Level 1- Fix
Preparing for Change, Assessing Risk & Making Decisions

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Using Level 1–Fix This level is intended to help you work your way through a major change event affecting your ministry and you need to deal with right **NOW**. When you have time you are encouraged to read the entire article, *Preparing for Change Risk & Making Decisions*, to see the scriptural principles behind this process and to gain a deeper understanding of how to engage your team members in a well planned and understood change process.

In   any major event affecting the focus and direction of a ministry, there needs to be a deliberate process for communicating the change issues as well as the change decisions. In that process, discussion must begin with the key leadership team, expanding out to the ministry teams and finally to discussion with all interested persons invested in the ministry. James Surowiecki in his book, *The Wisdom of Crowds,* says,

> *Diversity and independence are important because the best collective decisions are the product of disagreement and contest, not consensus or compromise. An intelligent group, especially when confronted with cognition problems, does not ask its members to modify their positions in order to let the group reach a decision everyone can be happy with.[1]*

In a mature Christian community, we can expect not only an intelligent group (if discipleship is taking place) but also that the Holy Spirit has been speaking wisdom and Word to the entire body, not just a leader or leadership.

- *The Foreign Element Has Entered the Building*   In a moment of change you and your leadership team will first need to work out the fundamental issues and opportunities to determine what appears to be the best change response. A series of meetings, as opposed to just one or two, will gain the best input and will provide the most thorough information as everyone associated with the ministry starts through, as we will see in a moment, the resistance stage of change response and then descends into the chaos stage.

- *The Immune System Responds*   The mechanism to receive dissent and questioning has got to be carefully planned. Like a foreign protein entering the body, the first response is to attack it as a foreign invader. Each person may have questions, doubts, concerns and

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information from his or her own perspective. If people's contributions are not channeled into a productive process of information and opinion gathering, then, like Moses and the Hebrew people, an emotional frustration builds. There could very welll be murmurings, criticism, and loss of confidence in leadership competency.

Each person who has something to say feels his question is legitimate and necessary for making decisions. Research into how groups make decisions shows that when there is open communication, the ultimate decision has benefited from all of the input and is better than no input at all—regardless of how hard, smart or stupid the comment was.

It would be unwise for you to steer clear of those kinds of possibilities, feeling they produce conflict and negative opinions. For some, those negative feelings may have been borne out of bad experiences in the past where a climate of openness was not encouraged. Those negative feelings could be borne out of experience and wisdom, experience and pain avoidance, or simply not wanting to move off dead center. It's always dangerous to base future leadership decisions on past emotional experiences. It's even more dangerous to completely ignore those emotional lessons and minefields.

How Small Groups Eventually Make Good Decisions

If the Foreign Element is significant it will be some time before you and the rest of the leadership team are ready to make a decision, but in order to be ready for sound decision making, a solid foundation must be poured.

James Surowiecki talks in his book about how badly the decision making process went when it was discovered after launch in January 2003 that a piece of foam insulation had become dislodged and struck the *Columbia* during lift-off. Because the process for making decisions was flawed (no aggregation process) the fatal consequence decisions were also flawed. The decision makers were some of the brightest and most talented engineers and technicians America could assemble yet they did not make the decision making process work—but they could have.

What about boards of elders and deacons? How can committees and volunteers and staff make wise decisions without turning life into an endless series of meetings or worse yet, without turning themselves into mindless lemmings in a group-think march to the sea? Is there any hope? Absolutely. Combining years of group research with my own experience working with teams, there are a few key elements that must be present in order for small groups within spiritual communities to make good decisions.

FUNDAMENTALS

> *You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.*
>
> Buckminster Fuller

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- *__Foundation of Trust__*   Within every group or team there has to be a mutual level of trust. Trust is essential to making good decisions. This means at least four elements must be present.

    - *__Trustworthy__*   Each member of the team, including the leader, must feel the rest of the group or team is *trustworthy* in regard to their integrity, their spiritual centeredness and their competency to participate (they know something about the reason for meeting and they possess skills necessary to interacting positively in a group setting).

    - *__Safe Place__*   Members must feel the meeting is a *safe place* where they won't be ridiculed for a diverse opinion, or ignored or made to feel they haven't passed some unstated and unknown initiation to be an "insider."

    - *__Meaningful Work__*   The work the group or team will be asked to do must be *meaningful*; the decisions mean something. Members have to trust the process.

    - *__Trustworthy Acts__*   Every participant must believe and act in a *trustworthy way*. In essence, each member takes his or her responsibility seriously.

- *__Equanimity__*   Often you can step into a meeting and within a few minutes pick out the leader, the informal leader, the "newby," the burned out cynic, and the person who is intimidated by the rest of the team and has no idea why he is there or what he has to contribute.

    - For the "newby" and the intimidated member: The leader of the decision making group must make a special effort to indoctrinate them into the group. They need to be made to feel valued for their fresh eyes, ears and tongue. They must know they are expected to fully participate in discussion and to understand how and why decisions are made the way they are.

    - For the cynic: The leader needs to take a dual view of her—as a minister and as a team leader. The cynicism within the member needs to be ministered to. The effect of that cynicism needs to be contained.

    - For the informal leader: The true leader needs to understand the informal leader's need for power or influence and to find ways to incorporate it into the process. This is a power struggle but it's not an oppositional power struggle; it's a collaborative power struggle. The wise leader finds ways to utilize the influence of the informal leader and to not be intimidated by her knowledge, experience, relationships or personality. It may be the leader will need to meet with the informal leader to build mutual trust. The formal leader also needs to find security in his own authority so it doesn't become a weapon of submission.

    The leader needs to communicate meaning as to the significance of the team and why their decisions are so critical. Only when all members feel they are valued and expected to contribute will groups start making smart decisions.

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- *__Diversity__*   Common experience as well as formal research studies confirm that teams who think and act like each other consistently make bad decisions. As a matter of fact, research studies show homogeneous groups actually get dumber than their individual members due to the errors of group-think.

  Team members are often selected on the basis of function in the ministry, election from membership, and occasionally because of unique expertise in an area of interest or discussion. Rarely is the question asked, "Is this a balanced mix?" A healthy team, capable of making wise decisions needs to have a good balance of different styles. No one style is more productive than another. However, it is essential for the leaders to know the mix. Should the decision team lack good balance, the leader can either compensate for the imbalance or add members to the team to create balance.

  - *__Team Player__*   Some people are predominantly contributors, others communicators or collaborators, while some will take on the role of challenger. An absence or overabundance of any one style will create serious group interaction deficiencies, getting in the way of good decisions.

  - *__Conflict__*   There are some individuals who, when confronted with a conflict situation (absence of a clear or quick resolution), will resort to competing, avoiding, collaborating, compromising or accommodating as their most comfortable means to resolving the conflict for themselves. In tense moments of conflict, each member must not only know his own dominant style for self-control, but also needs to know each team member well enough to express appropriate sensitivity and respect.

