlook, and direction, referred to in Scripture as the inward change of heart (R. Taylor 445). As such, deep personal change occurs in an individual “irrevocably altering his governing disposition, and restoring him to a true experiential knowledge in Christ” (Douglas and Tenney 851). Change, discontinuous with the past, occurs in the life of the believer, resulting in “new patterns of incentive and motivation” (R. Taylor 445), enabling a person to walk in “newness of life” (Rom. 6:4, RSV). Such salvific regeneration results in an “actual change in the person” (Meistad 4).

Jesus said, “unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom” (Matt.18:3-4, NIV). The Greek word used for “change” or “turn” is *straphete*. As a strict passive verb this suggests a change that cannot be brought on by oneself (Stauffer 61). This new birth, as John 3:3-6 indicates, is supernatural, not of human origin.

Moreover, time and again the New Testament testifies to the growing Christian’s need and invitation to be personally “transformed.” While this is not a matter of people’s own production, it certainly is aided by people’s participation. This is what is meant by being “partakers of the divine nature,” (2 Pet. 1:4, RSV). Theologically this is understood as “sanctification” (Musser and Price 428-29; Komonchak, Collins, and Lane 931-33; Buttrick 210-13). Justification is what God does *for* us, but sanctification is what

God does *in us*. Justification reflects *imputed* grace whereas sanctification demonstrates *imparted* grace (Meistad 4). While God utilizes our active participation in this growing process, sanctification must be clearly delineated from any sense that this is a work done for God. It is not. If we are truly “co-workers with God” and sanctification is a participation *with* God, not a work *for* God, from an organizational-business standpoint, this process might be referred to as the “practice of team learning.” In his book, The Fifth Discipline, Peter Senge insists that individual learners, no matter how talented, do not produce team learning. This is unmistakably a “team skill” acquired through progressive, repeated practice (257). Although mired in business-speak, this is an appropriate understanding of the process of Christian sanctification. A person, teamed with Christ through his immanent presence, empowered by the power of the Holy Spirit, progressively growing in this team relationship, learns His ways.

Christian transformation, while always beginning with the sovereign spark of God’s Spirit, is always progressive and ongoing. The Christ-follower is called to be continually renewed, by the renewing of one’s mind (Rom. 12:2). In so doing, people’s lives are simultaneously aligned with the will of God. As in the learning organization spoken about by Senge, our learning collaboration with God results in our increased ability to discern God’s good, acceptable, and perfect will (Rom.12:2). Functionally in the personal setting, this is deep change. Change permeates to the core of one’s being, resulting in new behavior discontinuous with the past.

John Murray states that this is “deep-seated and permanent change wrought by the process of renewal ... a process of revolutionary change in ... the center of consciousness” (114). Again, this transformation reflects the ever-increasing glory of God and

Christlikeness revealed in us (2 Cor. 3:18). The Greek verb used for “transformed” in this passage, as well as Romans 12:2 is *metamorphoo* (Bruce 214). Its root, *morphe*, means the basic element of anything, or inner form which remains constant (Stauffer 61; Bence 200). Consequently, the change wrought extends to people’s deepest core or structure. While not all scholars accept a precise hairsplitting over exact distinctions in the locus of outward and inward change (Cranfield 605-609), all accept this metamorphosis, also used to describe Jesus’ transfiguration, as “profound transformation” (605) that changes one’s form (Bullinger 143), reflecting the glory of God (Candlish 70). Such a transformation, while it may be inaugurated in a moment, must “continue indefinitely” (Cranfield 607; Candlish 69). As one is not passive but an active “sharer” in the Spirit’s pressure, one is conformed to God’s will, not the standards of this world (Cranfield 608-609; Bruce 212). Thus, the Apostle Paul calls for daily change in the essential nature or character of the person, a deep inward change of personality resulting in congruence with God’s original design for humanity in Adam and Eve (Barclay 157-58). Salvific regeneration and the process of ongoing sanctification result in the “restoration of the image of God” through this new creation (Meistad 4-6).

Arnold L. Stauffer says,

As one contemplates the image of Christ, one is continually being transformed into that image. This life-long process is a restoring of the original image marred through the fall of the first Adam. The process is essentially the work of Christ as he provides the sustenance to enable the body’s growth (John Stott 1986:171). The goal is to be molded into “the image of the second Adam, the Archetype of regenerate humanity” (E.K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce 1982:96). The goal of the Christian in the restoration process is to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ,” to “grow up into him.” (62)

Ultimately this regeneration, continued throughout one’s life through the process

of sanctification, culminates in the new creation after a person's death and final resurrection "in a twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52, RSV). At that time, this corruptible earth is swallowed up by the culmination of God's redemption and restoration in "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1, NIV).

### **Systemic-Organizational, Second-Order Change**

Deep personal change facilitated by a change agent will result in deep systemic or organizational change. But, as most transformational leadership experts agree, deep change that results in changed systems of thinking and behaving begins with the individual (Quinn 8).

Change is endemic to the Church. The essence of the Christian Church is an organization born of God that has a transforming influence on people. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20, RSV). The Church as God-inspired community, revealing the very presence of the living Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, is by its nature transforming. The Church as a body of believers is itself a change agent.

The Church as community, an organization, is characterized at its best as an organization that itself regularly experiences deep change. That is to say, the Church as recorded in Scripture has been amazingly capable of reinventing and reengineering itself in ways that result in changed thinking and changed behavior today. Indeed, this second-order change has repeatedly (while retaining core values) resulted in discontinuous and irreversible change in the way the Church functions as Church.

One might say that the essential tool God has used to do this in the life of the Church is paradigm shifting. As the Church increasingly takes on (and aligns itself with)

the mind of Christ (by the power of the Holy Spirit), it becomes a transformational community that experiences second-order change.

The book of Acts paints a vivid picture of how the early church institutionalized change as normative (and utilized paradigm shifting to accomplish this). According to Leith Anderson, the earliest change was not even desired.

1. Early leaders faded, so that we know nothing of Andrew, Thomas, Bartholomew, or Matthew after Acts 1:13;
2. Expected leaders failed (Judas);
3. Carefully chosen leaders didn't rise to leadership (Matthias, Acts 1:15-26); and
4. Former enemies assumed leadership roles (Saul became Paul) (21st Century 240-41).

However, change was not limited to that which could have been attributed to being purely external and imposed. The Church as a learning organization also forever altered the way it thought, behaved, and did business. Doug Murren identifies as the Church's most shocking paradigm shift its Spirit-led decision to "shift...the church's ethnicity" (120). The Apostle Peter functioned as a change agent having received a vision "calling on him to eat of clean and unclean animals without discrimination" (120). Peter was reticent to change the rules and traditions constituting appropriate dietary and religious behavior. Subsequent to this strange vision, Peter was summoned to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile officer in the Roman army, who was "a devout man who feared God ... gave alms liberally ... and prayed constantly to God" (Acts 10:2, RSV). Peter proclaimed while in the man's home, "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28b, RSV). In that moment, Peter realized that God was



calling him, and perhaps the entire Church, to give up an old paradigm for a new one. Peter said, "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34). Peter's paradigm shifted from the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church being open only to those who had come through the Law (or Judaism) to all people of faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. Says Murren, "Christianity had just entered a new stage. It was no longer a subset of Judaism,... no longer the single domain of the Jew" (121). This paradigm shift wrought second-order change that forever changed Christianity! This change was discontinuous with the past but continuous with the church's values, signifying deep organizational change. Indeed, Peter himself underscored these coterminous core values in his speech at the Jerusalem conference, retracing the revelation of God's grace and saving action which culminated in Jesus Christ. As a change agent, he punctuated his thoughts by saying, "God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8-9, RSV). The council then became the guiding coalition, which led the deep change in all aspects of the church's life and ministry. As with all deep change, "some were frightened by all this change" (Murren 121), or as Thomas Kuhn, expert on scientific revolutions said, decisions to practice a fresh paradigm "can only be made on faith" (158). This kind of deep change, however, was just beginning. As God, using Peter as change agent, opened the door of Christianity to the Gentiles ... so God would use Paul as a change agent to open the Gospel worldwide, to those beyond Palestine (Murren 121).

Deep change is endemic to the church. To be a transforming influence in the

world is central to what it means to be the people of God. As Arnold Stauffer said, “The church, as God’s people, cannot be static. It is always *en route*; the church is pilgrims on a journey. It journeys through time, and also toward perfection” (60).

God is intricately involved in this process of personal, organizational, and deep change, utilizing both individuals and the Church itself as a change agent to redeem, regenerate, and restore lives. It is throughout the process of transitioning-endings, wilderness-neutral zones, and beginnings-that God speaks to us (Ratliff 45-46).

### **Tradition and Change**

In his book, Natural Church Development, Christian Schwarz contends that the best way to think about the Church is from a “biotic” model (10). Far too often the Church has been regarded in technocratic ways that reduce it to mere procedures, programming, behavioral habits, and imperatives. Conversely, a purely mystical-spiritualist approach has often neutered the Church of its historical legitimacy, human input, and organizational pragmatism. When, however, the Church as well as church development are understood biotically there is a living exchange. The Church is BOTH organism and organization. These realities of the Church’s nature are NOT mutually exclusive but dynamically in tension. The Church will grow when in “balance,” manifesting the eight quality characteristics named in Schwarz’s book,. Biotic principles are simple. Healthy, living things reproduce and grow.

This tension in the Church’s life was echoed in a prior historical book by Jeffrey Russell entitled, A History of Medieval Christianity: Prophecy and Order. Russell similarly argued that the Church has always had a creative tension in its development between the more unstructured, freewheeling prophetic impulse and an organizing,

institutionalizing need for order (1). According to Russell, this dynamic and sometimes exacerbating tension was most visible in the Medieval Church.

Putting this historical construct and temporal reality into a functional theology, Christian Schwarz, in his most recent book, Paradigm Shift in the Church, prefers to speak about the Church's need to balance "tradition and change" to remain healthy, and, thus, grow (151). His theological paradigm, like Collins and Porras's business principle of "No 'Tyranny of the Or' (Embrace the 'Genius of the And')" is that the Church needs to be "bipolar" concerning tradition and change (Collins and Porras 43; Schwarz, Paradigm 157). That is to say, change and tradition are not mutually exclusive; both are needed. The former represents the pole of the Church as an organism (Schwarz 151). The latter represents the Church as organization (151).

Because an organism without any organizing principle is much like a cancerous cell that reproduces and grows until it consumes the life of the organism, tradition is the means by which an organism installs healthy order. However, when functionality is aborted or ignored in the name of preserving tired practices, tradition's organizing value is literally consumed, imploded, and destroyed by traditionalism. Traditions are perpetuated for tradition's sake, rather than functionality.

This historic and theological paradigm is useful for understanding deep change. Deep change does not seek to obliterate all form or organization. However, when form and organization curtail growth and health, they become cancerous and toxic. Deep change organizationally in the Church is continuous with core values but discontinuous with institutionalism. George Ladd maintains,

An ecclesiology can only be properly biblical if, instead of making a particular New Testament form into a normative standard, it comes back to the message of the New Testament in each new situation to ask afresh what is meant. This includes the possibility of disassociating ourselves from certain behaviors of the New Testament church in the same way that it had to relish stubborn adherence to Old Testament and Jewish laws and forms so that it would not become just a fossilized Jewish sect. (16)

### **A Community of the Spirit**

The Apostle Paul tried to communicate this bipolar balance of the Church as both organism and organization by referring to the Church, the community of Christ-followers, as a “body” (1 Cor. 12, RSV). While each person may have identifiable roles and functions (vs. 4-10, 14-21), there is nonetheless a measure of spontaneity as individual gifts and functions are assigned as the Spirit wills (vs. 11). Paul used another metaphor to speak of the earthly implements of the Gospel, whether individual or organizational. In 2 Corinthians 4:7, Paul asserts that the Gospel is born in “earthen vessels.” Thomas Bandy maintains that these earthen vessels “can be shaped in many ways” (Chaos 16). They are pliable, reconfigurable—not fixed and iconoclastic.

Consequently, in business-speak, the Church is the ultimate learning organization. It is an organized organism constantly in the process of changing itself (methodologies, structure, and programs), discontinuous with the past, yet continuously retaining it’s historic role as the earthen vessel of an eternal message. The Church, at its best, embodies a culture of change that communicates the transformational power of God for individuals and the Church itself. For this reason, Jesus could confidently say that his followers would do “greater works” (John 14:12, RSV).

This is possible only by the consequent impartation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “It is to your advantage that I go away” (John 16:7, RSV). He assured his disciples that

“you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you” (John 14:17, RSV). The indwelling Spirit of God is the One who will “send,” “teach,” “speak,” “guide,” “bear witness,” and “bring to remembrance” all that Jesus did and said (John 14:26, 15:26, 16:13, RSV). We see an example of this learning organization and culture of change at work in the book of Acts when the early church underwent deep systemic change and substantiated its culture of change by saying, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28).

George Hunsberger, in his book, Bearing the Witness of the Spirit, maintains that this climate of the Spirit’s bonding and leading is the distinguishing feature of the Church. The Holy Spirit is the One who enables our continuous learning without being confined to the past. Likewise, the Spirit creates a culture predisposed to change. Hunsberger, working from Lesslie Newbigin’s theology of cultural plurality, shows how it is possible to have both tenacious conviction and impassioned contextualization. Paul Hiebert calls this the difference between a “bounded” and “center” set faith (26-28). Center set means of self-identification are dynamic, whereas bounded sets are inherently restrictive. The Spirit, as the distinguishing feature of the learning organization called the Church, provides both impetuses for change and cohesiveness.

