

# **NAVIGATING CHANGE IN MINISTRY AS THE PRIMARY CHANGE AGENT**

**As Pastors, Knowing Where to Go and  
Determining How to Get There**

# A Strong Word of Caution!



**PASTORS...**

**ARE** the key change  
**agents** ensuring  
that the church  
remains both  
relevant and  
focused on God's  
Word and the  
message of Jesus  
Christ.

**Randy Helms,  
“The Pastor as a Change Agent,” says...**

**“Change is necessary because change is expected by the Sovereign God of the Universe. The pastor who does not learn to be a change agent will not be an effective pastor. But, Spirit-led change will more readily be accepted by Spirit-filled followers of Christ.”**

## **Dr. John MacArthur says...**

**All that the church growth/change plan needs, as described in Acts, is to have:**

- 1. A transcendent message**
- 2. A regenerate congregation**
- 3. A valiant perseverance**
- 4. Evident purity**
- 5. Qualified leadership that are trained, tested and accountable**

# Ron Edmondson, 7 Characteristics of Good Change Agents:

1. **Flexible**-navigating toward the goal
2. **Courageous**-unwaveringly push through
3. **Relational**-valuing the opinions of others
4. **Strategic**-valuing key steps and timing
5. **Creative**-seeing various paths to success
6. **Intentional**-making change for a specific purpose
7. **Thorough**-follows through on commitments & brings change to fruition

# 7 THINGS NOT TO SAY WHEN LEADING CHANGE IN A CHURCH

1. **“These are great changes, but I don’t understand why you don’t like them.”**  
Instead, develop the skill of empathy.
2. **“God told me this is what we should do.”**  
Don’t pull out the “God” card, but, instead suggest it as a positive plan or a wise course to consider. Otherwise, some may become suspicious or critical.

# 7 THINGS NOT TO SAY...

3. **“We have this all figured out, trust me.”**  
Don't be a person who “knows-it-all.” Be honest. We're not 100% sure this is going to work, but what we were doing was not working. So, let's try this.
4. **“What happened in the past is irrelevant; so let's focus on the future.”** This shows arrogance. History did not begin when you arrived at the church.

## 7 THINGS NOT TO SAY...

5. **“Everyone needs to get on board right now.”** Remember, some people take more time than others. Therefore, run with those already on board. Admit that this change will stretch all of us.
6. **“I know people are leaving over this change, but who cares?”** When change comes, almost some will leave. Don't pretend it doesn't matter. It does matter when people leave and express regret.



# 7 THINGS NOT TO SAY....

## 7. “This plan for change is bullet-proof!”

- This is never true. It might fail or develop problems you did not or could not anticipate.
- Instead, say, “I believe it is our next best step, so let’s try it. Thanks for the freedom to try new things.”

# DREAMS AND VISION DRIVE CHANGE

**PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE  
OF BIBLE (old campus)**



**CAIRN UNIVERSITY  
(new campus)**



# **4 THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO DREAMS,**

## **Carey Nieuwhof**

- 1. Your Dream Dies**
- 2. You Settle for Incremental Change**
- 3. You Leave**
- 4. You Learn to Lead Change Successfully**

# 5 STRATEGIES FOR LEADING CHANGE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR DREAM, Nieuwhof

1. **Do the Math.** Calculate who is actually opposed to the change.
2. **Choose your Focus.** Decide whether you will focus on who you want to reach or who you want to keep.
3. **Find a filter.** Develop the questions that will shape your future.

# 5 STRATEGIES FOR LEADING CHANGE

4. **Attack Problems, not people.** Help people see that you are for them even if you are not for their ideas.
5. **Don't Quit.** Persevere until your critical breakthrough comes. Remember that people who quit can often forfeit their place in the story God is writing.

# 4 TYPES OF PEOPLE, Nieuwhof

- **OPPONENTS.** These makeup about 10%, but they are loud and vocal.
- **EARLY ADOPTERS.** These are also about 10% and are audibly enthusiastic.
- **EARLY MAJORITY.** These are about 30% and are quietly supportive.
- **QUIET MAJORITY.** These are 50% and quietly neutral to hopeful.

# **AS A CHANGE AGENT THE PASTOR SHOULD FOCUS ON THESE**

- ✓ **Be in prayer from beginning to end that God will lead in the vision-casting for change and then guide in its communication. It is all about Him and His Church, the Body of Jesus Christ.**
- ✓ **Always remember you are a humble servant of Christ and fellow believers.**
- ✓ **Give God the Glory! Hallowed Be Your Name. Your Kingdom Come, Lord Jesus!**

# **Pastor's Role and Process in Leading Change**

## **STOP AND PRAY**

**The crucial foundational issue and cannot be  
neglected!!! Must have unanimous and  
enthusiastic support of church board leaders**





## Leading Change as a Pastor

# Confront & Communicate a Sense of Urgency

Sharing the positive and brutal facts with the  
congregation



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## Build an Eager Coalition

Work with the Early Majority (30%) and the Quiet Majority (50%)



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## **Become a Voice & Vision of Hope**

**Most members will follow leaders who have hope  
and possibilities**



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## Deal with People Issues

Respond in congregational Q & A sessions, as well as with genuine concerns of individuals or small groups



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## **Move from an Inward Focus to an Outward Focus**

**Steadily moving the church mostly focusing on  
herself to the issue for the benefit of the change**



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## Pick Low-Hanging Fruit

Begin to announce victories which will increase  
positive momentum



# Leading Change as a Pastor

## Implement & Consolidate Change

**Make the change a part of the church lifestyle or  
culture**



## As Thom Rainer cautions:

- If you want to be comfortable, don't lead change as a pastor in your church.
- If you don't want to be criticized, don't lead change as a pastor in your church.
- If you never want to put your paycheck at risk, don't lead change as a pastor in your church.
- And, if you never want to make a difference, to go through this life the same, tame, and lame approaches most church leaders have, don't lead change as a pastor in your church.



# SUGGESTED READING

- [ronedmondson.com](http://ronedmondson.com) – “7 Characteristics of Effective Change Agent Leaders” and “Making Changes in an Established Church”
- Carey Nieuwhof, Leading Change without Losing It, The reThink Group, Cumming, GA. 2012
- SLM.org – “Prophets-God’s Change Agents”
- Brad Powell, Change Your Church for Good, The Art of Sacred Cow Tipping, Thomas Nelson, 2007
- Thom Rainer, Who Moved My Pulpit? and Autopsy of a Deceased Church. B&H Publishing
- Jeff Iorg, Leading Major Change in Your Ministry, B&H Publishing