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FEEL IT:

THE PILGRIMAGE OF CHANGE FOR YOUR CHURCH

John Bartlett was being interviewed by the local newspaper on his 100th birthday. The reporter said, "John, in your lifetime, you must have seen a lot of changes." John replied, "Yeah, and I've been against every one of them!"

"John" may attend your church! He could be on your Board. And, he might only be 40 years old, not 100. It's not about age. It's about attitude, worldview, approach to life.

I was recently interviewed for an article in *ChurchExecutive Magazine* (April 2010 www.churchexecutive.com). The editor, Ron Keener, is a longtime friend. He asked if there was hope for the church in our increasingly secular society. I shared that, based on my observations, every active Christian will know there is a major move of God taking place by 2019. Call it renewal, revival, expansion of Christianity, or whatever you like—it's coming. It's coming out of England, has spread to many countries in Europe and is beginning to show up elsewhere. It is not on most radar screens yet in North America, but it is here already.

During the past thirty years I have prayed for revival. I have investigated every move of God on six continents. This is the first movement I have seen with world-wide potential. Do you want to be a part of what God is going to do?

Kent Hunter leads a team at Church Doctor Ministries that has developed a spiritual pilgrimage for churches to prepare for the coming revival. Church Doctor Ministries is dedicated to the transformational change of Christians and churches for the cause of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).



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MULTIPLYING MINISTRY

- ▶ The *Church Doctor® Report* is provided at no cost. Forward it to those in your network of influence and add value to their lives!
- ▶ Forward it to staff and leaders in your church, denomination, network, or fellowship.

Theologians and Christian historians differentiate between an “awakening” and a “revival.” A “revival” takes place in the world—in the community. An awakening occurs in the church. An “awakening” precedes a “revival.” In historical perspective, many churches around the world—especially in North America, right now—are at this *kairos* (a God time) moment of opportunity. This is true, whether they have a clue—or not.

For the article in *ChurchExecutive*, Ron asked me, “What is the greatest threat to this coming revival?” I replied, “The greatest roadblock to the coming revival is the local church that ignores the realities of our post-modern world.” John Maxwell, in his *Maximum Impact* CD, teaches: Break-through happens when these issues connect:

1. When you hurt enough that you have to.
2. When you learn enough that you want to.
3. When you receive enough that you are able to.

(*Maximum Impact* Vol. 2. No. 9)

NEW SERVICE

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This issue of the *Church Doctor* Report begins to approach John’s point #3: “when you receive enough that you are able to.” The focus is on a better understanding of change.

WHEN CHANGE FAILS

There are hundreds of jokes about change and Christians. We laugh, but it’s not funny. The essence of Christianity is described in Scripture in the most radical terms of change. To become a Christian is to become “born again,” “put to death the old Adam,” “move from darkness to the light.” Christians ought to be experts in change! Christians ought to be the ideal models of change for everyone else. It is embarrassing, pathetic—tragic—that most of the culture considers the church irrelevant. As God’s people, we represent God. To communicate that God is irrelevant either implicitly or explicitly is a gross sin. We need to repent: which, of course, means to change our minds in order to change our actions. It is all about change!

One of my favorite mentors, Lyle Schaller, once said, “There are two constants in this world: Christ and change.” This is the tricky part: Christ doesn’t change. Truth of Scripture doesn’t change. Everything else does. Everything else must! Mark Twain said, “The only person who really likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.” There is more to that comment than you think. The baby likes change—why? It is because it **feels** better.

This “feeling” issue is a key element to successful change. If you don’t get this, you will not see transformational change in your church. And, transformational change is a desperate need in your church—or the coming revival will just pass you by. I promise you, if—as the leader of your church—you don’t get this, don’t do something about it, you could be a remorseful, miserable Christian in the next few years. Why? You will—everyone in your church will—realize you have missed the opportunity to be in the middle of a major move of God. If that were to happen, you would feel awful.

Ken Blanchard, in his book *Who Killed Change?*, notes that, every day, organizations around the world launch change initiatives. In a previous *Church Doctor Report* (May/June 2010 Vol. 6 No.