For as Hans Kung says,

A Church which pitches its tents without looking out constantly for new horizons, which does not continually strike camp, is being untrue to its calling. The historical nature of the Church is revealed by the fact that it remains a pilgrim people of God. It is essentially an interim Church, a Church in transition, and therefore not a Church of fear but of expectation and hope: a Church which is directed towards the consummation of the world by God. (qtd. in Job and Shawchuck 88)

## Research Methodology

Researching the symbiotic relationship between leaders and organizations, continuity and discontinuity, emotional bridges that do not become entrenched vestiges of traditionalism, inherently involves analyzing process and meaning. Therefore, qualitative research is best suited for studying the impact of transitioning on the introduction and establishment of second-order change in church organizations. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln maintain that qualitative research focuses on “processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (4). Qualitative research is not interested solely with “outcomes and products,” but rather with “how people make sense of their lives, experiences and structures of the world” (Creswell 145). Consequently, “a standardized survey interview” elicits conversation that provides data revealed in narrative form (Creswell 145; Fowler and Magione 11).

Interview based research is highly dependent on two clearly differentiated, non-overlapping roles—that of the interviewer and the interviewee (Fowler and Magione 11). The former asks questions and the latter volunteers information or explanations (11). Audrey True contends that non-threatening questions that progressively graduate to more revealing questions facilitate the collection of data that is substantive and moves beyond mechanistic thinking to reveal process and values (212). An intimate relationship, therefore, is established between the researcher and representatives of the population studied (Denzin and Lincoln 4). Because the qualitative researcher becomes “the primary instrument for data collection and analysis,” the unrelenting task of the researcher is to state explicitly his or her “biases, values, and judgement” (Creswell 145-47). Such

procedures bring integrity to the inductive method and descriptive presentation of fieldwork that exposes the relationships in a social experience (Creswell 145; Denzin and Lincoln 4).

### **Conclusion**

In the day in which we live with rampant change, perhaps no skill is more incumbent on the Church than mastering the management of change. Like a freshman collegian racing to cram for a test on material he has not attended to, conscripting facts but ignoring synthesis, the Church is unreflectively devouring a plethora of material about implementing external changes. Armed with self-congratulatory reasons why resistant objectors do not fit the target group or do not possess the capacity to be early or late adopters, the Church presses on in their absence, lauding its faithfulness to relevance and needed change. What is left behind amid the shrapnel of behavioral directives is the carnage of people's emotions. They wanted to change if shown how to change. No one has shown them the emotional bridge from a beloved past to a desired future.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the great civil rights activist who relentlessly pushed for needed societal changes perhaps more than other individual in the history of this nation, said, "Whom you would change you must first love" (qtd. in Neuhaus 16).

Richard John Neuhaus, in his book Freedom for Ministry, adds these poignant words:

So also in pastoral ministry, it is precisely our passion for change that must stir up the gift of love. We all know how insidiously it happens that a pastor begins—perhaps at first unconsciously—to assume an adversary posture toward his people, to speak of "them" as the enemy. Then it is forgotten that prophecy is an office of love and not of contempt. Then it is forgotten that Amos, Hosea, and others spoke so straightforwardly precisely because they loved so recklessly, thinking so much more of the people of God than they thought of themselves. Then it is forgotten that the prophetic and priestly ministries are not antithetical but are forged together by the knowledge that whom we would change we must first

love. (17)

Thus, the first task of change is love. Because the first task is love we start not where we want people to be, but where they are. Management of internal transitioning is imperative to the function of transformational leadership. If one expects second-order change to be lasting, one must first help people in organizations find continuity amid discontinuous change. Time and again, change agency researchers have stumbled upon the serendipitous but seminal fact that to secure the adoption of new ideas change agents must “create conditions in which clients can help themselves” (Rogers 335). This is primarily done through the sharing of information “in order to reach a mutual understanding” (335). Peter Drucker refers to this fundamental psychological need for continuity as the “need to know” (90).

Therefore, the primary bridge to help people truly experience continuity amid discontinuous change is to develop strategies of transitioning which function as knowledge linkers between the past and the present (see Figure 1). Research shows these methods include values-based leadership, explicit paradigm shifting, the language of unity and collaboration, empowerment and the establishment of a change culture. Only when this happens will people know they have not only been changed, but loved. Only when this happens will change be lasting.



# Transitioning: The First Change

Values-based leadership  
Paradigm shifting  
Language of unity  
Empowerment  
Change culture



**FIGURE 1**  
**TRANSITIONING PARADIGMATIC GRAPHIC**

## CHAPTER 3

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

#### The Problem and the Purpose

As the prevailing literature seems to indicate, capable transformational leadership extends beyond simply communicating a vision with its accompanying behavioral correlates. Adroit transformational leaders also manage, or more specifically, lead the internal transitioning that enables external change, discontinuous with the past, to become permanent within organizations. Many pastors who desire to function as change agents in their local churches would do well to make intentional use of transitioning strategies.

The purpose of the study is to describe and analyze leader initiated or managed emotional transitioning on the successful introduction and establishment of second-order change, discontinuous with the past. Five United Methodist churches in the Wisconsin Annual Conference and one Lutheran church (ELCA) in Minnesota served as case study churches. Additionally, one senior pastor who has led second-order change in three different locations but recently was re-appointed to a new church was interviewed. This study seeks to answer the question, “How can leaders facilitate the emotional transitioning necessary to enhance the prospect of permanent installation of change without unnecessary upheaval?” This skill is seen as a component of transformational leadership, a biblical mandate that all the cosmos be redeemed in Christ and an extension of a theological call to unity.

#### Operational and Research Questions

To ascertain how emotional transitioning benefits implementation of significant external change in organizations, the following questions were answered insofar as

possible.

### **Research Question #1**

How do leaders facilitate the process of change?

**Operational Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.** The following questions explore the change agent's role in the change process.

1. How are leaders, clergy or lay, involved in initiating and managing significant, second-order change?
2. To what degree have the leaders seen change as a process, rather than a solitary act, behavior, or manipulation of the physical environment?
3. What is the role of the leader in the change process?
4. How does the change agent leader enhance emotional transitioning?

**Purpose for Operational Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4.** This research question seeks to determine the connection between leadership and the change process. Likewise, the question attempts to identify whether or not change leaders were overtly aware of the process of change itself and to elicit information concerning any intentional efforts to manage the emotional transitioning. Finally, the question is intended to discover whether or not change leaders took ownership for the task of emotional/psychological transition or just assumed it would happen.

In keeping with June Audrey True's research, which reveals that effective qualitative research employs non-threatening "warm up questions" to start, elevating to more substantive, revealing questions, this research question seeks to employ an open-ended attitude concerning the connection between change and leadership (212).

### Research Question #2

What is the role of continuity amid discontinuous change, and how does it express itself?

**Operational Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.** The following questions explore how the change agent facilitates, through overt strategies, the psychological need for continuity in the change process.

5. Do the change leaders perceive that people have a persistent and authentic need for continuity, even amid discontinuous change?
6. How do change leaders propose to address this need?
7. Can this emotional need be sufficiently satisfied, thereby freeing up individuals to then embrace external deep-change? [As Warren Bennis says, to move from doing what needs to be done to *wanting* to do what needs to be done (104).]
8. What were the specific strategies employed to facilitate emotional transitioning?
9. Were they effective strategies? How did you know they were effective?

**Purpose for Operational Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.** A review of current literature revealed that the prevailing emotional need for successful transitioning pertains to a desire for continuity even when systemic change may be considered discontinuous. Therefore, the task for the change leader is how to find mechanisms for appropriate and authentic continuity even amid deep change. Research question 2 explores this paradox.

### Research Question #3

How are individual changes, change agents and organizational change related?

**Operational Questions 10, 11 and 12.** These questions investigate the change agent's role in developing a change culture that is self-replicating, eclipsing the leader.

10. How does a change agent leader extend linkage beyond one's own personality to assist the development of emotional continuity within an organization?

11. Is it possible to establish in the fabric of an organization's life-tools, processes, or mind-sets that further enhance the change agent's ability to function as a linker?

12. How specifically does a leader contribute to a change climate, instill an organizational sense of the genius of BOTH/AND, empower a guiding coalition, or enable clear core values and overtly delineated paradigm shifts to create an environment conducive to change?

**Purpose for Operational Questions 10, 11, and 12.** If a change leader is useful, if not vital, to the change process through managing transition, present leadership research begs the question of how a leader can extend his or her reach. How can a leader multiply leadership even as the primary change agent, rather than consolidate it in himself or herself? John Maxwell maintains that when leaders develop leaders AND an environment is created that becomes the spawning ground for change leaders, growth and change are enhanced by this new "climate" (11, 17).

### **Subjects**

The subjects of this research are pastors and lay leaders in the United Methodist churches within the state of Wisconsin and a Lutheran church in Minnesota. The following criteria were established for the selection of participants:

1. The leaders (pastors or lay) are in churches that have undergone significant change within the past five years,
2. The leaders have been identified by their denominational supervisors (bishop and cabinet) as change agents,

3. The individuals were present for more than two years of the actual change process, and

4. When possible, the change leaders were present for what was perceived to be the entire duration of the change process.

Since I am a pastor within the United Methodist Church, I am particularly interested in leadership that has been effective in facilitating change within my denomination and state locally. However, the smallness of the Wisconsin Annual Conference (number of churches, number of pastors) relative to other Conferences may narrow the population and, consequently, the sample as well. Deliberate effort will be given to select sample churches that represent various sizes of churches: small, medium, large, and megachurches in our region. Care will also be given to select sample churches representing a variety of geographical locations within the state as well as different sizes of townships: urban, suburban, and rural (if possible).

### **Instrumentation**

The primary instrument for data collection was an interview protocol that was researcher designed. Each change leader, pastor or lay, was asked the following questions which arose out of the research questions and review of literature. The questions were designed to require an escalating level of vulnerability and specificity. In accordance with the research of June Audrey True, the initial questions were designed to be open-ended and non-prescriptive in-so-far as affording the participants great latitude in developing the focus of their comments about the significant change in their congregation. Subsequently, questions escalated in specificity and intentionality to address emotional transitioning (see Appendix A).

A pretest was performed on the interview protocol once it was developed. Four pastors were presented with the questions for their evaluation and review. Feedback received resulted in the rewording of some questions and abrogation of others. The questions were also reordered. The following guidelines were followed in order to achieve consistency among all the interviews:

1. Read the questions exactly as worded.
2. If the respondent's answer to the initial question is not a complete and adequate answer, probe for clarification and elaboration in a nondirective way-that is, in a way that does not influence the content of the answers that result.
3. Answers should be recorded without interviewer discretion; the answers recorded should reflect what the respondent says.
4. The interviewer communicates a neutral, nonjudgemental stance with respect to the substance of answers. (Fowler and Mangione 33)

### **Data Collection**

In order to provide consistency in the research data, the following procedure was followed. Subjects were required to meet all conditions of the designated sample. I first contacted those interviewed by phone. I clearly identified that they would be helping me fulfill the requirements of the Doctor of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary, as part of the Beeson program. I then identified that the scope of my research pertained to change within organizations such as the Church and change leadership. Subjects were told that the research had the support of the Wisconsin Annual Conference Cabinet, who had also recommended that person as a change leader. I divulged the parameters of time investment and conveyed any other incidental details. However, results of the review of literature or my own interests concerning the study were not discussed except to reiterate that the research concerned significant change within organizations and related leader involvement.

Individuals were asked if they would like to participate in the study or if they

needed time to consider their response. If the respondents wanted to participate, a date for an interview was set according to the mutual convenience of our schedules. All face-to-face interviews took place in the months of June, July, and August 2001. Subsequent taped phone interviews were conducted in December 2001 and January 2002.

Each interview was conducted in person. A room conducive to conversation without interruption was selected. Each pastor was asked to have the receptionist-secretary hold any phone calls, if possible and accept only emergency calls. Each interview took place within the confines of two hours. A microcassette recorder was employed to record each conversation. Two transcriptionists were employed to type each interview in verbatim form (including laughter or aside comments), utilizing the assistance of a Dictaphone. Interview findings were color-coded in accordance with recurrent words or themes.

### **Data Analysis**

Interviews were transcribed only after all scheduled interviews were concluded. When it was discovered that three interviews were not recorded due to a microcassette recorder failure, subsequent phone interviews were conducted and recorded after permission was received from Asbury Seminary. No conclusions or analysis was made until all interviews, face-to-face and via phone, had been conducted and transcriptions typed. To inductively examine the data, the following procedure was closely followed in an effort to remain as consistent as possible with each of the interviews.

Each transcription was placed with transcriptions from other leaders at that same location. Interviews from differing leaders at the same church were scrutinized to find recurrent or overlapping themes. A key word or phrase was identified, a corresponding



color assigned, and responses pertaining to that key idea were highlighted with that color. Each church location was first scrutinized against itself, as varying eyewitness reports and reflections from the leaders concerning the change process was compared for convergent or divergent information.

The same colors were used to highlight the same recurrent key words, phrases, themes, or concepts from one setting to another; however, areas of overlap were not presumed. New, recurrent key words, phrases, and thoughts received a new color designation if not identified in previous locations. Subsequently, areas of convergent thinking were compared between churches. This process took place on at least three different occasions. What conclusions could be drawn from these semi-structured interviews was readily apparent in the discovery phase of this process,

Finally, I reread all of the interview transcriptions. This time, using bold black, blue, and red permanent markers, I earmarked responses that pertained directly to research questions 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Together, the intra-comparisons within churches, the inter-comparisons between churches, and the collation of sections pertaining to research questions were compared for further analysis.

### **Variables**

The dependent variable in this study is the implementation of second-order change in the ongoing life of the congregation to include the successful or unsuccessful implementation of change. The independent variables are the leadership tactics, methods, and communication of the change agent(s). The intervening variables were the tenure of the pastors at their respective churches, the generational style of communication, denominational particularity of United Methodism, and the time afforded in individual

congregations for the full implementation and transition to second-order change.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Transformational leadership, leadership that enables a church organization to reinvent itself and experience second-order change, does not focus exclusively upon external desired changes. The change agent leader understands intuitively or overtly how to manage the process of transitioning, creating bridges between the past and present, that allow participants, namely congregants, to get on board with the changes. Therefore, one might say the transformational leader employs a kind of emotional and strategic cadence between the past and present creating continuity amidst discontinuity, that enables change to be desirable and thus successfully implemented.

