

IT TAKES A YEAR:

CHANGE, GROWTH AND RENEWAL IN THE CHURCH

- I. Me and We
- II. Our Identity
 - a. Who have we been?
 - b. Who do we say we are?
 - c. What do we want?
 - d. What are we ACTUALLY doing?
 - e. What are our goals?
- III. Creating a Theology of Change
 - a. Creation=Change
 - b. Transformation=Change
 - c. Death and Resurrection=Change
 - d. Teaching Task for Church Leadership (Ministry Staff and Lay Leaders)
 - i. We are always changing
 - ii. We can change responsibly
 1. Acknowledging our history
 2. Respectful of people
 3. Meaningful change
 4. Spiritually led change
 - iii. Change is in keeping with God's work in scripture and church history
 - e. Babies and Bathwater
 - i. Evaluation of needs
 - ii. Protection of vulnerable
 - iii. Gentleness in process
- IV. The Process
 - a. Step 1—Searching for the Next Right Change
 - i. Self-Differentiation
 1. What is our actual truth?
 2. What pressures are working on us?
 3. Are those pressures valid?

- ii. Seeking Homeostasis
 - 1. What are we holding up?
 - 2. What is creating imbalance?
 - 3. Where is the anxiety?
 - a. Who are most vulnerable?
 - b. Who are most responsible?
 - c. Who are most immature?
- b. Step 2—Asking Questions
 - i. How are things going?
 - 1. Evaluate
 - a. Surveys
 - b. Conversations
 - c. Lunch meetings
 - 2. Evaluate broadly
 - a. Across gender
 - b. Across age groups
 - c. Diversity!!
 - ii. What results are we looking for?
 - iii. What is worth trying?
 - iv. What is not worth trying?
 - a. Antithetical to our church culture
 - b. Church not ready
 - i. Is preparing church for readiness the task?
 - ii. Should the church get ready?
- c. Step 3—Proposal
 - i. ANXIETY ALERT—THIS STEP IS MOST STRESSFUL STEP
 - 1. Change is being talked about seriously
 - 2. Scenarios invoke imagination
 - 3. Division INEVITABLE without preparation
 - a. Factions
 - b. Scape goats
 - c. Closed door meetings
 - d. Blaming
 - e. Worst case scenarios
 - f. Conspiracy theories

- ii. Base Proposals on Research
 - 1. Evaluations from Step 2 should be PROMINENT
 - 2. Evidence should be available upon request of the issue being addressed
 - 3. Clear relationship between RESEARCH and PROPOSAL should be in evidence
 - 4. Buy-in of Leadership
 - a. Small group makes proposal to Leadership
 - b. Leadership makes proposal to Congregation
- d. Step 4-Communication
 - i. Face to Face
 - 1. Meetings—Special Sessions on this topic
 - 2. Existing Systems—Small Group learning opportunities
 - 3. Media
 - a. Publications
 - b. Social media
 - 4. Individual conversations
 - a. Leadership is now in LISTENING MODE
 - ii. Breaking Triangles
 - 1. Kindly, Gently, Refuse to be Triangled
 - a. Send people to each other
 - b. Do not keep secrets or promise to keep secrets
 - i. A confidence
 - 1. Person speaking about him/herself
 - 2. Told as confession
 - ii. A secret
 - 1. Person speaking about someone else
 - 2. Told for power
 - 2. Create safe spaces
 - a. Affirm ideas
 - b. Set clear boundaries
 - c. Establish rules for play
 - 3. Listen and Respond
 - a. Proposal WILL change
 - b. Constant evaluation

i. babies and bathwater

ii. GOALS

iii. Understand the “Year”

1. Saturation of information
2. Opportunities to talk, think, explore
3. Chances to question and revise
4. Space for emotions and grief
5. Dispelling anger through careful listening
6. Honoring traditions/Saying good-byes
7. Fatigue
8. All the words
9. Fairness of process/transparency of process

e. Step 5—Vote!

i. Rules for Vote Day:

1. Leaders are silent
 - a. Explain voting process
 - b. Nothing else
2. People can offer last words
 - a. Brief
 - b. To the point
3. Vote is transparent—no “special” rules
4. Announce results promptly

f. Step 6—Rituals of Change

i. Good-byes

1. Grief process
2. Simultaneous with celebration
3. Gratitude
4. Hopefulness

ii. Use sacred traditions

1. Familiar
2. Meaningful
3. Lower anxiety

iii. NEVER STOP EVALUATING

Resources for Further Study:

Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue by Edwin H. Friedman

The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Discerning Church Dynamics by Israel Galindo