  - *__Communication__*   You can often identify the person's communication style by what words they use. Analytical people will want to "think" about it. Highly relational persons "feel" strongly about an issue. Intuitive and creative problem solvers will often use the word "I see." Action oriented persons will speak in terms and words conveying action, activity, and doing it "now." Knowing how a person processes information will gain not only sensitivity into how they are communicating but also will allow you to identify the available resources within each of the individuals. If an issue involves impacting people, you need to go to the "feeler" to gain the sensitivity insight. If the issue involves facts and task you need to utilize the insight and sensitivities of the "thinker." The "intuitor" is the big picture person who is most likely the systems thinker and can see how all the pieces fit together. The "sensor" person needs activity and will help with decisiveness with an action bias. Thriving on risk, the sensor will also be willing to push others further than they would have been comfortable. As a result, a full mix is essential for a team to make good decisions.

  - *__Spiritual Gifts__*   We know from I Corinthians 12:27-29, Ephesians 4:11-12 and 1 Peter 4:10-11 that God through his Holy Spirit has empowered us with spiritual gifts for the building up of the people associated with the ministry. What we don't know exactly is how they become confirmed in us. During the charismatic renewal movement of the 1970's various spiritual gift inventory instruments emerged. They have now been used for decades, have become fairly mainstreamed in acceptance, and are helpful

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particularly in identifying the ministry gifts described in I Corinthians. While no one test is a theologically sufficient device to confirm spiritual gifts, these tests do help to focus a person's identification of strengths in personal ministry. We also know God has called some people to specific offices of ministry such as Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor/Teacher. It seems elementary that a ministry would have a good understanding of the spiritual gifts and giftings of the decision makers, yet I find it not a widespread practice among leadership teams.

- ***Experience in Group Processes***   People who have experience in group process function better in making decisions. That makes sense. Practice makes experience. Experience leads to consistency and consistency to reliability. The blind spot we may have when selecting a decision making team is to think people in business and government have the best experience. A stay-at-home mom with four kids has great experience in making decisions. The scout leader, sports coach, service club leader, community activist and organizer are great resources for decision making diversity as well. The only people who are clearly bad candidates for membership on a decision team are those whose minds are made up and closed before discussion begins. The Bible refers to those as stiff-necked or obstinate.

ESSENTIALS

- ***Openness***   I notice when team members are not secure in the team. If they have a differing view, it will come with explanations and smoothing ahead of it to make sure there is not social rejection, resistance or ridicule. Creating an honest climate of openness is freeing for members. One of the characteristics of an empowered team is when a differing view is offered, the rest of the team stops to ask for more information assuming that a valued, trusted and experienced team member has found something the rest of the "group think" had not seen. That was missed in the NASA meetings before *Columbia* left the space station for its ill-fated re-entry to earth.

- ***Emotionally Healthy, Mature***   To make good decisions, the members of the team have to be emotionally healthy. Otherwise there is a tendency in the team to overcompensate for the unhealthy member, giving them too much attention and creating too much distraction from making good choices.

MIRY BOGS

There are some gooey, miry bogs to avoid in making decisions.

- ***Over-Spiritualization***   This is a ministry we are talking about. Members are expected to pray about decisions. We must have people who are entrusted with making decisions who also are spiritually centered believers. Yet I have seen more than once where an "I believe God has told me we are to …" causes any further discussion on a topic to come to a screeching halt. Those are heavy words. This could be a correct statement. It could be an unintentional hijack. If this is a word from God through His Holy Spirit, it is profound

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and needs to be heeded. In many cases God may have given a nudge or direction to a person or the leader, but He usually confirms that in others as well. It is the wise leader who, when he feels the decision has divine direction, also is humble enough to ask the trusted team if God has confirmed that in anyone else, too. "Is it thee or me?" is an authentic question to lay before trusted team members to avoid the unintentional consequence of a spiritual hijacking.

- *__Authoritative/Autocratic__*   The days are drawing to a close when an authoritative benevolent dictator can be successful in transactionally moving a ministry to stability and growth, and keeping it there. Many authoritative ministry leaders don't realize that's their perceived style. Openness, accountability and feedback help keep the "JOHARI" window open (See Unit 5, Part 1 – Accountability, Disclosure and Feedback).

- *__Hidden Agendas__*   Disagreements can be healthy as long as the discussion is up front and in the open. But when a staff or board member does not trust the leader or has a sense of a loyalty commitment, meetings can go toxic. It's not always a staff person who has the hidden agenda or has the problem of openness. If it is the leader who is withholding information for no good purpose and is manipulating decisions, distorting discussion from the meeting, and circumventing the authority or responsibility of the decision team, then the team can very quickly go toxic. Hidden agendas will counter the potential for the best decisions.

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THREE MEETINGS

When groups and teams gather to eventually make decisions, I recommend there be three distinct phases to the process. They can be on different days or can flow from one phase directly to the next depending on the time available, complexity of the issues, need for more information and stamina of the decision makers. To reach a good decision there are three distinct decision making steps, best broken into separate meetings. They include the Change Meeting, The Risk Analysis Meeting and then, finally, The Decision Making Meeting.

The Change Meeting

How The Change Meeting starts will determine, in large measure, how the decision making process proceeds to conclusion. Some decisions seem deceptively easy with unforeseen consequences. For you and rest of the leadership team, two critical ground rules and two vital questions need to be set to avoid predisposing the team to a pre-determined answer.

GROUND RULES

- *Suspend judgment.* Everyone needs to be as neutral as realistically possible for this meeting. There is often the tendency to rush to judgment and bypass a careful examination of the effects of change. As a result there should not be any "yes" or "no" discussion at all. Everyone needs to commit to suspending judgment. There will be time enough to discuss and vote.

- *Everyone participates in the discussion.* Sometimes a team will dread the independent thinker who asks the contrarian questions and is highly opinionated. Generally, unless that person possesses substantial social influence power, his discussion, even if it's off the wall, won't make the group dumber. Rather, just the opposite occurs because now each member of the team will have to go through the intellectual steps to reach a decision. Instead of flowing with the "go," each member will have to consider and accept or reject all the extra information. That's usually good, not bad. But, this presumes the contrarian is emotionally healthy.

QUESTIONS

- *Anybody Been Praying?* This is not a facetious question. The leader needs to ask, "Has anyone in leadership been praying about this issue? If so, tell us about your prayers." Sometimes, one of the more difficult challenges of ministry is to be assured this is a "God Thing." Not all great or seemingly great opportunities are divine, though God is clearly aware of and in some way connected to everything that happens. Is this opportunity God's specific will or is it simply moving in His intention? God's will is justified through Scripture, through seeking prophetic word and divine direction, through individual and corporate prayer. God's intention means it is clearly consistent with the vision, mission, purpose, values and goals of the ministry if they were originally thoughtfully, prayerfully worked out and thoroughly grounded in Scripture. Don't ask for a full report on the process of prayer at this point, but do find out if prayer was at work.