The purpose of this research was to describe and analyze leader initiated or managed emotional transitioning upon the successful introduction and establishment of significant (second-order) change that is discontinuous with the past.

#### **Profile of the Subjects**

During June, July, and August 2001, I conducted interviews with seven pastors and seven laypersons (designated by the pastor) who were involved in second-order change in their congregations. All pastors were Caucasian and male. Of the lay leaders interviewed, all were Caucasian females with the exception of one white male.

Pastors interviewed were serving the sample churches under consideration with the exception of one who had been reassigned the previous year. However, since this pastor had led three prior churches through second-order change, he was deemed a worthy interviewee. The pastors were United Methodist serving in the Wisconsin Annual Conference with the exception of one who was Lutheran (ELCA-Evangelical Lutheran

Church in America) and whose church was in Burnsville, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. The Lutheran pastor was interviewed because United Methodist and Lutheran churches share a similar liturgical tradition and because the pastor serves a megachurch in our region. The sample churches thus represented various sizes: small, medium, large, and megachurch.

The interviews were conducted at the churches, including the interviews with involved laypersons. In one instance, two laypersons of differing age groups and different tenure at a sample church were interviewed together. All of the pastor interviews were with senior or lead pastors, with the exception of one in which the associate joined us for the final two questions of the protocol and a meal that followed. One layperson, due to her schedule and arrangements made by the church to accommodate it, was interviewed at a restaurant. Otherwise, all other interviews were conducted in the pastors' offices and with laypersons in a church library, office room, or other room free of distractions. Due to an apparent problem with the microcassette recorder, three interviews had to be conducted a second time by telephone (in December 2001 and January 2002) and were recorded.

The churches represent a varied sample in regard to membership size, average attendance, location, and pastor's tenure. The smallest church has a membership of 262 and an average weekly attendance of 157. The largest church records 9,500 baptized members and a weekly worship attendance of 3,900 (see Table 2). All information was derived from the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church 2001 Yearbook and Journal. Demographic data for the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, Minnesota was obtained from the senior pastor's executive secretary.

While the tenures at the churches varied from two to twenty-two years, the pastors were an experienced group with years of service totaling 232. Two pastors have long-term pastorates, both having served their churches for over twenty years. All other interviewees have served their churches less than ten years. In each case, the pastors identified themselves or were identified by their laypeople as being a key agents in the second-order change occurring in the churches. Pastors and their corresponding churches are identified in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**CHURCH SIZE AND PASTOR TENURE**

<i>Church</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Av. Attendance</i>	<i>Pastor's Tenure</i>	<i>Years of Service</i>
<b>Mauston UMC</b>	262	157	6	30
<b>Neenah: First</b>	686	250	3	26
<b>Onalaska UMC</b>	758	315	8	36
<b>Madison: Asbury</b>	947	600	21	38
<b>Whitefish Bay</b>	1,621	788	22	39
<b>Burnsville: P of P</b>	9,500	3,800	8	27
<b>*Madison: First</b>	1,031	443	2	26

**\* The pastor was interviewed for past experiences, not in regard to this congregation**

While each pastor identified change as ongoing, one church might fairly be assessed as before the completion of change (A), three in the midst (B), and two well into subsequent changes (C). The expression of second order-change occurring in each

congregation also varied as represented in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**CHURCHES AND PASTORS**

Mauston United Methodist Church	(B)	Rev. Bob Kenas
Neenah: First United Methodist Church	(A)	Rev. Gordon Lind
Onalaska United Methodist Church	(B)	Rev. Bruce Bartel
Madison: Asbury United Methodist Church	(C)	Rev. David McRoberts
Whitefish Bay United Methodist Church	(C)	Rev. Dick Jones
Burnsville: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church	(B)	Rev. Mike Foss
*Madison: First United Methodist Church		Rev. Keith Schroerlucke

**\* The pastor was interviewed for past experiences, not in regard to this congregation**

**TABLE 4**  
**SECOND-ORDER CHANGE IDENTIFIED**

Mauston UMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional worship → Contemporary service</li> <li>• Pastor centered → Team centered</li> <li>• Weekend “Chapel” church → Menu/Program church</li> <li>• Managed/controlled → Laity Leader led</li> </ul>
Neenah: First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown Dying → Satellite “Children’s Church”</li> </ul>
Onalaska UMC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood church → Regional church</li> <li>• Member Church → Reaching the Unchurched</li> <li>• Traditional Worship → Contemporary service</li> </ul>
Madison: Asbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood church → Relocation; multiple additions</li> <li>• Maintenance church → Growing church</li> <li>• Traditional structure → Team ministries</li> </ul>
Whitefish Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining Church → Growing, Outreaching church</li> <li>• Committee based → Small Group based</li> <li>• Volunteer-oriented programs → Staff-driven excellence</li> </ul>

Burnsville: Prince of Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member based → Discipleship based</li> <li>• Low expectation church → High expectation church</li> </ul>
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### Leading, Initiating, and Managing Second-Order Change

The **first Research Question** focused on how leaders themselves are involved in or facilitate the process of change. In each interview, the pastors identified themselves as a primary instrument or catalyst for change, however, the conditions precipitating the pastors assuming these roles varied. For three of the seven pastors interviewed, a pastoral change or church crisis helped to create widespread awareness in the congregation that “something must change.” Whether the continual loss of members, the aging of the congregation, financial woes, or a general malaise, some acknowledgement that change was necessary preceded the pastors’ arrivals. In those instances, the pastors entered the scene more as an expert or as the ones expected to provide leadership in the process. They were more overtly recognized as change agents.

However, in four instances the pastors had to assist the congregations in coming to an awareness that change was needed. Keith Schroerlucke referred to this process as helping the congregation face its identity and asked the questions, “Is this really who we are?” and “Who do we want to be?” While he believes that many churches already have an identity, a role in the community, and a calling that comes from God, he finds, particularly in declining United Methodist churches, an identity crisis of sorts. Too many churches are living out of who they have been, their rich heritage, rather than facing the reality of the ministry they are presently doing or not doing. His role, therefore, is simply to “hold up the mirror” and help them “work through a new identity which then leads to a change often in their vision for ministry and mission.”

Others felt the need to be more blunt in their assessment. Both Bob Kenas and Gordon Lind communicated with their congregations how failure to change would result in continual decline that at some point might be irreversible. Said Lind, “We don’t have the luxury of time. Fundamental change is necessary if this church is going to survive the next ten years.” David McRoberts, who in twenty-years time led his church from a membership of two hundred to one thousand, incurring multiple building additions and one major relocation, articulated to the congregation that the church’s purpose was not simply to meet their needs but to reach others. The infectious, invitational “friendliness” of the church became its hallmark.

Mike Foss is moving his Lutheran megachurch from a membership paradigm predicated on a European village mentality to a discipleship paradigm he believes reflects the organism of the early Church, not the institutional maintenance prevalent today. This shift is operationalized in what he refers to as the Marks of Discipleship—pray daily, worship weekly, serve in and outside the church, be in relationship, give proportionally, and read Scripture daily (see Appendix B). Mike told his church he felt called by God to develop a church based on discipleship. This personal calling was one he was willing to leave the church to pursue, but he said, “I’d rather have a church of four thousand committed disciples than eight thousand members.”

Those for whom a foundation of change had been laid nonetheless had to assume the role of point guard for change. Dick Jones, formerly trained in engineering, used his analytic mind to assist the congregation in developing strategic steps to take to become a growing, vibrant, large church of small groups. Bruce Bartel had to enable his congregation to see the “purposefulness of change,” not change for change sake nor



merely to be like another church. If they were to truly become a regional church, they needed to think like one, reaching the unchurched and providing the kind of worship and programs that draw people in from beyond the immediate neighborhood. Gordon Lind, whose church had gone through a process called “ReVision” prior to his arrival, had to help his congregation deal with its denial of decline and face the facts. The process of facing the facts is still ongoing in that congregation.

In each instance, the pastor assumed a primary role as initiator, interpreter, architect, or manager of the changes that needed to take place. The pastor, therefore, functioned as a change agent. Perhaps this is most tellingly revealed by the laypersons instrumentally involved in their churches’ second-order changes. In each instance, they referred to the lead or senior pastor as the primary change agent: “our fearless leader,” “a teaching pastor,” “working behind the scenes,” “a man of great vision,” one possessing a compelling spirituality or a leader bringing people together. Bob Kenas remarked, “I definitely had to set the tone in terms of becoming a church that offered more.”

### **Identifying the Ongoing Process of Change**

Every pastor spoke in terms of change being an ongoing process. In fact, in most of the interviews, when asked what length of time was required to fully implement the change, most responded with laughter, “it is still going on!” Even in churches where the successful completion of second order change has occurred, namely Whitefish Bay, Madison: Asbury, and to a lesser degree, Mauston United Methodist Church, change was articulated as an ongoing process. Dick Jones playfully described how his wife will ask, “Why do you want to change things all the time?” His response, “Because we can always do things better.” Jones aptly represented the view of two other pastors saying,

“Where is the flow not happening?” and “Where are our weaknesses [as a church]?” In this way, progressive change is reflective of Christian Schwartz’s view in Natural Church Development in which churches must attack the greatest growth restrictors. Jones says, “Change is a process that is continual because any time you change, and you say, ‘Now that we have changed,’ and you institutionalize it, you’ve got a couple years stint,.... then, you need to say, ‘What do we need to do next?’”

### **The Issue of Loss**

In addition to their awareness of change as an ongoing process and not a solitary act, the pastors interviewed expressed an understanding of the emotional transitioning as central to change in organizations. This emotion was expressed as an attachment to the past. Bruce Bartel said that the sentiment he often hears is, “We’ve got a lot of people here now. We have three hundred people in worship. Why do you want to get any bigger? This is just fine.” Dick Jones cited people’s need for “comfortableness” and the familiar. “People need some things ... that don’t change.” For at least two of the pastors, grieving was specifically identified as the reason for people’s emotional anguish. Bob Kenas said, “Some people are going to feel like they are losing. It’s a feeling that we are not this little fuzzy, cozy community anymore.” Mike Foss expressed the same truth by saying, “Most people in the church are resistant, not because they’re bad people or have evil designs, but because their experience of change is loss.” Gordon Lind echoed this by saying that the reason he believes many people reflexively fear change is that “change means loss. I’ve learned years ago, was taught years ago, that change really is perceived by people as loss.” Consequently, he maintains people need to hear what the benefits of change will be. For this reason, David McRoberts says his church does not

make “snap decisions.” Bob Kenas remarks that everything is laid out for the church, oftentimes giving the “pros and cons” of various changes. Such differentiation serves as a kind of public acknowledgement of what people are giving up in favor of something better.

### **The Role of Dissatisfaction**

Dissatisfaction was one of the fertile soils widely cited by the pastors and laypersons alike in affording people the impetus to get out of their comfort zone, to give up the familiar, and to risk change. One pastor described a groundswell of sentiment in his congregation as “something significant had to happen or people are going to move on and look elsewhere.” At the Onalaska church, a growing awareness emerged that fundamental changes were necessary or the church would “die slowly.” Simple inertia of the church in the direction it was going was not sufficient; the church could no longer attract people just by saying, “We’re here.” Keith Schroerlucke said churches he has led through major change come to the place where they realize, “There’s something missing here.” A level of dissatisfaction and even desperation can provide pressure for needed change. Both the Mauston and Neenah churches expressed that they did not have the “luxury of time.” Even absence or dearth of vitality sometimes provided the openness to change. “I was fortunate,” said Kenas, “I came into a church where the committee life was also near death.” Into that vacuum Bob was able to craft committees into ministry teams with an emphasis on leadership.

### **Vision Casting**

A primary function adduced for the change agent pastor in initiating, managing, or leading second order change was that of vision casting. Each pastor in various ways

articulated the primary responsibility of repeatedly casting vision about what a future incarnation of the church may and should resemble. Mike Foss maintains that when a church has a clear vision of where it wants to be and an accompanying sense of where it presently is, people more easily “buy the vision.” In fact, they make it their own by nuancing the vision with their own ideas. Dick Jones asserts that if a vision is compelling enough people will not have to be argued into it. The vision makes sense. No one needs to be leveraged insinuating, “You’re not a Christian or something.” Instead, “You convince people because of the vision not by force or not by intimidation or not by manipulation.” Bob Kenas proposes that the vision gives people a target for which to shoot, not merely a past to savor.

Keith Schroerlucke differentiates the issue of vision with a different emphasis. God gives churches vision: “It’s not my vision.” He went on to say, “Part of my job as pastor is to help the congregation articulate their vision.” So, whether this new vision for doing church is a product of God’s inspiration to the pastor or emerges from the congregation, every pastor said that one of his primary roles is to trumpet its cause.

An ancillary instrument to being a visionary, transformational pastor, however, is to employ the principle of repetition. Mike Foss said, “Leaders fail to communicate by a factor of ten.” Consequently, David McRoberts said, “We keep telling the vision.” Bob Kenas added that a leader has to look for a way to tell the story and cast vision “over and over in a thousand ways.” The value of repetition is not that it manipulates or brainwashes; rather, vision keeps the church’s primary purpose and calling before the congregation in a way that shapes day to day ministries, missions, and activities. Furthermore, repetition affords people time to make the vision their own and to articulate

it in their own words. Besides, as Keith Schroerlucke says, “It takes a long time to turn a big ship.”

### **Personal Communication**

In identifying skills necessary to leading second order change, the pastors and lay persons interviewed both identified communication as crucial. Two expressions of this communication were pivotal: interpersonal listening skills practiced in one-to-one relationships and broad-based communication to the congregation utilizing a variety of formats and mediums. Careful listening to individual persons, even those stridently opposed to changes, seemed to establish the sense that their concerns and losses were understood. General communication provided a kind of information sharing that made the changes seem accessible and not hidden.