3), I reported that many churches are engaged in change efforts that leave the church worse off, or at best, unchanged. This is because these efforts fail to deal with cultural issues in the church: attitudes, values, beliefs, worldviews, and priorities. They are quick-fix efforts that are a waste of time and energy. Ken Blanchard reports that in organizations that try to improve the status quo (change), 50%-70% of these efforts fail.

In many efforts to bring about change in churches, the end result is cosmetic. Some believe that because you start a new program, build onto the facility, or start a ministry at an off campus site, your church experiences the necessary transformational change, and that you are now postured to be in the middle of a coming great move of God. Some churches go through a “transition” effort or hire a consultant who makes recommendations—and wonder why, a year later, there is no evidence that the church has really changed.

John Kotter, in his book *The Heart of Change*, gets to the feeling level. He explains that many change initiatives fail because they rely too much on “data gathering, analysis, report writing, and presentations.” In other words, most efforts are: (1) programmatic, not process; (2) deal with “things,” not “values”; and (3) focus on information—right thinking, not feeling. Kotter calls for a crea-

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For an application form:
e-mail jasonatkinson@churchdoctor.org

KEY RESOURCES

-  Blanchard, Ken. *Who Killed Change?: Solving the Mystery of Leading People Through Change*. New York, NY: William Morrow, 2009.
-  Fullan, Michael. *The Six Secrets of Change: What the Best Leaders Do to Help Their Organizations Survive and Thrive*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
-  Fullan, Michael. *Leading in a Culture of Change*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
-  Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. *Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard*. New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2010.
-  Hunter, Kent R. *Changing the Church Without Blowing it Up: Motivation, Process, Purpose, Vision*. Corunna, IN: Church Doctor Ministries, 2008.
-  Hunter, Kent R. *Leading Your Church Through Change* (audio resource).
-  Hunter, Kent R. *Reengineering the Church: Seizing Opportunities to Reach Postmoderns Among the Challenges of Globalization*. Corunna, IN: Church Doctor Ministries, 2008.
-  Hunter, Kent R. *Reinventing the Church: Uncluttered Structures for Unparalleled Challenges* (audio resource).
-  Kotter, John. *The Heart of Change: Real-Life Stories of How People Change Their Organizations*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2002.
-  Kotter, John and Holger Rathgeber. *Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press., 2006.

tive approach that aims at grabbing the “feelings that motivate useful action.” Apply this to the church and you begin to see that preparing your church for revival is not a quick-fix event or teaching people to be missional. It’s a spiritual pilgrimage.

SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE

Revival is something God does. You can’t initiate it. However, you can prepare for it, and you can prepare your church for it. The change element preparation is a reposturing of the culture in your church. It works

MY FAVORITE THOUGHTS ABOUT CHANGE

(FOR YOUR PREACHING, TEACHING, WEB SITE, BULLETIN, NEWSLETTER, AND PERSONAL APPLICATION IN THE PILGRIMAGE OF CHANGE)

1. It is God's Spirit that changes the atmosphere of our way of looking at things, and then things begin to be possible which before were impossible.
Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*
2. There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.
John F. Kennedy
3. People in church ossify very quickly. Keep the church moving all the time, or, before you know it, people will have a fit if you move a chair.
Paul Maconochie, Philadelphia St. Thomas Church, Sheffield, England
4. The church builds on tradition; it doesn't live on tradition. Churches that live on tradition die on tradition. Transition leaders need to be "turnaround" (that is, *metanoia*) artists. But it is God who effects the turnarounds. Religious leadership is less about turning around or turning ahead and more about turning toward God.
Leonard Sweet, *Soul Tsunami*
5. Change is hardest on those caught by surprise. Change is hardest on those who have difficulty changing too. But change is natural; change is important.
Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat*
6. We must be the change we wish to see in the world.
Gandhi
7. Reasonable people see the world and adapt to it. Unreasonable people see the world and expect it to adapt to them. Change is brought about by unreasonable people.
Paul Cole, National Religious Broadcaster's Convention, 1997
8. To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.
Winston Churchill
9. Perhaps the most relentless enemy of achievement, personal growth, and success is inflexibility. Some people seem to be so in love with the past that they can't deal with the present.
John C. Maxwell, *Failing Forward*
10. Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.
Oliver Wendell Holmes
11. Change comes more from managing the journey than announcing the destination.
Ken Blanchard, Leadership Network Conference, 1994
12. Change is inevitable. If we ignore it, we're lost. If we go along with it, we fall behind. If we initiate it, we lead.
Robert Yawberg
13. Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world – indeed it's the only thing that ever has!
Margaret Meade
14. Everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself.
Leo Tolstoy
15. Christians are supposed to not merely endure change, nor even profit by it, but to cause it.
Harry Emerson Fosdick