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- ***What's the Problem/Issue/Opportunity?*** Some change issues require a problem to be addressed or solved. James Surowiecki in *The Wisdom of Crowds* says there are three categories of problems:

    The first are what I'll call cognition problems. These are problems that have or will have definitive solutions. . . . The second kind of problem is what's usually called coordination problem. Coordination problems require members of a group (market, subway riders, college students looking for a party) to figure out how to coordinate their behavior with each other, knowing that everyone else is trying to do the same. . . . The final kind of problem is a cooperation problem. As their name suggests, cooperation problems involve the challenge of getting self-interested, distrustful people to work together, even when narrow self-interest would seem to dictate that no individual should take part.[2]

Identifying the type of problem you have facilitates diagnosis of how best to approach it. Making this simple determination can save hours time toward achieving a solution.

FRAMING PERSPECTIVE – HOW YOU START IS HOW YOU FINISH

The first meeting, the **Change Meeting**, needs to be centered on building a frame through which the eventual decision(s) are made. First, seek to select a frame through which the issue or opportunity is discussed and which becomes the dominant approach in reaching a decision. Groups consciously or unconsciously tend to use one of the following styles: analytical, finding a comparable model, competing models, multiple perspectives of stakeholders or "the high road." It's important to see that the frame with which you start the discussion process will most commonly be the frame through which you later end up making the decision.

- ***Analytical***   Do we have enough information to make a decision? The analytical approach is simply adding up the pros and the cons and making a decision. This is the most efficient approach and works best in simple issues where cost is the critical issue. Replacing equipment, approving an uncomplicated budget, or making a moderate level purchase or service agreement are the kind of decisions for which the analytical method is fast, straight-forward and efficient. The analytical approach is not the best when complex human relation issues are involved or when a complex project involves multiple stakeholders and intricate interrelationships.

- ***Comparable Model***   Has someone else been faced with this issue or opportunity, problem or decision and been successful? What can we learn from their approach? If the decision has not been made before or the decision makers have had no experience with the given program or process, then a comparable model approach makes sense. In a comparable model, a similar program or process or purchase is examined in another ministry to see how well it worked out there. If no identical example can be found, it may help simply to ask the question, "Have we done something similar to this in the past and if so, how did it turn out?"

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- *__Competing Models__*   Is there a best among some good alternatives? Sometimes there does not appear to be a good point of reference where experience can be judged and where there are several alternative solutions available. It may be that having persons prepare a proposal—one that outlines benefits, features and how specific obstacles will be resolved—may be the best way to flesh out a clear direction. Vendors have to do it in a request-for-proposal process. If you use this approach though, watch out for undue ownership. Caution must be taken to make sure competing sides don't create relationship issues downstream based on whose idea or solution was eventually chosen.

- *__Multiple Stakeholders__*   Who will be affected by this decision? Why should we care? Complex issues with a number of different groups or stakeholders with differing expectations lend themselves to using the Multiple Stakeholders approach. In this setting, the decision team takes each stakeholder and advocates that entity's position, needs, fears and hopeful outcomes. It may be helpful or necessary to talk to the identified stakeholders to find these out specifically. The following all lend themselves to Multiple Stakeholders framing: Days for worship gatherings and discipleship (including Sunday mornings); school or day care on the premises; vacant land use on church property; endowments and bequeaths.

- *__"The High Road"__*   What is the Biblical standard for this situation? Some issues clearly need to be resolved on the basis of biblical and ethical standards. All of the other "yes, buts" do not merit the same level of consideration, simply because there is only one clear right way to frame.

It may be the issue needs to be framed from several perspectives. The listed options above are not either/ors and it may be that all five perspectives need to be looked at. Without an undue amount of discussion or debate, the leader or facilitator should determine how the perspective (such as analytical) should start. Then as the detail begins to unfold, he or she must also determine how to move to other options. Deciding on an initial framing perspective will help establish focus for problem solving.

__Framing Questions__   On a white board or on flip chart paper accompanied by lots of available wall space, it is time to start asking questions. Title the first sheet "Framing Questions and Answers." Experience shows that how the framing questions are asked will in large part determine how the question gets discussed and answered. The first listed item on the sheet should be "Framing Perspective – Foreign Element."

__Foreign Element__   In framing the issue, the first thing to describe is what the **foreign element** actually is. .

- *__What's The Point?__*   First, the decision team needs to describe in one sentence why are you meeting.

- *__Define the Foreign Element__*   Next, describe the foreign element and potential change issue(s). This is a good time to brainstorm. Let the thoughts flow and DO NOT discuss or evaluate any thought. Just write them down.

- Identification: "Who/what appears to be the foreign element?"

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- Opportunities: Identify the opportunities available by responding to and/or against the foreign element. Ask, "Why should we even discuss this?"

Ministry Questions -- The Resistance Beings In trying to frame the foreign element it is natural for people to begin to experience resistance to a possible change that is still ill defined. The mind is struggling to find security in a possible change event. It is very normal to be cautious and even skeptical. What you don't want to surface is cynical thinking. It is unhealthy for all. Keep in mind that resistance is not necessarily negative thinking. However, resistance can stop cloud or side track gaining an understanding of exactly what's going on. Don't ignore the "yah but" and "what if" kinds of discussion. Rather, make note of the concerns and assure you will return to those questions at the appropriate time.

The next sheet(s) to put up on the wall are related to ministry. Label them "Ministry Questions."

- "How does this change opportunity or issue fit or not fit with the vision and purpose of the ministry?" The team needs to explain how the change response aligns with the ministry or takes the ministry off course.

- If the change opportunity meets the vision/purpose test, then ask, "If we don't accept/resist the opportunity of change, who in this community is better positioned, resourced and prepared to respond?" And, "What are some reasons we should or should not look at partnering with another ministry on this?" Don't debate the question, just put up thoughts as they come from the table. For example, it may be that circumstances and opportunity are just right to launch a small group ministry. What is the possibility of sharing a staff position to launch the ministry opportunity with another church?

Exciting options are available. For example, in Cincinnati, Ohio, Crossroads Community Church saw the opportunity and the ministry burden to address the needs of the under resourced in the greater Cincinnati area. The result is described in *Willow*, a publication of the Willow Creek Association.