### **Listening**

While the pastors stylized communication to fit their own personality, they nonetheless touted the value of one-to-one communication. Bob Kenas contended that face to face conversations helped him be mindful of “where people are at.” His “open-door policy” is a way of allowing people to know their voice is heard. Once, upon finding that a small group was meeting after church to grouse, Bob asked if he and his wife could attend. Hearing their concerns and objections firsthand broke down barriers. While Dick Jones spends much more time with staff as the church has gotten larger, he nonetheless intentionally makes the rounds. He employs the principle referred to as “management by walking around.” He frequents the many groups of the church, if only for a few minutes, so that those with questions will find him accessible. David McRoberts and his associate, Gary Holmes, who functions in a co-pastor relationship,

will both make upwards of sixty phone calls a week just to be in touch with people.

David identifies the calls as a function of his personality and holdover from his days of visiting every member at home during the course of a year. Bruce Bartel, who characterizes himself as having the gift of mercy, finds that simply listening to people is one of the best responses to resistance. Gordon Lind has mentored several leadership development small groups, and Keith Schroerlucke prizes one-to-one conversations as a way of being “available” and “authentic” with people. One pastor alleged that when he listens to people interpersonally it enables him to “identify some of the red threads” that run through that person’s life or experiences of the church. In so doing, it allows him or any other change agent pastor to hear the yearnings and desires of people and connect them with the needed change. One woman at his church, for instance, lamented that her children did not value the formal, liturgical service she so cherished. Through articulating that experience, she recognized that a newly forming contemporary service at the church employed a style more attractive to her children.

### **Preaching**

All pastors interviewed identified the sermon as a primary tool for personal, direct communication with the congregation at large. Even one pastor who did not consider preaching his strong suit, when asked how he communicates matters related to change with the congregation, cited his number one instrument as being preaching. In proclamation, a kind of personal modeling begins, asserts Foss. In preaching one can publicly “lift up as living examples other people in their growth and their struggle, tell their stories to allow people to get it and buy into it.” Gordon Lind shared how he embarked on a “heavy hitting” sermon series meant to shake his congregation from their

lethargy and denial. McRoberts and Kenas both named worship as the best setting in which to teach biblical principles that impact people's receptivity to change. Bruce Bartel maintained that something said "ten different times in ten different ways" in worship is far more effective than a newsletter article.

### **Tools for Managing the Process of Change**

The **second Research Question** focused on the role of continuity amid discontinuous change. The operational questions thus dealt with the methods and strategies change agent leaders employ engendering a sense of continuity even amid discontinuous change in church organizations.

#### **Public Communication**

Based on the interviews, blanketing communication to the congregation, embodied in various forms, is a crucial method in helping people deal with second-order change. The communication was accomplished in a multitude of ways: newsletters, both monthly and weekly, public testimonials in worship or at meetings, e-mail, focus groups, open forums, feedback groups, paragraphs in the weekly bulletin, congregational letters, postcards with bullet style messages, church council meetings, retreats, annual church conferences, small home group meetings, and leadership gatherings. Stress was given to making the dissemination of information as comprehensive as possible. Information enables people to have some sense of control over the upheaval and chaos of change. It also provides a kind of linkage between what was and what is soon to be. Three pastors emphasized how communication should be "up front" and "honest." If people have expressed concerns, they should be dealt with forthrightly in a public forum. Bob Kenas stated firmly that the key is to "communicate, communicate, communicate." Mike Foss

adds an exclamation point to this by saying, “Most leaders stop talking to people ... because we are worried we’re talking down to people saying it too frequently.” In fact, just the opposite is true. Clarity of information helps people feel some level of mastery over a situation in flux and also helps nurture trust in the change agent leader.

### **Core Values**

Closely related to information-sharing communication is the need for a church to articulate the core values around which it organizes its life. According to Bob Kenas, core values are absolutely necessary for “the long haul” if a church does not want to be distracted from its task. Core values establish a focus that a mission statement will not provide. Core values reflect the unique style and particular flavor with which a church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, attempts to fulfill the Great Command and the Great Commission. After all, says Foss, “the choices you and I have as leaders in ministry are rarely between good and bad. It’s usually between goods.” At the church in Onalaska, Bartel led a process by which the congregation clarified its mission statement, constructed a vision statement, and identified what its values were. The amazing thing about disclosing values, enumerated Bartel, is “we have not thrown out the main values we’ve have had in the past, we’ve just added to them.” Such continuity provides emotional bridges of sorts for those undergoing substantial change.

### **Training**

Another means of helping establish continuity amid discontinuity is to provide training events outside the local church. These trips have a way of enlarging people’s vision and augmenting their concerns and fears with actual experience. Over half of the pastors interviewed cited how a trip to Willow Creek by a group of laypersons served as a



catalyst for visionary leadership residing with the laity and not merely the clergy.

Sending the entire worship team from the Mauston church to a two-day conference in Minneapolis, presented by Maranatha Music, became a turning point for the church.

Within a few months, the church had developed a thriving contemporary service.

Likewise, sending two women to the Promiseland Workshop at Willow Creek spawned a summer Sunday school and a revamped Fall program. Whitefish Bay has sent individuals to the Frazier Memorial United Methodist Church in Alabama to increase their understanding of expansive lay ministries.

Said one pastor, "Training beyond the local church is all important." In fact, the Mauston church employs a principle that "no one goes alone." Anyone who attends a workshop must do so with at least one other person so the person does not experience the workshop alone. In this way, the inability people have to conceive of practices outside of their own experience is supplanted by firsthand experience.

Many of the pastors also cited the value of in-house training, such as a Saturday morning leadership training given every January for all new leaders and returning leaders on work teams. The two largest sample churches, Prince of Peace Lutheran in Burnsville, Minnesota and Whitefish Bay United Methodist in a northern suburb of Milwaukee, both hold their own weekend seminars with regional, if not, national profiles. They are called "Changing Church" and "Growing in Discipleship" respectively. Pastors designated such in-house training as an effort to get people "out of their box." This can also be accomplished by using resources unfamiliar to the participants or by bringing in an outside consultant.

## **Outside Help/Authorities**

Several of the churches cited the use of outside help and research firms as a way to help them get practical information about how to proceed strategically. In the very first year of Dick Jones' ministry, The Institute for American Church Growth, out of Pasadena, California, began a two-year, consulting contract with the Whitefish Bay Church. From that study several conclusions were drawn: the church was understaffed for its size—all that could occur was maintenance not growth with existing staff; they did not have enough small groups; a sufficient number of opportunities for volunteers did not exist; present volunteers were not adequately trained and resourced; and, the church was geared to serving present membership rather than assimilating new persons.

The Onalaska United Methodist Church utilized the Center for Parish Development in Chicago and acquired a consultant, Susan Gray, from Michigan. An age analysis survey of the congregation was conducted by students from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse. The survey analysis revealed that the church was weakest on youth and young adults. Subsequent programming and staffing sought to address this vital need.

David McRoberts, of Asbury United Methodist Church in Madison, also brought in a consultant from Nashville when the church was considering whether to build in a different area or relocate. In each case, the use of outside authorities provided a level of expertise and independent confirmation of the church's course of action that facilitated a mitigating and assuaging of fears. While risks may remain, they are, subsequently, considered to be informed, calculated risks.

As previously mentioned, First United Methodist Church of Neenah had used a

process sponsored by the Wisconsin Annual Conference called “ReVision.” However, at the time of the interview, the church was poised to embark on a \$10,000 to \$12,000 study with a research firm out of Chicago called Primary Insight. This study will provide data in three areas concerning the church’s proposed satellite “Children’s Church.” (1) Is the community ready? (2) Is the church prepared to launch and sustain the ministry? (3) Are enough leaders and workers enlisted to provide viability? According to pastor Gordon Lind, “We want to test our dream,... test our target,... and test our methods.” The research firm chosen was not church related, and change agent pastors showed little reluctance to use outside personnel to help their churches acquire information that would provide a bridge of confidence in implementing needed change.

### **Short-Term Gains**

Another kind of emotional bridge utilized in allowing churches to feel good in the midst of the upheaval of change was what might be referred to as short-term gains. That is, future changes are made possible by previous successful changes. In hiring new staff at the Mauston United Methodist Church, they elected to hire a part-time, visitation pastor, even though their first desire was for a worship coordinator. According to Bob Kenas, the decision was because “we could sell it the best.” While this course of action might appear on the surface to be an abrogation of ideals, it was an attempt to build success into both positions. The visitation pastor reached the older members of the church and assured them that they would not be “abandoned,” even as the church sought to simultaneously reach out to new persons with an increase in worship creativity.

Such methods of creating short-term successes, momentum, and even what might be referred to as greasing the skids seemed to be an intuitive awareness pastors possessed

in helping their congregations accept change. Dick Jones spoke of how he seldom, if ever, brings a new idea up for a vote the first time it is aired. Rather, he asks people to think about what is being proposed and give it some time for feedback and conversation. Frequently, the idea will be brought up again at the subsequent meeting of the council, again without vote. By the time it is brought to a vote, people have been afforded the time to acclimate themselves to impending changes and oftentimes do so with little amendment or tinkering with the proposal. Gordon Lind said, “One successful change leads to another.”

### **Two Tracking**

Some churches seem to have less resistance to change because they have less binding traditions. Norms or expectations for ministry are not presumed with the inculcated adage, “We’ve always done it that way.” McRoberts, whose congregation began in 1975, boasts that this is the case at Asbury. Change is not accompanied by reflexive resistance. “We don’t do anything the same twice here,” he said. In congregations of a much longer history, one of the best methods to implement change is referred to as “two tracking.” Two tracking is a way of adding new ministries without deleting existing ministries nor changing their identity with unwelcome changes. Bruce Bartel claims that his church would like to start a new women’s ministry that is more open to younger women. The format of the existing UMW does not, by design, lend itself to this. Instead of changing the existing UMW, they are simply spawning new women’s groups.

The two tracking methodology forms the backbone to Neenah First Church’s venture into a satellite ministry. The church recently celebrated its sesquicentennial. The

downtown location has virtually no parking except for that on the street and in the lots of nearby merchants. The physical constraints on the church are enormous. The hope is that the satellite ministry may provide the option for future relocation. To presume that all parishoners will move is simplistic. Citing supporting research Lind says,

Most congregations in the process of redevelopment decide, initially, that they all want to stay together, whatever that means—stay together geographically, stay together corporately, but she says, most congregations in her field experience can't do that. They can't stay together and determine that they're better off and it's more faithful to everyone there and more faithful to the mission. For those who are not willing and not ready to go forward in a new way for a new day, there's Track 1. For those who want something more, want something different, who want to try to relate to the church again, more fully, to what's happening in the culture outside, there's Track 2.

Indeed part of the reason for the two tracking, says Lind, is that the culture of the existing church cannot be the culture at the new satellite ministry. It must be something completely other than they have known.

In a much less pronounced way, this two tracking is a part of the fabric of the Mauston Church's life. As they sought to get out of a small church mentality with only weekend services, they followed the model of Goshen United Methodist in Indiana by becoming a "menu church." That is to say, people are afforded many choices. "And we have learned," said Bob Kenas, "not to spit in the buffet!" The mentality of a buffet is that a person may not like everything offered, but then again they are not forced to partake of every programmatic course.

### **Creating a Change Culture**

In discussing his church's plan to relocate the church by establishing a satellite ministry or "Children's Church," whose target audience is eight year old millennial children and their families, Gordon Lind said,

Do we simply relocate the church? We talked through that and decided you don't simply relocate a declining church because when you do, you relocate the culture. Putting up a new building is not adequate to turn a church around, but you create a new culture.

Attention was given to shaping a culture that facilitates change, or at least assists change in becoming embedded in the life of the church, according to change agent pastors and laypersons. **Research Question three** focused on how individual changes, change agents, and organizational change are related. The operational questions thus had to do with how change agent leaders extend linkage beyond their own personality to provide emotional continuity within organizations. How does one establish within the fabric of a church organization's life tools, processes, and mind-sets that enhance the implementation of future changes? To what extent can a church establish an environment or culture conducive to change?

### **Teaching about Change**

Change agent pastors are committed to disassembling the mystery around change. That is to say, not only do they lead their congregations into the spiritual journey of what it means to be a fully-functioning, biblical community, not only do they assess their greatest growth restrictors or develop informed strategies concerning needed change, but they also teach about change itself. Bob Kenas said, "I've talked about the visionaries, the early adopters, the middle adopters, and the never adopters, and how we could not have a church that was led by never adopters." At meetings, he makes a regular habit of teaching lessons about the principles for healthy, growing churches. Bruce Bartel says, "When people are comfortable the way they are, you have to teach them what it means to be the church." Gordon Lind has put key books in the hands of his leaders that have to do with leading a declining congregation through needed changes. When he feels that a

particular book may be too cumbersome to ask his laity to read, he often does book reviews. He is regarded as well read by his lay leadership. Both Dick Jones and Mike Foss are point guards and keynote speakers for their churches' yearly seminars. To do so, they must be reflective and disclose the inner rubrics of change in the local church.

### **Permission-Giving Teams**

Another area that affects the climate of a church and prevents good ideas from being beat down or micromanaged to death is the principle of permission giving.

According to their layperson, the Mauston church practices the principle this way:

If two people have talked about this it's a good idea. If three or four people talk about it, it's a better idea. If a couple of those two, three, or four people are willing to implement, now that's a great idea. And we only do great ideas.

In other words, if a plan of action fits the mission statement, vision, and core value of a congregation, it is blessed and given the opportunity to thrive or fail. Several of the pastors and laypersons alike stressed how their church is not afraid to try new things. Such churches have a team attitude that seems to compound and grow with each venture. They intentionally foster attitudes that are not departmental or competitive. In fact, a part of the restructuring that makes this possible is when churches elect to go with more of team approach than that of standing committees. Gordon Lind said,

Structurally, we've been in the process of closing down standing committees. They do a good job of protecting the past and guarding the status quo. And, in their place, we are using planning, task groups, and study groups, which I've always found a lot more successful in getting work done, some desired result, . . . or we have a small group system called Christ Care.