best in a process—a spiritual pilgrimage. It is an awakening.

In the mid-1500s, Copernicus theorized that the sun, rather than the Earth, was the center of the solar system. What was the church's reaction? The church leaders revolted. In their minds, this change in perspective was a major assault on the thinking of the church. People *felt* that Copernicus had not just introduced a new insight on nature. They *felt* he threatened the idea that humanity, the main occupant of the planet, was the center of God's concern. People were put to death for adopting Copernicus' view.

Here's my point (and you may have to reread the previous paragraph a second time): did you get this? "People felt"—mentioned twice. The "feeling" issue motivated the church leaders towards serious judgments—and had major repercussions—for those who adopted Copernicus' understanding.

We need to change our concept of church (speaking of change!). Too often, we think of the church as an organization. Think, instead, of your church as an organism. We think of the church as an institution. Think of your church as a community of relationships. We think of the church as a place. Think of your church as a complex of interactive systems. We think of the church as programs and activities. Think of your church as a movement.

Organization ⇔ Organism
Institution ⇔ Community of Relationships
Place ⇔ Complex of Interactive Systems
Programs/Activities ⇔ Movement

According to a university sociology text book, *People, Power, and Change: Movements of Social Transformation*, a movement is "a group of people who are organized for,

ideologically motivated by, and committed to a purpose which implements some form of personal or social change; who are actively engaged in the recruitment of others; and whose influence is spreading in opposition to the established order within which it originated." Sound like Jesus? John the Baptist? The early church? A revival? Your church?

KENT HUNTER ON CHANGE...

As we enter the 21st Century, those churches that will be effective will be more biblical than traditional, more mission than maintenance, more outward than inward, and more spiritual than political. They will multiply, not add; they will empower, not control. God will use them, not to embellish an institution, but to change the world. They will have a passion: not to perpetuate the past, but to seek and save the lost.

~ Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast

Notice in the above definition, the feeling-related words:

- Ideologically motivated
- Committed
- Actively Engaged
- Influence

Dan and Chip Heath, in their excellent book *Switch*, have captured the difference between change that doesn't work and change that does. Many believe that change takes place in this way:

Analyze ⇔ Think ⇔ Change

This is the assumption behind most training at Bible colleges, seminaries, and Christian universities. It is the methodology surrounding most consultation and so-called revitalization efforts and activities to transition a church from maintenance to mission. It is what characterizes these efforts. It is why they fail. The limited focus is on:

- Knowledge
- Programs
- Right information—truth
- Strategies

They fail to emphasize the development of:

- Attitudes
- Beliefs

- Values
- Priorities
- Worldviews

In short, they fail at the key level of spiritual formation. To the dimensions of teaching, preaching, and programming, add the elements of discipling (where values are not just taught, but caught), experiential learning (on-the-job training), equipping (mentoring), and interactive value clarification (discussion, processing). This is not an event or quick fix. It is a spiritual pilgrimage. The way change happens:

It is not: Analyze \Rightarrow Think \Rightarrow Change

It is: See \Rightarrow Feel \Rightarrow Change

This is how God changes churches, preparing them to experience an awakening. Then they can be part of a coming revival. God uses leaders who “get this” to be change agents for transformational change. If you want to be ready for what’s coming, think in terms of real change through a spiritual pilgrimage for your church.

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