> *As they (Crossroads Community Church) sought more opportunities in the Cincinnati area, they learned that there was no infrastructure that could support the hundreds, even thousands, of willing volunteers. To solve the problem and meet a great need, Crossroads joined with nine churches and parachurch ministries from various denominational and racial backgrounds. Together, they laid the groundwork for a one-stop shop of compassion services that will holistically serve the under-resourced of Cincinnati. Scheduled to open in 2007, the $13 million city Link Center will provide food, clothing, job training, counsel, spiritual support and more, all under one roof.*

- Dogs and Dog Tails: "Is the infrastructure ready for change?" Sometimes great opportunities can pull down the core of an enterprise. A company gets a contract too big to service or build a part for. Or it may be that an acquisition sucks up too many assets, and leadership time gets poured into integration issues instead of into establishing cash flow to pay for the acquisition. Customers may get confused or frustrated in the reorganization, and sales may plummet. What has happened is a classic case of the tail

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wagging the dog. In a ministry there are tails and dogs. A tail bigger than the dog is one to watch out for. It usually starts as a great opportunity to expand ministry, but its success or impending failure due to lack of resources begins to control ministry.

Christian schools, retirement centers, building campaigns, and multiple campuses all have their stories of pulling down a successful ministry by overtaxing resources; so, you must ask the question, "If we accept the change, what are the internal organizational and resource needs?" If a major change opportunity is presenting itself to your ministry you need to ask the second tier questions such as, will this increase our need for trained volunteer staff, administrative support persons, marketing/media relations, etc. How long will it take to strengthen and train them? How robust is the infrastructure if there are substantial setbacks in resources, timing or membership support? Too often, without proper planning, initial success causes the tail to start wagging the dog.

- For the key leaders, the question is, How will this opportunity personally affect you? If we do it? If we don't? All of these elements must be addressed. Also, Will this opportunity enhance or detract from the focus and time requirements of current ministry activities?

- Tempo-centric time focus: Every organization has its own unique rhythm. Most service businesses are daily tempo-centric. Retail establishments are continuously tempo-centric. For them, it doesn't matter what time of the day it is as long as the doors are open

  A ministry facing specific change opportunities needs to ask, "Will this alter how we view time?" This seems like an odd question but most church-based ministries are weekly tempo-centric. This means the church functions on a seven day calendar. Will adding a daily tempo-centric ministry, for example, alter the time sense of how decisions are made and services are delivered?

Congregational/Membership Questions   These questions are still in the first ***Change Meeting*** and are designed to assess how well leadership knows membership. Important questions to ask are:

- What do we think is the congregational support for the change? Why would they support this? Why would they not?

- Do we have skilled and discipled resources to build leadership and ministry teams? If not, where will they come from? How will we recruit and train volunteers? Will this change alter our constituency demographics? In what way?

- Will this change alter our congregational or ministry identity? If so, how? Some churches have a long standing tradition of a traditional ministry focus. It may be foreign missions, community service, Sunday school or VBS. A community ministry may have focused narrowly in a specialized area such as feeding homeless, providing chaplaincy to

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jails and prisons, addressing teen substance abuse, providing homeless men with job skills, etc. Will the change issue facing the leadership team alter that identity?

Community-at-Large Questions   Finally, you need to ask how the change issue will affect your ministry's identity and relationship to the community where you minister.

- Will this change alter our established identity—how the rest of the community views us? If so, how?

- What is the impact, short and long range, if we don't accept the change?

- If we accept the change, how does that affect our service reach—our serving demographics?

Review & Summarize

- Whoever is leading and facilitating the discussion should start to review and summarize the discussion until the team can form a statement about the change opportunity. The team must either come to a conclusion regarding the change response or formulate a recommendation to take to a larger group of stakeholders, constituents or congregants.

- Ask for prayer and fasting. Membership does not expect leadership to do the praying for them, but there is an expectation that leadership has submitted their personal desires plus the opportunity and the purpose of the ministry to a process of fasting and prayer.

  - God's direction. This may be an issue of semantics but we perhaps spend too much time seeking God's will and too little time discerning God's direction. If a ministry proclaims Christ as Lord and Savior, seeks to bring people to a relationship with Jesus Christ, desires the Holy Spirit to minister in power and convicting truth, and has members praying to be instruments of righteousness, then the ministry is in God's will and whatever it does to serve those purposes serves his will. That is not to say that holding up everything that is done and plans to be done to the revealing light of Scripture is not a good thing. Every person and every ministry needs to periodically (daily, if necessary) examine its motives for ministry.

  - God's intention. What's more sensitive is discerning God's intention for the moment, and most often, that intention comes through common thoughts and insights planted in the hearts of many who are committed to the ministry they are a part of. J. I. Packer says it this way:

    We were neither made nor redeemed for self-sufficient aloneness, and it is not to be expected that our private stock of wisdom and discernment will suffice without supplement from outside sources. We must never be too proud to take advice from persons wiser and godlier than ourselves, and any personal guidance that we think we have received by inner nudge from the Lord ought to be checked with believers who are capable of recognizing unrealism, delusion, and folly when they see it. In these

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two ways the Spirit regularly uses the fellowship of the body of Christ to deepen each Christian's discernment of God's will, and it is part of the discipline of divine guidance to be ready for the Spirit to speak to us through other believers to confirm his will for our lives.[3]

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The Risk Analysis Meeting

The leadership team is ready to go to the next meeting, *Risk Analysis*. In this meeting, still no decisions are made. This is the time to realistically look at and assess all the potential risks and outcomes of responding to the change event. This meeting can immediately follow the *Change* meeting or, depending on urgency for a decision, can be held after more information is gathered and people are talked to.

Another purpose for the risk analysis meeting is to address resistance in an objective manner. Most resistance is subjective and the best way to tame it is to get objective labels onto the feelings.

- *What are the real costs?* House and Garden TV sponsored a dream house giveaway. A Batavia, Illinois couple were the "lucky" winners. The only problem? Come the end of the year, Don and Shelly Cruz will owe about $650,000 in back taxes and penalties to the IRS for the $1.5 million, 5,000 square foot lakeside home in Tyler, Texas they won.[4] In order to keep the dream house, the Cruzes will have to come up with a small fortune in cash equal to at least 2-3 times the cost of a conventional house. Sometimes what seem like incredible opportunities carry unanticipated costs that could collapse a family, a business or a ministry.

  Remember the fictional Grace Community Church scenario? Similar events do occur in real life. A senior pastor friend of mine walked into a new pastorate at a church with a $2 million endowment. Eventually this actual church ended up getting the money out of the church because the amount of the endowment was so disproportionate to the size of the church. The unintended consequence of giving the endowment, and the unanticipated consequence of receiving it, was that it caused a change in people's attitudes and actions. It caused them to decrease or stop their tithing ("*With that kind of money in the bank, why do you want ours?");* to resist offering for special needs *("Why don't you just go to the bank and tap our funds?");* and to stop volunteering *("Why ask me? Can't you hire someone for that?");* even though the money was earmarked for missions. The well intended gift ended up working against the foundation of the ministry—selfless sacrifice. Sad but true.

  Some changes present the possibility of alterering the whole dynamic of why we came into existence? That is what a *Risk Analysis* meeting is for: To determine risk factors.

