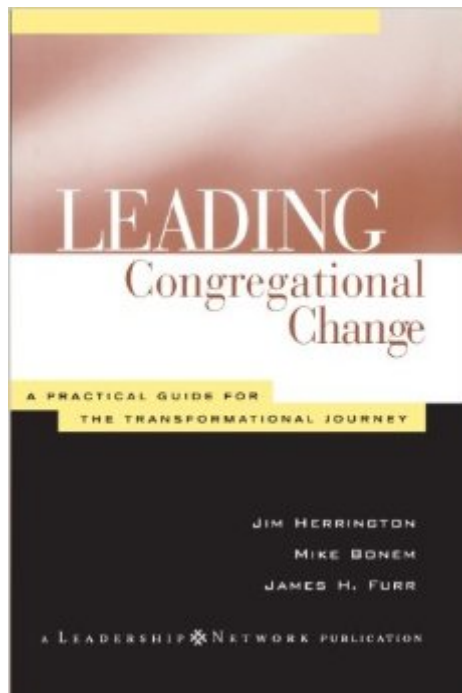


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Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide For The Transformational Journey



Synopsis

A Leadership Network Publication With this much-needed handbook, the authors brilliantly combine their experience guiding dozens of churches through the change process with both the study of Christian disciplines and the sophisticated understanding of such important business thinkers as John Kotter on leading change and Peter Senge on learning organizations. In this eminently readable book the authors have distilled their insights and practices into simple but powerful concepts for leading congregations, whether long established or recently formed, through profound change. Leaders using this guide will also be interested in the companion Leading Congregational Change Workbook, which offers assessment questions, planning worksheets, activities, and case examples for each stage of the process.

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Jossey-Bass; 1 edition (February 11, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1118446208

ISBN-13: 978-1118446201

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (20 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #165,499 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #155 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Institutions & Organizations](#) #181 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church Administration](#) #409 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Christianity](#)

Customer Reviews

As the General Supervisor of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in the United States, I am constantly looking for leading edge thinking to resource our 5,000 licensed ministers. The authors of LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE are much more than just brilliant theorists or students of change theory. They are practitioners who have successfully piloted their recommended change process and offer this excellent book to help leaders in congregations seeking true and lasting change. LEADING CONGREGATIONAL CHANGE recognizes the complexities and difficulties in bringing real change to established congregations. No quick fix or limited approach produces the fundamental changes needed to position many established

congregations for future vitality. The authors apply current change theory to the local church in a sequential and understandable way. I purchased multiple copies of this book and distributed them to Foursquare District Supervisors across the U.S., recommending that they encourage pastors in their regions to use this excellent resource.

Jim Herrington and co-authors Mike Bonem and James Furr have written an absolutely stellar book entitled, "Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey." Jim has previously written about the three levels at which transformation must occur, "What is needed is a radical transformation of individual believers and local congregations in order that we might begin to see transformation in the city." (See *City-Reaching: The Road to Community Transformation*) He asserts that individuals, local congregations and the City Church as a whole must be transformed in order to transform the city. The terrible reality is that in nearly every city in America we find 70% - 80% of local congregations so unhealthy as to be incapable of sustaining community impact. The local congregation is in dire need of revitalization. The authors present a Congregational Transformation Model that integrates three interactive and interdependent components; spiritual and relational vitality, an eight-stage process for change, and four essential learning disciplines. The authors write, "Spiritual and relational vitality forms the heart of the transformation process. Congregations without an adequate level of vitality will not be able to sustain significant change. A congregation that is not committed to following God or that is experiencing significant discord within the body will find it virtually impossible to follow the difficult path of transformation." The eight-stage change process is the sequential component of the model that gives form and direction to the transformation. It is not enough to know that change is needed, or even to have a clear image of the church's future. The challenge is to create a realistic way to get there. The eight stages give structure and sequence to the process of moving from today's reality to a distant tomorrow. "The third component represents a set of learning disciplines that are essential for the leaders who will guide the transformation. Without these disciplines, the many hurdles that are encountered in the long journey are probably insurmountable." These experienced congregational change leaders are insightful, practical, and powerfully compelling. This is a must read for every leader concerned with community transformation.

This book does not offer simplistic answers to a complex issue. Instead, it provides tested, seasoned directions, discussions, and examples for leading congregations to a "preferred future". It's a must read for every church leader.

This book is an excellent answer to the question, "how do we transform declining congregations into Christ-like bodies that display the power of the Gospel in our communities?" [page 1] Jim Herrington and James Furr of this author triad are great friends of mine in ministry. Readers should take time to absorb the spiritual and strategic wisdom of these two guys along with the third author, Mike Bonem. For congregational leaders and congregational champions who are looking for a solid change process that has been well tested by practitioners, this is a good book to add to your collection. Judicial leaders will especially want this book as it was written from the perspective of reinventing how a local denominational organization helps its congregations to transform. For congregational leaders and congregational champions who feel they already know the process they like to use for change and transition, this is a book that at least they must reference. Too many processes do not adequately address the spiritual and relationship vitality that is so well addressed by this book.

Excellent book if you need assistance with the congregational transformation processes. I received my masters degree in church life and administration and this book hit on all of the relevant themes. Remember, this isn't about a new program, it's about a paradigm shift for declining churches. It's a great book to give you the fundamentals in transforming churches.

In *Leading Congregational Change* the authors make a clear and understandable presentation of the change process. As the authors are quick to point out, the change process need not be linear, but there are certain elements that are found in all successful change processes. Most of us have not given this the kind of thought that the authors have and have a tendency to bog down at some point and wonder what happened. The authors help us understand what is going on and how to keep the process moving so that we can achieve the results we want. tomlaw.org/booksummaries

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