In the environment where groups are trusted to do ministry, not simply advise others, a team attitude grows. Innovation is not merely tolerated or endured but

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welcomed. Again, Lind recounted,

We set outside the regular governing process a half dozen or strategic teams ... and protected them, set them aside. We said these are new and fragile teams, and we want to give them the freedom to think creatively and come up with new solutions for new ministries or new ideas for new ministries.

Mike Foss advocates the development of teams that are “collaborative” in fleshing out the vision of a church. When a vision is bigger than the pastor, bigger than what he or she alone can accomplish, people begin to put their fingerprints on a portion of it, “nuancing” it in their own way. In resisting the temptation to control this, “leadership skills are multiplied.” Foss said, “It’s a recognition that just because God has given the leader the dream, it has to be given away!” Dick Jones remarked that a similar resistance to micromanage resulted in laity developing ministries of excellence. Recent Easter and Christmas productions were “written and produced by church members.” Keith Schroerlucke maintains, “Empowerment of the laity is crucial.”

When people begin to take initiative, they become leaders, and ministry no longer resides exclusively with the pastor. Jones said that when ministry becomes “self-perpetuating,” you “don’t have to fight to keep it going.” Bruce Bartel commented about how his church is trying to simplify the processes in the church. “We’ve tried to model permission-giving systems... We have narrowed the size of the church council to a manageable twelve people.”

### **Staff Changes**

A part of the structural adjustments that create an environment and culture receptive to second-order change must also extend to staff. In every church, the issue of staffing came up as one of the more painful, exacting, but necessary components of

building a change culture. Sometimes such adjustments amounted to the difficult decision to let go of a long-time staff member because that person was more invested in the past than the present vision for being and doing church. Sometimes, the issue was competence or the person's inability to conform to the tasks outlined in a job description. Accordingly, sometimes resolution could only be found in celebrating a person's ministry and acknowledging an anguished parting. Each change agent pastor said that staffing was crucial.

For many the issue of staffing had equally to do with "key hires." Dick Jones spoke of putting resources in the right places. Since longer tenured staff tended to be trusted more, Jones looked for new hires to free up present staff for innovative, new ministries. He, along with two other pastors, spoke of the need to "staff for growth." Bob Kenas has led his church on a journey of progressively adding part-time staff in needed areas of expansion. Both David McRoberts and Bruce Bartel spoke about their associates functioning as co-pastors and alter egos. In various language, all the pastors spoke of the need for the staff to function as a team, all on the "same page." Mike Foss considers this area of team building and accountability with staff to be a central responsibility he has in the life of the church. Perhaps, Keith Schroerlucke was the most blunt or unguarded. He said, "There is not room on a staff for, well, I'll use a strong term, disloyalty. I mean, they have to be, in most cases, not only loyal to the senior pastor, to the person articulating the vision,... or they at least need to be on board enough to say, 'I can move with this, do my part.'" According to Schroerlucke, too many churches operate out of a "silo mentality"-people each "doing their own thing."

### **Long-Term Pastorates**

All but one of the respondents referred to the need for long-term pastorates. Dick Jones and David McRoberts both spoke of how on some occasions the implementation of change rode the coattails of them being known quantities. An accrued measure of trust made palatable what in other situations might have been more traumatic. People also had a context and track record in which to place change. Others, like Keith Schroerlucke and Bob Kenas, spoke of the frustrations that can take place when a change agent pastor is moved too quickly and changes have not become embedded in the culture or values of the church. Bruce Bartel spoke of specifically asking his ecclesiastical officials for a longer pastorate if there was any hope for consistency in vision of moving to be a regional church. Bartel said, “This is as key as anything.”

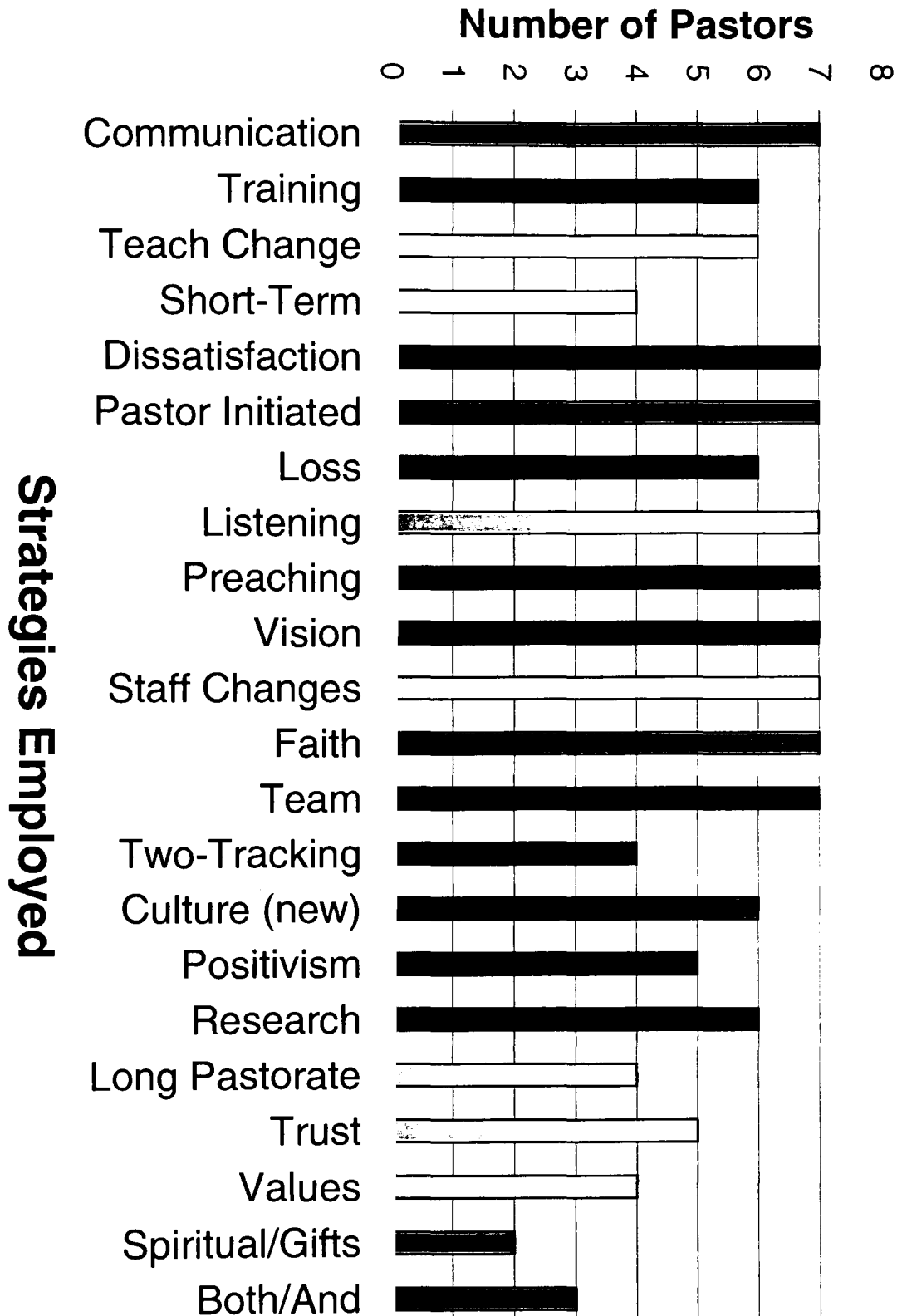
### **Faith Venture**

Finally, several of the pastors were quite intentional about how a church that can make second order changes must have a vibrant spiritual life with a level of expectancy and trust in their ventures. Bob Kenas said, “Make decisions that require faith; don’t make faithless decisions.” Bruce Bartel frequently asks the questions, “What’s God calling us to be right now? Is it just to stay the same size we are and have a happy family?” Mike Foss spoke in very personal terms about how care for the institution can supplant active spirituality; “We have pastors whose work has very little to do with their ongoing faith life, which is bizarre.” He relates this to how too many churches are “institutionally defined and driven.” Yet, in the New Testament the Gospels, Acts, Paul and letters it’s all about “transformed lives.” Time and again in these interviews, pastors spoke of their personal calling and God’s calling of the church. This was equally

pronounced in the laity, many of whom spoke not only about their “wonderful leader” but God’s call upon that local church.

### **Summation**

The skill of transitioning individuals who are part of an organization is not a product of happenstance. Thoughtful leadership, deliberate strategies, and the intentional development of a culture that reinforces the change are necessary, not optional. The research demonstrated that pastors must be the catalysts, change agents if they expect their church organizations to undergo second-order change. In no setting did lay leaders express that the needed, desired changes would have transpired without the pastors’ leadership. Furthermore, each pastor employed strategies and methodologies to assist the transitioning necessary toward the establishment of deep change that would not regress. These strategies provided a level of emotive continuity amid the external chaos of change, and these strategies were identifiable, having continuity from one church to another, regardless of the size of the congregation. In each church, as a part of the function of the transformational leader, additional strategies were utilized to embed the second-order change in the life of the organization in a way that was not dependent on the change agent pastor for its persistence. These identified strategies, having to do with the role of the change agent pastor, implementation of the process of change in the congregation, and the rubrics of developing a change culture in a church organization, were discussed in narrative form in this chapter of the research. They are also represented in the form of a graph in Figure 2.



**FIGURE 2**  
**STRATEGIES EMPLOYED**

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the conclusion of every interview I asked one question: “What have you learned from this change process?” The answers were telling:

It can be very trying, not in the sense there is nothing happening, but just that it takes lots of energy, and you feel almost schizophrenic. I mean, you are doing this at one time, you’re doing this at another time, you’re doing that at another time, and it takes a lot of energy. There are some very positive times. There are also some very frustrating times. (Bartel)

You’d better be ready to work hard first of all, and you can’t pull it out of your hip pockets. You’ve got to do your homework, you’ve got to study, you’ve got to pray. One of the things that I almost don’t want to miss in this whole thing is, I keep emphasizing, we’ve got to expect faith to be required of us. We can’t make decisions that require no faith. Those are faithless decisions, and we want to make faithful decisions. (Kenas)

It’s been a steep learning curve. I learned a whole lot about first, to start with, ReVision. Then I learned, I’ve really gone on a ledge here, to learn about fundamental change, systemic change, renewed some thinking about the systems model,... the whole redevelopment of declining congregations, and ... ideas about multiplying congregations. It’s been a whole new deal. It’s been like starting ministry all over again; that’s what it’s like. (Lind)

If you want to be comfortable at any point of your ministry, don’t change. This does not breed comfortableness. My wife, who likes things somewhat the same, when I come home and say what we are thinking about doing now, she just says, “Oh brother, oh sister,... what’s next?” Everything looks pretty good from her standpoint because she’s comfortable,... there are people in the church, they need some things that they’re into that don’t change. But, on the other hand, it’s a varied mentality that says, “Of course we’re going to try new things!” (Jones)

It is frustrating in one respect and is exhilarating in another. To be patient, to realize it’s not my own doing, that I am hopefully just being a faithful instrument of Someone who has a much grander vision of where we are and where we need to be. Just being faithful. (Schroerlucke)

Change can be exciting; it can be very fulfilling. (McRoberts)

I think a big element has been that, for us, we really do feel that we’re

being led by the Spirit of God. And when we confront things, saying like, “How are we going to deal with this, losing people we didn’t want to lose.” And yet, people come in and step forward; leadership comes into place. I’ve seen people fulfill their passions and kind of go, “Wow, this all makes sense. This is worth it.” It’s like you begin to realize that God has more invested in this than we do. And it’s just not another business; we’re not CEOs just pullin’ off a great routine here. (Holmes)

I’ve learned this, and I say it to you as a leader: We are willing to give our lives for our vision in ministry. OK, then, let it be a vision so big, only God can do it. Anything less than God for our lives isn’t worthy of us, let alone the ministry. (Foss)

The tasks and challenges taken on by change agent pastors are very demanding. Organizations are inherently perpetuators of the status quo (Tichy and Devanna 72). So, why be a change agent, initiating, leading and managing second-order change in church organizations? As one pastor said, “It’s so much easier being a ball-roller, resting on your laurels, and making no waves. However, to do so is to live a life of quiet acquiescence to the ‘What if’ and ‘If only we had tried.’” To be a change agent leader, then, is to realize that change is possible, to give one’s life to transformation, and to experience God in the midst of it. As Pastor Mike Foss of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church said, such transformation is the only thing “worthy of us, let alone the ministry.”

### **Major Findings**

The research revealed major findings concerning the role and function of change agents in the successful establishment of second-order change in church organizations.

#### **Change Agent Pastors Are Central to Organizational Change**

Change agent pastors serve a pivotal function in leading second-order change in church organizations. While the pastor cannot be “the team,” he or she must be the “point guard” for the team. Peter Drucker contends that leaders must be out front leading (73). Pastor Bob Kenas added his own flavor: “I really had to be the guru.” Although a

change agent leader might be a part of an organization, an element of heterophily in which this leader is not mired in the inertia of the organization as it presently exists but sees what changes need to occur for its future viability, is necessary (Rogers 346). The leader, then, becomes the one adept at change, or as Pastor David McRoberts said, “It’s been very normal.... I guess I’m more able to change.” Change begins with the change agent (Quinn 8).

This is not to say that others do not want to want their beloved organizations to dance with the frenetic pace of change in our society. Mike Foss remarks, “I’m absolutely convinced that the majority of people who follow Jesus take that [discipleship] seriously; they want to, they just don’t know how to do it!” The practices that were once handed down are no longer. In the same way, Dick Jones maintains people want to change and they want their churches to make needed change: “They just don’t know how to do it.”