- *What's at stake?* Key risk analysis questions include: If we decide to go forward, what are the realistic gains? What are the optimistic gains? What are the minimally expected gains? What are the very possible losses? What is the worst case scenario we could imagine by going forward? Could it be lawsuits, a church/ministry split or bankruptcy? How likely is that to occur?

  In early 2004, after over five years of planning, the Tumwater, Washington American Legion Post looked forward to the opening of a new facility intended for member and community use. In 2005 they lost title to the building. The August 10, 2005 front page of

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The Olympian headlined the sad story: "American Legion Dream Sours" followed by "Developer says lack of payment could force post to surrender new home."

The article went on to say,

> Three years ago, the commander of American Legion Post 166 bubbled about the project that would give the city a conference center and his post a new home.
>
> "This is a really, really, really big day for Tumwater," Ed Cleeves told those assembled for the groundbreaking ceremony.
>
> On Tuesday, as post leaders raced to avoid losing a stake in the building, K. Frank Kirkbride characterized the project he developed for the post in a very different way: "This is just a disaster from our standpoint."
>
> The sole motivation to develop the project was to give the post and community a valuable asset, Kirkbride said of himself and his partner, Don Lewison. Having to wrest control of the building from the post weighs heavily on him, Kirkbride added.
>
> "The most painful, painful thing I had to do was to take this building back," he said. "It was an excruciating thing to do."
>
> Yet the post hasn't paid a cent of the nearly $1 million it owes for the building, the developer said. And unless the post can pay back the debt in full or arrange a financial plan backed by a bank or investors by month's end, it will permanently lose its interest in the building.
>
> The post is negotiating with individuals to bring about a resolution.[5]

The stakes were high and in the process of poor planning and execution, the post lost its home.

- **_List all the risk factors._** This is the time to make a laundry list of the risk issues. Financial drain, legal liabilities, congregational or membership support, staffing resources, current building and land utilization, and legal restrictions may all be legitimate concerns. Some may be minor, but it's best to get them all out in the beginning so they can be put in perspective. Some team members may feel like this is raining on a parade, but it's reality.

- **_Comparable models._** If the framing perspective included looking into comparable models, this is a good time to pull that data and experience in. Are there any other similar ministries who have a similar program? What can you find out from them? What risks did they encounter that you haven't thought about?

- **_Balance restorers._** On the "what could go wrong" side, are there built-in measures of protection so as to be able to restore balance if things start to get out of control?

- **_Review the change discussion._** Is there any reason why we should not continue with the process of making decisions? Is there a compelling reason at this point, due to the

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unacceptable risk of change, that further discussion would be unproductive and just increase the defensiveness of people who have opposing views?

- ***Continue to suspend judgment.*** There is a strong temptation, after giving some discussion to risk, to directly move to a decision. Avoid this temptation until everyone feels the risk gain and loss issues have been thoroughly discussed.

- ***Perspective – The trivial many and the vital few.*** Not all risk issues are of equal concern. Valuing the risk is important. For example, getting sued for doing something is always a risk. Some activities have greater liability exposure than others. In 1906, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto created a mathematical formula to describe the unequal distribution of wealth in his country, observing that twenty percent of the people owned eighty percent of the wealth. In the late 1940s, Dr. Joseph Juran made a broader application which he called the "trivial many and the vital few." Maybe in your discussion, using Pareto's Principle, 20 percent of the risk issues are substantial and 80 percent are trivial. It is essential to sort out the trivial many risk issues and focus on the vital few. Don't ignore what appears to be a trivial point; just don't overreact to it or give it more time or attention than appropriate.

- ***Conclusion***. In concluding this portion of the process it is important to summarize by creating a list consisting of three columns. Column one is entitled "Things We Know." The next column is labeled, "Things We Know We Don't Know." The third column is labeled, "Things We Don't Know We Don't Know." The third column sounds like an enigma—and it is. These are the things that will kill you. The only way they are revealed is through prayer, fasting and communication.

- ***Anticipate Chaos*** Not everyone may agree with how you've reached this point. Some may feel other issues were not sufficiently addressed. Others may be uncomfortable with where they see the ministry heading and are not comfortable with the identified risks. There may be doubts in the leadership team. That is normal. Believe it our not, chaos can be a sign of progress. Hidden agendas are surfacing, divergent views are being aired. Human nature is at its worst and its best. Something is going to happen. It was psychiatrist and author of *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck, who said,

    The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.

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Decision Making Meeting

- *__Go–No Go__* Now it's time to make a decision. For the leadership team, the first decision is to decide to decide. Is the change issue adequately framed? Do we know what the foreign element is? Can we anticipate the level of resistance and acceptance? Can we survive chaos and unanticipated success? In other words, is the anticipated change acceptable? Is the risk of resisting or embracing change acceptable? Does the change keep our organizational or ministry culture the same or does it alter it? If so, how? Is this a good thing to do in general? What is the gain? What is the spiritual profit? The decision at this point is not yea or nay; it's simply, Do we stop our investment in time or do we go forward to a decision. In the legislative process, this is what is called the Rules Committee. When a bill comes to Rules, the legislative leadership of the House or Senate will determine if there is sufficient evidence from bill hearings and the political capital necessary to bring it out for a vote on the floor. Likewise, your decision as to whether or not to move forward should pass through a Rules Committee of your own. This may be an executive committee or a committee of experienced advisors.

  If the answer is to go forward with discussion, it's time to take the process of making a decision to a larger group. It could be to the management or ministry team. Or it could be to the membership or stakeholders of the ministry. With either group, it would be foolish to throw the change opportunity on the table and let a larger group thrash through the same process. That's not leadership; that's inciting a riot. The wise approach is to present the product of discussion up to this point and ask for input. This gives confidence to the rest of those directly affected that thoughtful discussion and prayer has gone before this meeting. It also builds trust in the leadership team for future decision and actions. Don't buck conventional wisdom. Research studies show that in implementing change, unsuccessful leaders do not take the time to explain to the larger group the rationale for the decision or listen to expressed concerns.[6]

  As you begin the decision making process your leadership team needs to be looking for the Transforming Idea. What does it look like? How will you know it when you find it? It's almost like trying to define when you will know you have found true love; you'll know it when you experience it—if you're looking for it.

- *__Vision & Purpose Test__* Any ministry leader using a vision statement with purpose as the philosophical foundation to ministry must, absolutely, discipline himself to ask each time a decision is made, "How does this fit with vision and purpose?" Since the vision statement and defined purposes reflect the biblical precepts of who you are and why are you doing what you do, testing the core is essential for focus.

  The unspiritual person has little difficulty making decisions. If it feels right in the gut (intuition), feels good (sensual), makes sense (intellect), and some other peer group agrees with it, it's a go. For the spiritual persons, in wanting to make a right decision pleasing to God, we sometimes forget our basic training and stand paralyzed, wondering which way to move. Firefighters, police officers and soldiers, sailors and pilots train and

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train so that right decisions are based on sound training, not panic, doubt and fear. Spiritual leaders need to constantly train to better discern their own inner voice, the voices of team members whispering words of fear, greed, power or pride, and the still small voice (and sometimes booming voice) of God.

- **_Stopping the Runaway Train_**   There are those nightmare times when all of a sudden the decision making team train begins to shake and shudder on the track and you can see a train wreck coming. Sometimes it's a runaway train. On other occasions, it somehow gets high jacked—the leader is being held hostage and the train is going in a different direction.

  In a 1985 movie, *Runaway Train*, two prisoners, Manny and Buck, escape from a desolate Alaskan maximum-security facility. As a part of their escape plan, they hop aboard a train and make a clean escape. Unfortunately the engineer suffers a heart attack. To make matters worse, the brakes fail and the train goes out of control and can't be stopped. Railroad management's plan is to derail the runaway train, killing its occupants and thus saving the lives of hundreds of others. But once Manny catches on to the plan he tries to jump off the train, only to be talked out of it by railroad employee Sara. Desperate about having his perfect plan go sideways, Manny apparently goes mad and viciously prevents any attempts to stop the train or rescue its passengers. Manny's plan is that if he's to die, and if the others are to be saved, it will be on his terms, or no terms.[7]

  Does the plot sound vaguely familiar? Maybe this is déjà vu from the last major issue you had to resolve with a decision team. Let's look at some of the classic errors responsible for causing your runaway train.

  - *Error of Preemptive Conclusion*   Watch out for decisions that have the appearance of being simple. The leader may have poorly framed the original question and the team is simply moving as fast as possible to reach the railroad round house. If you listen carefully you can hear the hoot of the engine whistle. As the leader you must stop and ask, "Now why are we making this decision this way?" If participants can't give a coherent response other than, "I thought that's what you wanted," then start pulling the emergency brake.

  - *Error* of *Confirmation Bias*   The leader must be watchful to make sure the other decision makers don't unconsciously seek those bits of information that confirm their underlying intuitions, prejudices and opinions. The leader many times must function more as a mediator than the problem solver. Research into how juries come to decisions shows there are basically two types:

    - Evidence-based juries – weigh the evidence and testimony before making a decision
    - Verdict-based juries – look simply for a conclusion of guilt or innocence

    Evidence-based juries take longer to come to a conclusion and are more thoughtful in the process. Verdict-based juries operate more on the emotional "gut."

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The leader needs to periodically ask, "On what foundation are we making this decision?"

- Error *of Information Cascade*   Experience and research shows that many people at some point start doubting their own conflicting private information and start to accept the actions of others and imitate them. Sometimes people are wrong and the majority is thinking right, but in an information cascade, the doubter begins to find fact in the false assumptions of others, ignoring his own correct information.

  The best way to avoid information cascade is to encourage the contrarian to speak, believing she may be a potential source of information not seen by the majority of the team. Discussion will sort the facts.

- Error of Consensus   This is often confused in ministries as synonymous with unity. In reality, consensus is accepting the lowest common denominator of agreement and being satisfied with it. Ministries need a decision making environment where spirited debate occurs because the stakes are so high. Spirited debate in an environment of trust is not negative conflict.

- Error of Social Comparison   Studies show that people who don't regard themselves at the same social level (intellectual, economic, social standing) as others will doubt their own beliefs and go along with those they look up to, even if those they look up to are strongly believed to be wrong. Leaders must model equanimity to get full participation.

- Error *of Spiritual Presumption*   There is a fine and critical balance between seeking the mind and will of God and proclaiming it in a decision making process. Since the same Spirit of Christ is present in all believers, we have to believe that the same Spirit who revealed His will to one will confirm it in others. It is not a challenge of spiritual authority or respect to ask for clarification, test for affirmation, wait for confirmation and weigh any prophetic word received or impressed upon a decision maker. To not allow a process of submission to the spiritual insights and maturities of others may be presumption.

- *Error of Talkativeness*   Some people clarify their thoughts by listening. For others, it's by talking things through. There are the few, also, who feel a need to dominate the conversation. The leader needs to do three things to moderate this error. First is to remind participants to balance the discussion. Quiet people must be willing to step up and make comments; that's a requirement of membership. Likewise, vocal people must develop the discipline of listening. Second, the leader needs to remind the team that they too are responsible for monitoring balance of discussion. Third, the leader must model the standard and call on the quiet listener for thoughtful insight, ask more open ended questions and send the constant talker for donuts (just kidding).

- *Error of* Abdication   I've seen leaders, when a board has had to make a tough call, become more concerned about continued position than process. They basically stand on the sidelines of discussion so in the end, if the tide of support is not going

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their way, they can point to a runaway board and claim distance from the decision. The complete personal investment of the leader in a team decision is fundamental. Much is the discussion about loyalty to the leader. Equally important is loyalty of the leader to the team.

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Ways of Aggregating Data to Make Decisions

How data is collected and framed influences greatly the conclusions born of it. When dealing with especially complex issues, multiple approaches are highly recommended. If different conclusions are reached, explore the reasons why. Is there unintentional biasing of the data or the outcome? Listed below are some of the common ways to approach the final decision.

- *Other Experiences* – Ask participants to describe if they have experienced any similar situations. If so, have them describe what was decided and the outcome of the decision.

- *Pareto's Principle* – Try to define the "20% factors"—those items, issues, or people that have the greatest potential to affect 80% probability of a successful outcome.

- Vote – Voting may or may not be binding. A non-binding vote is a good way to start determining the prevailing opinions of the team. If someone has an opinion diverse from that of the rest of the group, ask him to explain so that previously undiscovered ideas or concerns can be brought to light.

- Force Field Analysis – Take a sheet of paper. Draw a vertical line. On the left side label the column "Issues, Facts and Forces Preventing Success." Label the right side "Issues, Facts and Forces Leading to Success." Have team members brainstorm items. Discuss why they are preventing or leading to success. After the list feels complete, value the items by placing a percentage label on each item, based on how much force that item has in the column. Items on each side should total 100%.

- Decision Tree – Some decisions are complex with a large number of variables. A decision tree can help sort them out. The best way to work a decision tree is to start with what you now know. What is the first decision you need to make? Write it down. Then put two branches off of the first decision: Yes and No. If the answer you are about to make is yes, what is the result? Are there decisions that branch from the yes result? Keep working those out. Then go over to the no. What are the consequences of no? Do those require decisions? If so, what are the consequences of a yes and a no for each of those? Building a decision tree gives you the best information for a contingency plan and builds in considerable flexibility to any decision making process.

- Brainstorming – The creative form of problem solving and making decisions works best in the early stages and pulls the non-obvious ideas out of team members. Here are a few rules if you plan to use it.

  Rules for Brainstorming
  o No criticism, evaluation, judgment, or defense of ideas during the brainstorming session.

  o No limit on "wild" ideas, no matter how outrageous or impractical they seem. Every idea is to be expressed.

  o Quantity is more desirable than quality.