That is the vital role of the change agent pastor. He or she becomes “the linker” between the past and the future (Rogers 336), the one who helps assemble psychological underpinnings of continuity amid the experiential chaos of discontinuous change. Resistance to change is real and substantive. However, managing the process of emotional transitioning and employing effective strategies of doing it not only make second-order change possible but probable.

### **Clarity of Vision Is a Necessity**

Whether God formulates a vision primarily in the minds of the pastors (such as Kenas, Jones, Foss) matters not. A clearly articulated vision of a desirable future is a necessity. Some church visions may simply be a matter of discerning what is the



prevailing God-given identity of a church and if the church is living, behaving, and functioning out of that identity (Schroerlucke). Other compelling visions may be forged from a guiding coalition (Bartel). Regardless, one is needed. John Kotter states, “Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing and incompatible projects that can take the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere at all (“Why Transformation” 9). Churches know this all too well from practice.

Sometimes the combination of both leader initiated and congregation formulated vision is what summons followership (Lind, McRoberts). As Gordon Lind said, “Never get out and lead alone.” Without some guiding coalition, a vision is imperiled to be forgotten (Kotter, Leading 51; Herrington, Bonem, and Furr 47). The voice of one crying out in the wilderness may provide the initial spark necessary, but only a visionary community has the force necessary to sustain the process and guide it to completion.

However, the vision must be focused enough that it directs, aligns, and inspires action (Kotter, Leading 7), but broad enough that as Mike Foss asserted, “Others can come to have their own little vision within the field of it.” Dick Jones said, “I tend to set the vision, but allow the creativity with the vision to branch out in many different ways.” A clearly articulated, compelling vision not only makes the future accessible and understandable, but vision also becomes transferable to the individual members of the organization. In his book Leading Change, John Kotter contends that vision is the most essential element to organizational transformation (7).

### **Communication Gives Control**

Information sharing becomes a primary instrument of “linking,” that is, providing

continuity amid discontinuous change (Drucker 90). Since the pace of change is what people find unsettling (Bridges, Transitions 4), information sharing creates a psychological rest stop to catch one's breath and see above the daunting terrain of change. The research project showed that those who successfully navigate their congregations through the potentially capsizing waves of change do so with relentless communication, intentional repetition, and presentation in a multiplicity of forms. As David McRoberts said, "We go overboard in communication."

This linkage connects the past and the present in a way that gives individuals at least some measure of cognitive "control" over their circumstances. They may feel that they are in a very unfamiliar place, but they are given a roadmap and a compass. They possess both an objective overlay to see the big picture, but also a kind of global positioning coordinate to chart their present location in the more subjective and momentary implementation. In so doing, the notion of victimization is halted, and trepidation is assuaged.

### **Acknowledging Loss Disassembles the Cycle of Fear**

The research revealed that the change agent leader must possess a working knowledge of the process of grieving and loss as it relates to change to be effective. While one might have thought this awareness need only be intuitive, clearly the subjects of this research went out of their way to facilitate expressions of loss. That means the change agent leaders did not squash expressions of dissent. Instead, they looked for common threads of values that unite the past to the present. Yet, they did not presume that a future incarnation of the church would automatically provide the same level of emotional satisfaction as past models. As Dick Jones observed, change affects and

disrupts people's lives in a very real way. Change to a Sunday morning worship schedule, for instance, is not merely a programmatic decision in the life of the church but will directly affect people's Sunday morning routine and ritual, when their children are awakened and fed. So, says Jones,

When people come in and say, "I don't like this!"... as a pastor I don't argue with them. I listen, and I affirm some part of what they say, so that they understand that I hear what they're saying and that I'm aware of it. I say, "I think this is an important insight, and if you don't mind, I'd like to have you either write it down, if you would like to, and send it to the committee. Or I would be glad, on your behalf, to express this concern." In other words, as a pastor, I don't have to argue with people; I can simply hear them and support them.

Keith Schroerlucke noted, "People need to know they are heard in whatever changes; it gives them a voice." Oftentimes, people resist not the change itself, but rather that they felt "voiceless" in the process.

The transformational leader allows and, indeed, facilitates the free expression of pain, regret, and loss. The research revealed that this permission to express grief was often embodied in the change agent's prevailing commitment to being "open" and "honest." Several of the pastors emphasized that they resist the temptation to correct or coerce dissenting words. Simply acknowledging a person's pain provides the validation that loss has occurred, a recognition that is generally sufficient for the healthy person to move on in the process of change rather than constructing systemic opposition. When instances of solicitation of ill will occurred, change agent pastors were able to be confrontational, freely identifying the unhealthy dynamics of triangulation, projection, and coercion, precisely because they had been "upfront" and "honest" about the loss.

The research project showed that those who initiate, manage, and lead second-order change are well aware of the necessary component of grieving that must

accompany the change process. Not to do so is shortsighted and focused exclusively on external change rather than internal transitioning. All transitions begin with an ending (Bridges, Managing 3). Change always involves loss (Bolman and Deal 394; Keener 21). To recognize and facilitate this grieving enables a person to avert the conclusion behaviorally-herded individuals arrive: “This is not my church any more.”

### **Teams and Permission Giving Provide Lay Empowerment**

The research demonstrated that for change to rise above a solo effort, the development of teams and an empowerment through permission giving afforded to the laity is necessary. In the same way that the change agent leader is a linker, laity become bridges personified. Bob Kenas spoke of how his secretaries, along with others who have discovered their leadership gifts, are key individuals to sustaining the process of change. Gordon Lind referred to those who have been a part of his six leadership development small groups as “ambassadors” for the vision. The project showed a multiplicity of ways this team building can be facilitated: from simply moving away from standing “advisory” style committees to work-oriented task forces or the establishment of new small groups. The gambit was covered in leadership development groups, long-range visioning teams, or simply allowing smaller teams more permission to make decisions within their realm and be responsible and accountable for them. “Being collaborative,” allowing teams of laypersons to flesh out in detail a larger vision, enables others to “buy in,” said Mike Foss.

Providing training experiences was found to be a vital method in helping individuals hone their natural skills or those discovered in a spiritual gifts assessment. Such training experiences enabled vision to reside in the person, independent of the

change agent leader. As Mike Foss so capably assessed, most people have the want to, they just lack the how to. Training experiences are what empower laity to have the how to.

For this reason, Bruce Bartel noted, “Since change is a process, we wrap people in the process every step of the way.” When laypersons then embrace a clear vision, nuance their own portion of it, gain training to actually lead practical components of where the church is heading, second-order change becomes self-perpetuating. “You don’t have to fight to keep it going,” said Dick Jones. A church becomes a kind of learning organization in which change is an “adventure” (Foss) and “fun” (McRoberts).

Change becomes natural to the laity as well as to the change agent. In the context of the interviews, in those churches where laity now have become the heralds of the vision, not reliant exclusively on the pastors, they themselves made followers or replicated ministry. A new culture was born.

### **Cultivation and Crafting of Culture Reinforce and Embed the Change Process**

For emotional transitioning to become natural (a part of the psyche and skill set of a congregation), crafting a culture where change is perceived as normal is imperative so that change does not exclusively hinge on the persona and credibility of the change agent. Likewise, this also prevents the change from relapsing to the prior state. A culture of change inverts the basic reflexive emotion from fear of loss and subsequent oppositional resistance to an environment where people thrive on the challenge of change.

This is especially difficult in a milieu where theology has been made negotiable. Therefore, by design or by happenstance, permanence is experienced often in liturgy, structure, and ecclesiastical forms of church practice. Mike Foss was astute in saying that

in Lutheran and United Methodist congregations, we end up with a “membership model” serving the institution. This will be an ongoing issue for United Methodist pastors who serve in settings where cultural relevance has been inculcated in the realm of theology (not merely its mode and communication, but its content) and where the liturgical and other ecclesiastical constructs are given greater permanence (from the value of episcopacy to the itinerant system to the use of the lectionary).

Deep change, second-order change, is more than incremental change, which is limited in scope and reversible. Deep change in organizations establishes new ways of thinking and behaving, usurping existing patterns of conduct (Quinn 3). What is institutionalized is the organization’s continuous improvement and learning. Change is now normal, no longer exclusively emotionally draining but satisfying, producing what Dick Jones referred to as “the fresh breaths of the Spirit.” Metaphors, like “new wine in new wine skins, rather than in old wine skins,” cease being metaphors and start being part of real life according to Gordon Lind. When the culture changes, we become “cocreators with the Holy Spirit” according to Mike Foss.

### **Contributions to Research**

As a result of the research, there were key contributions to the prevailing literature in the area of leading change in church organizations.

### **Transitioning Is Essential**

To repeat Bridges’ words, change is external but transitioning is internal (Managing 3). I would add, change is transient and lapsive whereas transitioning embeds change in permanence until the next change is initiated. Pastor change agent leaders need to be less focused on what “needs to be done” and the behavioral correlates of change.

Instead, they must focus more attention on the emotive ledger—vision, communication, values, information sharing, and other emotive “bridges” that constitute continuity in discontinuous circumstances. They must give attention to the development of lay leadership and lay empowerment and create an environment and culture friendly to second-order change.

These findings are consistent with current literature; however, they only emphasize the magnitude of what should be the locus of effort. Transitioning is key to the successful completion of second-order change.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is focused on pastors in Wisconsin who have led or are leading second-order change in their churches. Its specificity is useful to those who serve in the area. Many of the findings seem to be universal and transferable to any setting; however, United Methodists tend to “look like” the predominant denominations around them. That is to say, Methodism embodies a rubric of eclecticism born of John Wesley’s role as a second generation Protestant reformer. Since he was both a sacramentalist and revivalist, since he opposed deists on one end of the theological spectrum and enthusiasts on the other, we have tended to inculcate a rubric of borrowing from both ends of the theological spectrum, as well as, praxis. At our best, then, we are vitally balanced. At our worst, we are a kind of chameleon denomination or one that at the least ends up with a brokered faith.

The findings here represent largely United Methodism in the north, namely the northern Midwest. The findings, therefore, represent United Methodism captured in the milieu of liturgical prescriptiveness if not liturgical correctness. Moreover, in this region

people do not “think big” certainly not as “big” as those of the Southern churches. A different culture exists in the South that seems to promote more sizeable risktaking. Northerners in the Midwest, particularly those of Germanic and Scandinavian decent, are cautious. Then again, northerners tend not to have the kind of organizational failures such as the financial collapse of the Enron corporation in 2002. Rather, businesses, churches, and organizations tend to die slowly and slip more and more to obscurity.

This regional culture, if correctly assessed, must factor into why pastors are calculated, incremental, cautious, and sometimes even timid about change. Moreover, pastors do not have the authority or prestige of those in the South that tend to bolster the command of their decrees and visions. So, perhaps the need for skills such as listening, while valid in every setting, are exaggerated in the North. Our ecclesiastical status quo, our incrementalism, our guarded stewardship, the weakened authority of pastors demand heightened listening for transitioning to effectively take place. However, this is also the value of this study to the region. Changes, even second-order, do appear on the surface more incremental here, even when substantive and discontinuous with the past.

Another limitation is that the project set out to study churches that have undergone major change, successful and unsuccessful, to determine how cognizant they were of the process of transitioning. To my knowledge, none of the churches surveyed experienced unsuccessful second-order change, which is probably why most were recommended to me by the cabinet of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church. Significant learning, I am sure, can also be derived from those who have failed in similar endeavors. While participant pastors and lay leaders did talk freely about “failures,” they did so largely in the micro sense, not the macro sense. The primary



beachhead of their second-order change efforts were, for those who have completed it, successful. Having said that, one might assess the sample churches' profiles in this delineated fashion: two churches have completed a second-order change and are well into subsequent secondary and tertiary changes; two churches are very much in the midst of second-order change; two are at the beginning stages; and one, pastor has yet to begin any substantive changes in his present location whatsoever.

Another limitation of the study is that the sample recommended and subsequently researched did not include persons of color, and no lead pastors were women. While the results may not have varied, clearly the possibility exists that cultural and gender-based differences may have provided further strategies for emotive and cognitive bridges of continuity amid discontinuous change.

Of course, the major liability in qualitative research is researcher bias. According to Floyd Fowler and Thomas Mangione such "interviewer-related error" can transpire from,

1. Question wording,
2. Respondent characteristics unrelated to what is being measured,
3. The setting in which the interview occurs,
4. The position of a question in an interview schedule, and,
5. Even the presence of an interviewer, as compared to having a respondent fill out a form (24).

By stating explicitly the researcher's bias and his or her role in the research as well as being exhaustively descriptive about the methodology of the data collection, such bias can be minimized (Creswell 147).

## Unexpected Conclusions

The research also rendered conclusions that were unanticipated, yet which provide valuable insights into the initiation and management of second-order change in church organizations.

### Aligned Staff

I was surprised by or did not anticipate how important “aligned staff” is to effective leadership in second-order change. This is not to say any pastor seemed defensive, intolerant, or incapable of incorporating dissentient views. Indeed, as a part of the grieving process inherent in any change, many of the pastors seemed to go out of their way to acknowledge it and give it fair play. However, staff people “become a continuity in themselves” as Dick Jones so capably articulated. Either they will assist change in happening or oppose it. Obviously, some staff need to be a part of the guiding coalition, those who formulate, test, and articulate a vision for a congregation. However, as far as the grand vision for a congregation is concerned, since clarity of vision is key, no mixed messages will suffice. Said Mike Foss candidly, “You won’t be on staff unless you are 100 percent on board.... Because the ripple is very, very significant.” I think this is why Gordon Lind spoke so glowingly about Judy, a new church manager, who frees him up from the day to day management tasks of ministry (facility, program, personnel, and the like) to focus on leadership tasks, vision casting, and leader development. Both David McRoberts and Bruce Bartel spoke in passionate terms about alter ego, complementary, co-pastor associates.