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- "Piggybacking"—building on ideas—is encouraged.

- Everyone must be encouraged to participate.

- Record all ideas, i.e., on a piece of flipchart paper.

- Choose "Top 5 Ideas." Combine similar ideas when appropriate.

- Individually rank ideas.

- Decide, as a group, which idea will be enacted first.

- Begin the brainstorming process again as necessary.

The leader's most important roles are preventing participants from grading ideas and assuring that the team works for creativity. Most teams are so accustomed to solving problems in a linear, task-focused format that the leader may have to work hard to keep the ideas (including wild ones) flowing.

- "What If?" Scenarios – The best way to prepare for a decision is to begin asking the leadership team, What if we decided to do nothing? What would be the gain, what would be the loss? What is compelling us to do anything at all?

The next line of questioning asks, What if we decide to postpone this decision? Why would we do that? What would be the gain? What would be the loss by waiting? Why do we have to make any decision right now?

Then on the flip side of that, What if we decide to go forward as a result of this meeting? What would be the costs, risks, gain and loss? Why do we have to make this decision right now and begin implementing?

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Tips on Making Decisions

Regardless of the method, it's time to make a decision. Here are a few tips:

- Don't make decisions on an "empty stomach." Avoid snap decisions. If the solution appears too easy, it probably is. Use as much time as is reasonable to pray and discuss.

- Watch out for labeling of people and circumstances. Stereotyping people involved in the decision or pigeonholing the problem or solution is lazy thinking and results in poor decisions.

- Spend some time framing the decision. This is foundation building—not seen in the end, but everything rests on it.

- Don't procrastinate. The lack of time is your enemy. Taking advantage of the gift of time allows for brainstorming, temperature taking, balloon floating.

- Make decisions on a white board or on paper. Putting up people's thoughts and ideas for everyone to see gives them a sense of ownership and allows for others to look at and think about each point.

- List stakeholders in the decision's outcome. Who gains from the decision? Who, if any, are the lesser because of it?

- Don't burn bridges, build them. Inductive, divergent decisions create a contingency plan. It is our tendency to be deductive and to come quickly to the one best, logical solution. Avoid that tendency for as long as possible. Doing so helps create more options.

- Don't agonize over it once it's made. No decision is perfect for everyone. Make sure flexibility is built in so that modifications can be made if needed.

- Look for win/win collaboration efforts. Advocate the "on the other hand" side. Except for issues of doctrine and ethics, trying to find a win/win builds community.

- Practice explaining your decision to your board of elders or to the membership of the ministry. Can you imagine the expressions on their faces? Are they surprised? Perplexed? Pleased? Shocked?

- Don't ask for input unless you seriously value the source and are prepared to incorporate the input.

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Twenty Questions for Making a Decision

A final check by asking these questions will secure confidence that this was the right decision at the right time and made by the right team.

1. <u>What is the issue requiring a decision?</u> If after going through this process you can't define the issue in objective terms, you don't have a problem or a decision to make—you just think you do. Objectively describing the issue needing a decision begins a process of transferring subjective worry to objective concern.

2. <u>What is the decision?</u> Is it yes or no? Are there contingencies? Is the question: Yes, but how (or if or when)? Importantly, what about why?

3. <u>What, if anything, does this have to do with me? with us?</u> The reference point for making decisions should always default back to your personal and ministry vision, mission/purpose statements and core values.

4. <u>Is it scripturally correct?</u> Having defined the problem, issue or opportunity, you are now able to topically label it. What is the root issue? What does Scripture say about the topic?

   - What did Jesus do? Without getting overly critical, rather than presuming what He might do, ask the real question: What will I do because of what Jesus *did* or *said?*

   - What does Scripture say? What are the other examples, principles and direction provided through the New Testament epistles, Old Testament stories, and words of prophecy and wisdom?

5. <u>Is it ethically moral, not just prudent?</u> Will the decision meet the letter of the law and fail in the spirit? Prudent decisions are correct ones but are selfishly beneficial. Ethically moral decisions are correct in the letter, are not self-serving, and are transparent in their intent and consequence.

6. <u>Is it my/our decision to make?</u> Many decisions are best delegated. Encouraging other staff members to make and be responsible for decisions creates ownership in the process and trains others to go through the disciplined process of making thoughtful decisions. Also, by whose authority are you making this decision?

   - If it's not my decision, than whose decision is it? Take time in determining whose decision this is. If you are leader of a team, why not let the team work it out after giving the parameters for decision making? Most decisions are best made at the lowest level.

   - Am I the best person to make it? Based on personality type, some people are more gifted in analytical processes and others in relational processes. Some decisions need to be made by the leader while others need to demonstrate a unity of purpose through making the decisions.

   - Upwards delegation may be wise. Some decisions must/should be made by your leader, your board of elders, deacons or directors.

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- Some decisions simply must be made by the leader. In such cases, it is essential for both the decision and the circumstance to communicate authority, investment, complexity or ownership. These situations are rare. Most often, and this is not a matter of passing the buck, decisions are best made by the team, not the leader.

7. <u>Who will benefit?</u> Some decisions need to be made to protect the stability or integrity of the ministry. Be careful because if those decisions are made at the expense of the people you serve, it could be what I call ecclesiastical sin: Preserving the institution at the expense of the true church—the believers.

8. <u>What are the alternatives?</u> Are there different ways to reach the same decision? What are the costs and outcome potentials for each alternative? There are always alternative decisions and alternative ways to reach any decision.

9. <u>If an opponent made the decision, what would it likely be?</u> Analyze why and how a person who may be on the opposite side of an issue would resolve the issue or answer the question. Can you find common ground if anticipated opposition to a decision arises?

10. <u>What is the cost for gain, of loss?</u> Most decisions carry some cost for success and failure.

    - Can you anticipate them ahead of time? Is the gain from the decision worth the cost?

    - Who will pay a price? All decisions come at a cost. It may be monetary or it could involve reputation, time or human resource. Count the cost of the decision. Determine who will pay for the result of a good decision. Who pays for one that ends up bad? What is the price they pay?

11. <u>What do wise counsels say?</u> Have you consulted wise people who are not emotionally connected to the issue and the outcome?

12. <u>What does my "heart" say?</u> The heart is a combination of emotional thought process and subconscious right brain processing. One of the functions of the right portion of the brain is to continuously analyze the environment to create what is termed homeostasis—a state of normalcy. The brain is continuously making sure body temperature, posture, blood pressure and awareness of the social and physical environment is being managed to eliminate any life threatening conditions. As a result the "heart," the subjective part of our being, many times can detect pattern problems long before the logical part of the brain, the left side, can figure it out. This is the "gut feel" or intuition. You can't rely on the gut but don't ever ignore the warnings. They are usually correct. If your gut feel is not good, there probably is danger lurking in the pattern.