If, in fact, the kind of second-order change occurring specifically in church organizations, is to some measure God-breathed and inspired, not merely a business plan,

it adds a further dynamic. Mike Foss said that churches mistakenly believe the most important or only basis of a church hire is that the employee has the necessary skills. This is a huge mistake, he maintains. The underlying rubric necessary from a church employee is that one is open to and desirous of matriculating on a “spiritual vision.” Without this prevailing attitude and posture of the soul, accountability to the vision is experienced by staff as control and thus they will resist!

### **Long-Term Pastorates**

Another unexpected finding is the magnitude of pastors’ insistence that second-order change is best lived out in longer pastorates. As Bruce Bartel asserted, “It takes several years, especially in our system.” The discontinuity of the United Methodist appointive system has a way of inoculating people against taking seriously the vision caster. Even when a change agent pastor acknowledges the loss involved in change and encourages the embracing of a vision for future benefits, the congregation doubts if the change agent pastor will be afforded the time to see the change through to completion. Privately, they fear they will be left with the chaos of the wilderness, the in-between land. Consequently, “the well is poisoned” and institutional resistance results from an ecclesiastical methodology that has little to do with the local church itself.

Such instability becomes an inhibiting factor to pastors taking the risk to be change agents, even when they feel “called” to it or when they possess the necessary skill set. As indicative of the opening remarks in this concluding chapter, there is a personal cost to the change agent pastor in terms of expended energy, the role of being catalyst and thus, lightning rod for people’s sense of loss, and the weariness that results from the natural, repetitive organizational resistance. A few of the pastors admitted they have

sometimes wondered, “Why bother?” when they see several years of front-end grueling work disregarded by a successor. An institutional impetus is subconsciously thrust on the pastor to be a protector of the status quo for no other reason than self-preservation.

### **Research—A Necessary Body of Information**

I also did not anticipate that research provides integral linkage and information sharing between pastors and congregations. Beyond general principles, statistics (on a plateauing attendance or age analysis revealing the missing generations) were deemed vital. Gordon Lind shared how prior data “left on the shelf” reinforced his congregation’s denial of their dire situation. Dick Jones mentioned that the Whitefish Bay congregation knew something was not right but, until they brought in an outside consultant, could not discriminate with precision what exactly was missing. Bruce Bartel made explicit that demographic surveys, not only about the present congregation but its contrast to the burgeoning community, assisted the congregation in realizing what it had to do to attract new congregants and be a regional church.

### **Establish Urgency BUT...Be Positive**

Most of the pastors seemed to validate through their own experience that John Kotter is correct in saying, “Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation” (Leading 36). Without urgency, complacency and the path of least resistance settle in, and change is stalled. “Without motivation, people won’t help and the effort goes nowhere” (“Why Transformation” 3). However, those who discussed this dilemma seemed unified in their view that it is possible to both establish urgency and be positive. Bruce Bartel said, “We’ve never said, ‘You know, you’re in trouble and if you don’t get your act together, you’re going to be in deep doo-doo.’” No, what he and other

leaders did was to try and “be positive about all of it and say, ‘We’re doing this because we are followers of Jesus Christ, and we’re called to do this, and this is really healthy for us.’” As Bob Kenas said, we do not go in “blasting ‘em and chiding ‘em.” While urgency can be and often is predicated on dissatisfaction or the “yearning for more” in Christian community, such realism is supported by a prevailing sense of hope and the conviction that prophetic assessments lead to a better day. This theologically-supported optimism also functionally recognizes that some change is chosen and some is thrust on us.

### **The Pleasures of Change**

A final unanticipated finding was the deep satisfaction and glee expressed by change agent pastors and laypersons concerning the pleasure derived by congregants who had formerly been oppositional before needed change had occurred. Bob Kenas, whose church now uses PowerPoint for its contemporary service, noted how the older segment of the congregation (60s, 70s, and 80s) were resistant to this new-fangled technology. They did not want it in the “regular” service. However, once they heard how creatively and tastefully PowerPoint was being used, and after having experienced a few “previews,” they did not want to be “left out.” In particular, older persons having hearing deficiencies and impairments fell in love with the visual announcements prior to the service. Likewise, displayed pictures of those having fiftieth wedding anniversaries were met with resounding praise. Recently, when PowerPoint was used at a funeral for a concluding song accompanied by a photo montage, it facilitated people laughing as well as crying and subsequent grand accolades.

### **Contribution to Research Methodology**

The greatest contribution the study makes is to underscore the need for emotive transitioning as a necessary function of leadership to the establishment of second-order change in church organizations. The greatest contribution to research methodology would be the value of the interview protocol questions in eliciting information about the strategies that enable such transitioning to occur. The questions, while beginning with the external changes desired or achieved, enabled the change agent pastors to progressively reflect upon and disclose the methods utilized to assist the congregations in establishing emotional bridges from the past to the future.

### **Future Research Recommendations**

A follow up study to the research would compare the identified strategies of transitioning used by leaders of churches that were led to the successful establishment of second-order change with those that had an unsuccessful result. Comparative issues would include whether key methodologies were employed in certain situations and not in others; whether some strategies more essential than others; and, can such methods and strategies, in fact, be pinpointed.

Secondly, since the prevailing psychological need is for continuity amid discontinuous change, valuable research would result from a comparison between churches that institutionalize a flexibility in methodology yet espouse a rigidity in doctrinal divergence with churches that are theologically fluid but liturgically and ecclesiastically prescriptive. Research would address which churches have an easier time instituting second-order change or whether such difference in effectiveness of implementing change is negligible.

Finally, further research could compare the observations of lead pastors with a random sample of parishoners, rather than those deemed by the pastor to be leaders. In so doing, the researcher would gain a better understanding of the congruence or incongruence of perceptions around issues of external change and internal transitioning between the pastor and congregation at large.

### **Practical Applications**

Many have said, including pastors interviewed in this research, that in mainline denominations, even individuals deemed to be at “the top of their game” have not been taught how to manage and coach a staff (Kenas). Pastors, while regularly proclaiming the Good News, are ill-prepared to care for their own souls amid the rigors of ministry (Foss). Pastors are taught exegesis and historical textual analysis, but they are seldom taught how to lead (Lind). Very little, if anything, is taught about emotional transitioning in leading second-order change. The Church would be well served to start!

## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions

- A. Tell me the story of your journey, your experience, with change in a local congregation.
- 1) What specifically is the change that has taken place in your congregation?
  - 2) Who or what provoked the need for change in your congregation?
  - 3) How did the church make that change?
- B. Tell me how you might have functioned as a “change agent” in this process.
- 4) What was required of you in the way of leadership to assist in this change?
  - 5) Were there particular leadership skills necessary to facilitate the process of change?
  - 6) How did you communicate and articulate matters related to the change with the congregation?
  - 7) Were any particular communicative skills most useful?
- C. Tell me about the relationship between the inner psychological needs of people in the midst of change and its impact on the achievement of external change.
- 8) What was difficult emotionally for the congregation during this change, and how did you respond with pastoral leadership?
  - 9) What resistance and obstacles were there in moving to a new paradigm?
  - 10) How did you show sensitivity or communicate in a way to reach those who had an investment in the past?
  - 11) What means were afforded as emotional bridges to assisting people in moving from the past paradigm to the present paradigm?



12) What kind of structural adjustments, staff changes or other overt/demonstrative changes did you need to make to support your shift to a “new way of doing business”?

13) Did you meet resistance and what was your subsequent response?

D. Tell me about methods you might have used to extend your change agency beyond your own “reach” into the ongoing life of the organization.

14) Were there other things you needed to do to embed the change toward permanence?

15) How long did it take for the “transition” to fully take place?

16) What signs or what “markers” helped you know that the change had successfully occurred?

17) When did you know you were ready to “move on” to new, subsequent changes?

E. Summarize your learnings for me.

18) Were there identifiable things that could be done to enhance the successful completion of more, future changes? That is, is it possible to establish a “change climate”? And if so, how?

19) What did you learn from this change process?

20) Is there any important information about leading change that you were not given the opportunity to express?

## APPENDIX B

## Prince of Peace—Marks of Discipleship

*Marks of Discipleship*

Discipleship is the Christian's intentional journey in grace. Jesus commanded the church to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18). The goal of a disciple is maturity in Jesus Christ... "to grow into the maturity of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

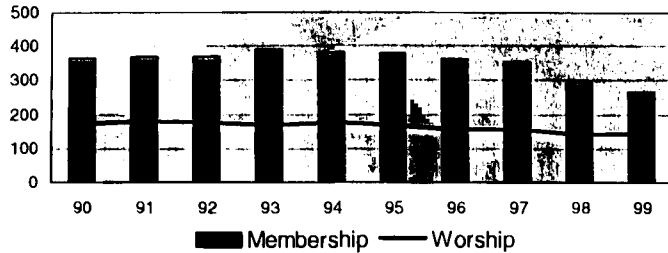
Being disciples of Jesus Christ is what Prince of Peace is all about. The marks of discipleship are significant components of our spiritual growth. At Prince of Peace we lift these marks of discipleship up as clarifiers. They help us experience the joy and responsibilities of our faith. The marks of discipleship are the benchmarks for our leaders in the ministry.

I will strive to...

- **PRAY** daily - I Thess. 5:16-19 & Psalm 119:105
- **WORSHIP** weekly - Psalm 122:1 & Heb. 10:23-25
- **READ** the Bible - Eph. 4:11-16
- **SERVE** at and beyond Prince of Peace - I Cor. 12:4-13 & Matt. 25:31-46
- **Be in RELATIONSHIP** to encourage spiritual growth in others - Mark 6:7 & Romans 15:1-2,(3-6)
- **GIVE** of my time, talents and resources (tithe) Malachi 3:10 & II Cor. 8:12

**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**Mauston UMC, 420 Suszycki, Mauston, WI 539481627**  
*Heartland District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



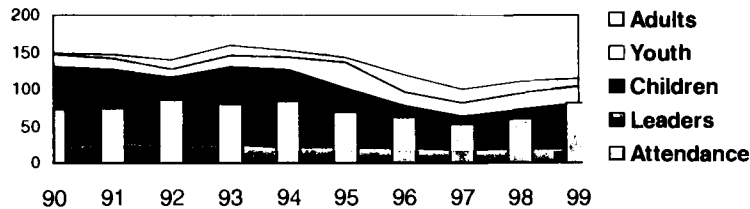
Membership at Mauston UMC has decreased 27% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is down 16%.

In 1990, 48% of Mauston members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 55%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	364	173
1991	369	181
1992	371	179
1993	389	170
1994	379	177
1995	377	170
1996	362	158
1997	352	158
1998	293	141
1999	267	146

**Church School**

Church School membership fell 23% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes increased 14%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in adults (300%).

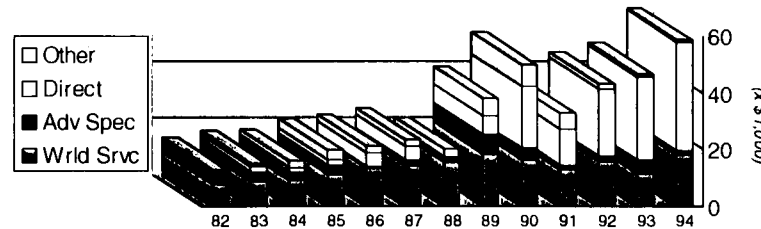


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	22	29	25	25	22	22	20	19	18	20
Children	109	98	92	106	106	80	58	45	54	61
Youth	16	15	11	14	15	34	18	18	22	22
Adults	3	5	12	15	10	8	24	18	16	12

**Benevolences**

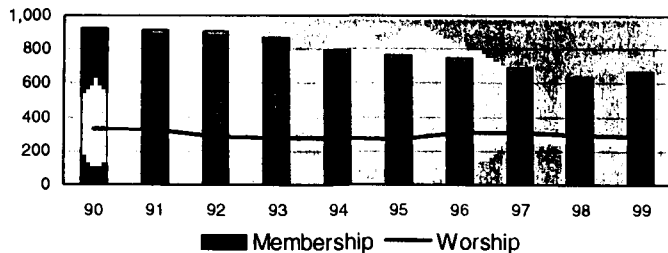
Giving to benevolences at Mauston Church are up 59% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 70% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 23%. 5% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 1%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	7.8	8.0	8.4	9.2	9.9	10.3	10.2	9.7	7.3	10.0
Advance Specials	0.0	0.1	0.8	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.9	1.1	4.3	3.3
Directly Given	0.9	1.3	1.2	1.1	2.1	2.2	0.2	6.6	1.3	0.8
Other	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.1			



**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**Neenah First UMC, 201 S Commercial St, Neenah, WI 549563021**  
*Winnebago District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



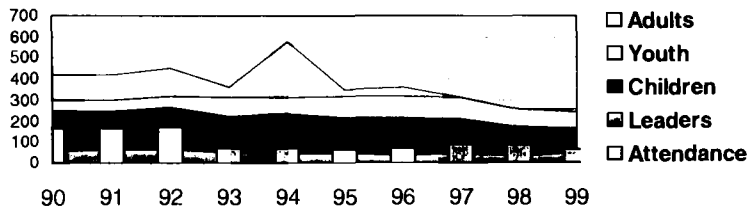
Membership at Neenah First UMC has decreased 27% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is down 13%.

In 1990, 36% of Neenah First members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 43%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	919	331
1991	912	327
1992	902	289
1993	867	278
1994	797	279
1995	765	268
1996	745	310
1997	687	312
1998	638	295
1999	668	287

**Church School**

Church School membership fell 39% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes decreased 60%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in youth (51%).