13. <u>What does my "head" say?</u> As Western-Greek thinking creatures, we pride ourselves on our analytical reasoning abilities. In some people it is impressive to see, but don't think reasoning has to be the only word on making good decisions. Neither does it have to be the last.

14. <u>What does my "spirit" say?</u> What is the product of prayer? Have you been directed to a scripture? Have others been praying? What is their sense? I don't know about others,

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but for me, discerning God's intention is often difficult. There have been times when the answer is clear and unambiguous. But often it takes time, discussion, and prayer before a sense of clarity emerges. We can't be casual about the process and expect to get good answers.

15. <u>Does the decision need to be made now?</u> Timing is everything. Sometimes delay is wisdom. Impatience is part of our sin nature. Patience is a virtue and is a part of the mind of Christ. There are times when delaying allows for God to work His works. However, watch out for procrastination. It's our nature to do the things that give us enjoyment and put off the uncomfortable. Learn to sense when delay is wise and when it is simply avoidance.

16. <u>What are the costs of making a decision now?</u> Is there prudence in making a quick decision? Does it lower costs? Does it cut off harmful dissension? Does it cut off productive discussion and ownership?

17. <u>What are the costs of waiting?</u> Does delaying either a decision or the implementation of a decision for whatever good reason increase hard costs (dollars, assets, resources) and come at the expense of relationships? Parkinson's Second Law says that delay is the most deadly form of denial. If the decision is to not make a decision until later, it needs to be for good reasons and good purposes.

18. <u>Can we implement the decision – people, programs, time?</u> If you make a decision, what's the time frame for implementation? Do you have the human and other resources in place to implement and deal with the ramifications of the decision?

19. <u>Have we informed people in plenty of time?</u> A mature group or team can positively deal with a contingency plan. People can plan, anticipate, share in the process, gain ownership and provide refining input. Letting people know a present decision has been made about a future opportunity gives people time to prepare or resist, depending on how the decision is managed.

20. <u>Do we have enough information?</u> If it takes X effort to reach 51% certitude, it will probably take 10X effort to gain the information to have 61% certitude, and as much as 100X effort to get to 71%. How much information is enough? It will depend on the criticality of the decision, how easily the decision can be modified or even reversed. NASA's confidence in a decision regarding the space shuttle is much more critical than a decision to buy a new church van. There is wisdom in knowing the line between being reckless and nitpicky.

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Implementing & Sustaining Change

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

Leo Tolstoy

Integration

You, your leadership team and possibly the stakeholders of the ministry have been through a challenging process. Integration involves first of all being able to clearly define what you intend to do because of the change event/opportunity. The effective leader pulls together everyone who was a part of the process, and particularly those who had differing views and uses the positive and optimistic feelings coming out of a complex process to work toward a common vision and goal. Some key steps include:

- Communicate vision as to how the change decision makes the ministry stronger, more flexible, more relevant, more true to the vision and mission/purpose.

- Incorporate as much as possible the concerns of those who demonstrated some degree of resistance.

- Make the decision making process a legend by retelling how differing views and concerns made the final decision better and relationships stronger.

- Develop a clear plan. Leadership may have successfully taken you through the change/risk/making decision process but it is only the practical managership steps of working the process through that sustains trust and trains everyone in successful change experiences.

- Demonstrate that the difficult process has some immediate return on the investment of time and emotions. This can be accomplished by Taking an immediate step to implement some aspect of the change.

- Ask often, *"Now why are we doing this?"* It keeps the vision and purpose at the forefront.

- Confront naysayers early. This is still a fragile time. When you hear of naysaying, talk to the person, hear their concerns and remind them that the process is going forward. There was a time to voice concerns but not all concerns are actionable. Explain their continuing attitude is eroding unity, is not healthy, and you need them to support you and the plan by not complaining.

- Be flexible. Very few decisions are complete and perfect from the inception. Make sure when modifications are made to the agreed plan there is sufficient communication to everyone., Make sure the changes incorporate the contingency planning in the risk and decision making meetings and the changes are is still true to the original decision. If unanticipated issues come up requiring a major change from the original decision, bring your leadership team back together and discuss the new issues.

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Let's Get Personal

Change and what a ministry does with it, to it and because of it determine its future. At the epicenter of every change quake are the actions of the leader. Warren Bennis, one of the leading authorities on leadership behavior, describes the dynamic tension always present between external change affecting an organization, internal change within the organization and internal change within the leader.

Learning to lead is, on one level, learning to manage change. As we've seen, a leader imposes (in the most positive sense of the word) his or her philosophy on the organization, creating or re-creating its culture. The organization then acts on that philosophy, carries out the mission, and the culture takes on a life of its own, becoming more cause than effect. But unless the leader continues to evolve, to adapt and adjust to external change, the organization will sooner or later stall.[8]

What's relevant to the Christian community about Bennis' observations is that while the Body of Christ never changes, the institution—the vessel in which the *ecclesia* functions—is in a dynamic state of change. From the seven churches of Revelation to today we see that the manner in which leadership responds to change has a direct influence on the vitality of the ministry.

Deep Change

Out of crisis, reflection, prayer, and feedback come times when the leader realizes the first change that must occur is within himself. Spiritual leaders are highly vulnerable to the self-sins of control, preservation and gratification; perhaps more so than even the people they lead because they dip their egos into the pool of approval more often than anyone else in the ministry.

A pastor friend of mine has been leading the same church he started over 30 years ago. And yet in those 30 years he has "re-invented" himself, by his own admission, at least four times. Re-inventing is another term for deep change and involves holding up every thought, action and belief to God, and praying and humbling yourself so that God can refresh and renew vision and purpose, and also methods and means for ministry. My friend is now approaching 60 and is looking forward to continued renewal and another "reinvention."

Robert E. Quinn has consulted with many of the largest corporations in America and has worked with some of the most outstanding business leaders of those corporations. In his book, *Deep Change*, he ties the change that must take place within organizations with the change that must start first inside the leader.

There is an important link between deep change at the personal level and deep change at the organizational level. To make deep personal change is to develop a new paradigm, a new self, one that is more effectively aligned with today's realities. This can occur only if we are willing to journey into the unknown territory and confront the wicked problems we encounter. This journey does not follow the assumptions of rational planning. The objective may not be clear, and the path to it is not paved with familiar procedures. This tortuous journey requires that we leave our comfort zone and step outside our normal

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roles. In doing so, we learn the paradoxical lesson that we can change the world only by changing ourselves. This is not just a cute abstraction; it is an elusive key to effective performance in all aspects of life. [9]

Throughout the book Quinn continues to pound home that if we don't involve ourselves and the organizations in which we share a leadership role in a continuous process of personal deep change, we face only one alternative—slow death.

In 2 Corinthians 3, 4 and 5 as well as in the books of Romans and Ephesians, Paul gives a most compelling description of the continuous renewing process within us as spiritual beings. Paul would know the concept of deep change as spiritual transformation.

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