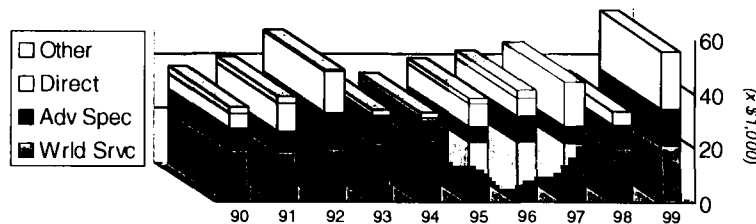


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	58	61	62	48	47	47	37	47	34	52
Children	191	188	208	177	189	170	177	164	140	112
Youth	51	50	51	90	74	101	107	100	80	77
Adults	121	124	130	50	267	33	40	0	0	15

**Benevolences**

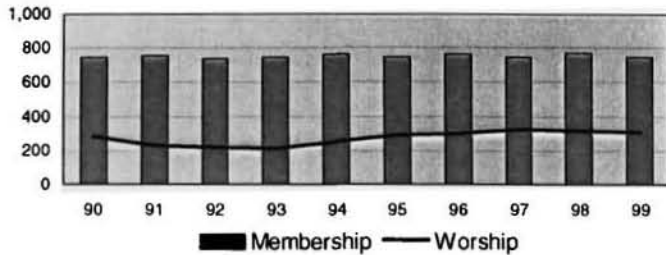
Giving to benevolences at Neenah First Church are up 61% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 37% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 24%. 37% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 1%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	19.3	18.9	19.9	22.3	23.3	22.3	22.2	21.6	20.0	21.0
Advance Specials	7.8	7.0	13.2	9.4	6.7	5.9	9.7	6.5	8.5	13.5
Directly Given	5.5	10.6	14.9	0.6	1.2	8.1	6.6	16.3	5.2	21.2
Other	2.6	2.3	0.6	1.9	1.7	2.2	2.8			



**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**Onalaska UMC, P O Box 37, Onalaska, WI 546500037**  
*Heartland District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



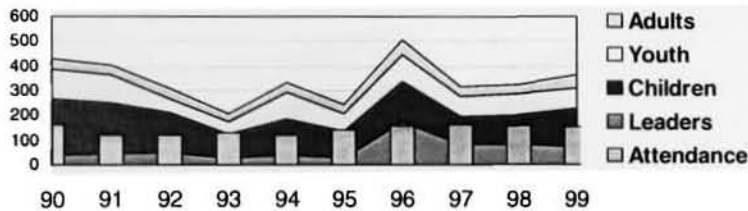
Membership at Onalaska UMC has decreased 1% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is up 10%.

In 1990, 38% of Onalaska members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 42%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	750	284
1991	751	233
1992	740	222
1993	743	212
1994	760	253
1995	747	291
1996	763	305
1997	750	327
1998	768	317
1999	745	313

**Church School**

Church School membership fell 15% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes decreased 7%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in leaders (80%).

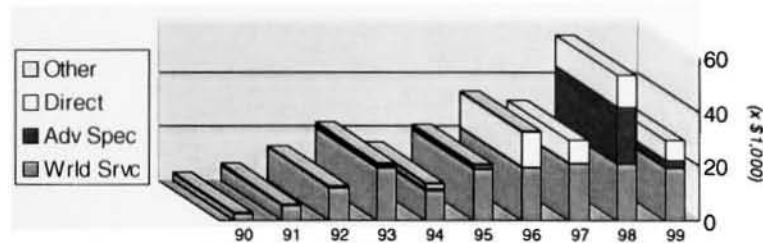


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	40	43	48	30	36	27	175	82	84	72
Children	228	210	167	96	148	109	162	115	116	158
Youth	118	113	54	47	110	72	112	82	87	81
Adults	45	35	41	32	40	40	59	38	42	55

**Benevolences**

Giving to benevolences at Onalaska Church are up 905% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 64% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 10%. 24% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 2%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	2.5	5.3	12.0	19.3	10.6	18.7	19.2	20.7	20.7	19.2
Advance Specials	0.2	0.0	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.4	0.5	0.6	21.5	3.1
Directly Given	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.5	1.5	1.1	12.8	8.3	11.7	7.4
Other	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.4			

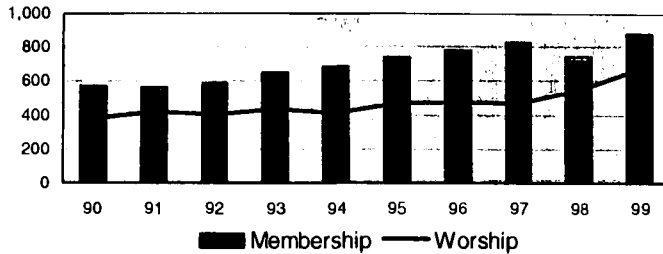


Onalaska Profile

APPENDIX E

**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**Asbury Madison UMC, 6101 University Ave, Madison, WI 537051055**  
*Capital District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



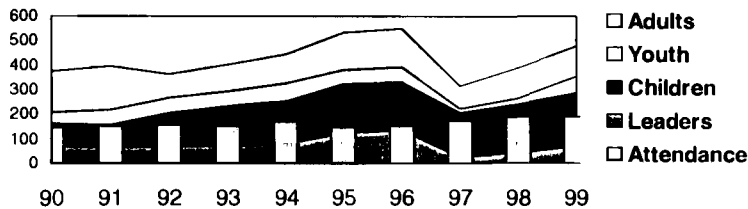
Membership at Asbury Madison UMC has increased 55% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is up 78%.

In 1990, 67% of Asbury Madison members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 77%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	568	381
1991	564	417
1992	584	408
1993	653	438
1994	682	414
1995	740	471
1996	781	480
1997	826	471
1998	743	548
1999	880	678

**Church School**

Church School membership rose 28% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes increased 30%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in children (129%).

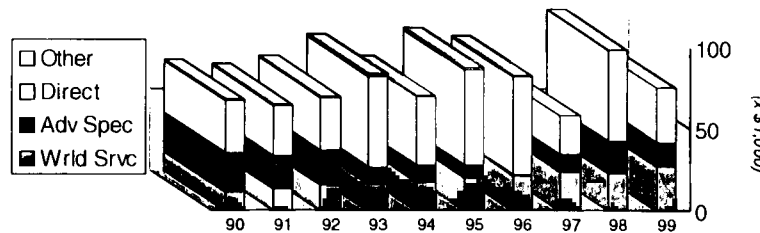


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	70	66	69	73	80	128	135	30	45	70
Children	96	94	141	160	175	198	200	180	200	220
Youth	42	56	59	60	70	55	60	15	25	65
Adults	168	180	95	110	120	156	158	90	125	125

**Benevolences**

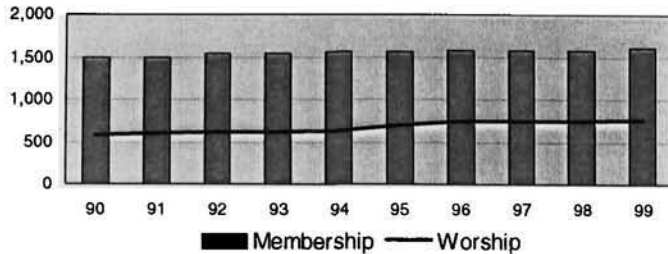
Giving to benevolences at Asbury Madison Church are up 13% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 35% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 19%. 43% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 2%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	11.3	12.9	15.3	16.7	17.3	19.4	21.7	24.1	23.0	27.3
Advance Specials	23.9	20.8	21.9	9.9	10.3	8.3	0.1	10.0	19.5	15.0
Directly Given	31.9	30.7	32.0	55.9	42.1	58.1	60.3	24.4	56.5	33.0
Other	1.1	0.7	0.8	1.2	0.6	1.6	0.7			



**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**Whitefish Bay UMC, 819 E Silver Sprg Dr, Whitefish Bay, WI 532175273**  
*Metro North District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



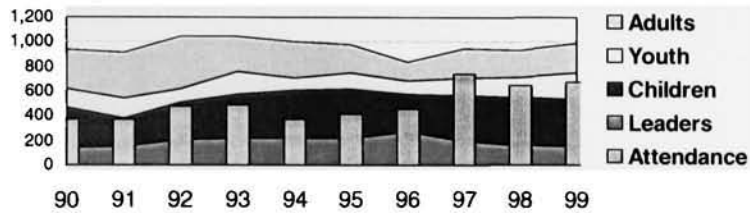
Membership at Whitefish Bay UMC has increased 8% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is up 30%.

In 1990, 39% of Whitefish Bay members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 47%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	1,491	583
1991	1,494	601
1992	1,532	615
1993	1,533	618
1994	1,552	641
1995	1,559	692
1996	1,574	748
1997	1,569	747
1998	1,565	743
1999	1,611	759

**Church School**

Church School membership rose 6% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes increased 85%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in youth (47%).

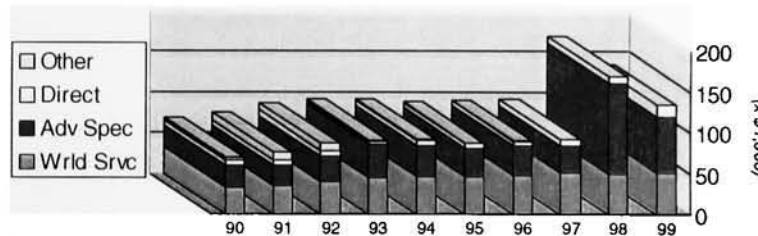


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	146	149	203	216	213	215	277	194	167	152
Children	325	235	308	362	397	402	298	370	384	385
Youth	150	160	109	187	96	132	116	149	170	220
Adults	320	372	422	287	296	228	150	239	217	238

**Benevolences**

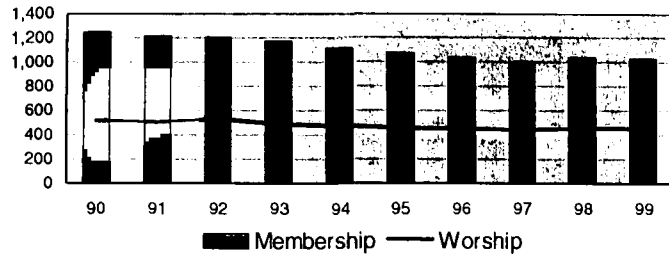
Giving to benevolences at Whitefish Bay Church are up 95% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 38% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 51%. 11% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 0%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	33.0	34.8	38.9	44.3	45.4	45.6	47.6	50.8	49.4	51.7
Advance Specials	25.7	24.0	31.8	40.3	38.5	35.5	35.8	32.5	111.5	68.4
Directly Given	6.6	6.3	7.0	3.5	5.8	5.6	5.7	7.9	8.3	14.4
Other	4.0	9.9	8.6	2.8	2.1	1.1	1.1			



**UMC Local Church Profile**  
**First Madison UMC, 203 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 537032105**  
*Capital District, Wisconsin Annual Conference*

**Membership and Worship Attendance**



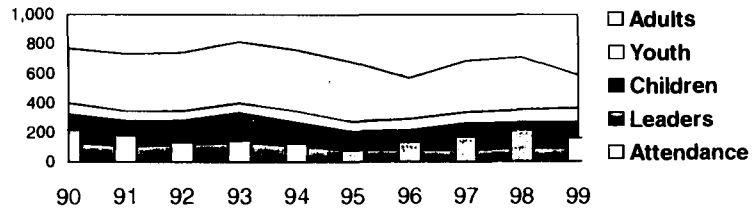
Membership at First Madison UMC has decreased 18% from 1990 to 1999. During the same period attendance is down 13%.

In 1990, 42% of First Madison members attended worship. In 1999 the average was 45%.

Year	Membership	Worship
1990	1,248	522
1991	1,215	514
1992	1,195	531
1993	1,163	494
1994	1,106	482
1995	1,069	454
1996	1,029	452
1997	1,005	445
1998	1,036	453
1999	1,021	455

**Church School**

Church School membership fell 24% from 1990-1999. At the same time attendance at Church School classes decreased 26%. The largest increase in Church School membership has been in youth (7%).

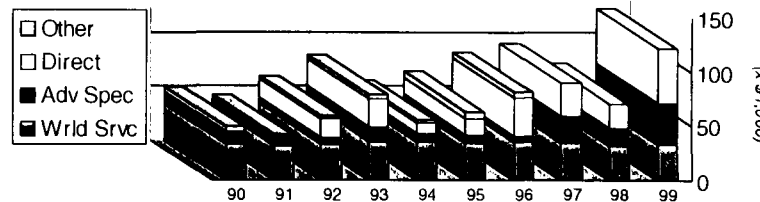


	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Leaders	138	105	120	140	112	78	81	84	93	90
Children	185	175	166	199	163	128	135	177	179	185
Youth	81	68	60	65	67	64	76	71	87	87
Adults	372	385	400	418	419	415	280	356	363	229

**Benevolences**

Giving to benevolences at First Madison Church are up 158% from 1990 to 1999. In 1999, World Service giving accounted for 26% of all benevolences. Advance specials were 30%. 40% of benevolence dollars were given directly. And other benevolent giving made up 4%.

(x \$1,000)	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
World Service	33.4	31.4	33.7	36.2	35.4	34.6	35.1	34.9	32.3	33.2
Advance Specials	10.6	8.8	5.4	13.4	8.2	7.7	5.9	24.4	15.6	38.1
Directly Given	0.0	0.0	17.3	25.7	8.9	14.9	35.5	30.2	22.7	50.7
Other	5.1	1.8	2.9	3.8	2.5	6.0	4.5			





APPENDIX I

Consent Form

*Rev. David W. Blackmer  
Lake Street United Methodist Church  
337 Lake Street, Eau Claire WI  
54701*

Dear

*Thank you for your participation in my doctoral research entitled, THE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNAL TRANSITIONING AS A NECESSARY FUNCTION OF LEADERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SECOND -ORDER CHANGE IN CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS. A key to vital research which honors those who participate is to obtain consent in using your name and the data received in presenting the information in written form. In gratitude for your help in this process I plan to give you a copy of my completed research. Please fill out the information below and affix your signature on the line identified. Again thank you for meeting with me and for helping me in this endeavor.*

Sincerely,

David W. Blackmer

\*

\*

\*

\*

## Research Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give permission to David Blackmer to use my name in print as pastor of \_\_\_\_\_ and to disclose the information discussed in our meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
sign name here

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