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When Change Is No Longer an Option

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Notes:

- The dictionary referenced is the Webster's II New Riverside Dictionary, Revised Edition.
- All scriptures are quoted from the New King James version of the Holy Bible, unless otherwise noted.

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CHAPTER 1

RE-CONTEMPLATION

It all began with a thought—what you think about you bring about.

All organizations are created through the following inner process. However, those that grow and remain relevant pay close attention to the last step, which restarts the process.

1. Pre-contemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Decision
4. Action
5. Follow-through
6. Re-contemplation

This book is about Re-Contemplation.

Pre-contemplation was the period during which you began sensing something within you. Something that began as a dream. Something that began gnawing at you. Something that kept you awake at night and daydreaming during your waking hours. Something that was vague, ambiguous and amorphous. You knew something was going on, but couldn't put a handle on exactly what it was.

Contemplation was when those fleeting and vague thoughts began taking shape. You could actually talk to someone intelligently about the thoughts. Your sentences made sense. You could answer questions with reasonable certitude. Ideas started taking shape.

Decision was when you started putting plans together. The project and ideas you had in mind were more easily transferred to written form. People and places started coming together in your thoughts. Others were not only

interested, but they began affirming your direction. More concrete decisions began to form.

Action was when your decisions were given legs and arms. People were recruited. Vision was cast. Facilities were located and explored. Finances were allocated. Startup dates were announced. Plans became concrete. Things were about to happen.

Follow-through occurred when actions were in place and what had begun needed to be sustained. Any ball player will tell you that the importance of follow-through cannot be over-emphasized. Everyone who is married today knows that it happened because of repeated follow-through. Growing a child from birth into maturity requires constant follow-through.

However, this follow-through, as important as it is, cannot be the end of the process. Remaining in this

posture fossilizes the organization and institutionalizes what was once an exciting idea and opportunity.

Instead of working to grow and live in the excitement of our contemplative thoughts, now life becomes full of follow-throughs ... leading to maintenance.

If not checked, we stop playing to win and start playing NOT to lose!

So, how does someone reenergize the organization? Through re-contemplation.

Re-contemplation is when you revisit the original dream – its ethos and, most of all, its intrinsic purpose. We become obsessed with existential questions. Most people would rather live in denial than deal with the pain of reality and reframe their world. Forward-moving leaders have the courage to bring these

haunting questions from the back of our minds to the forefront.

Questions such as...

- Is this all there is to life?
- Why am I feeling dissatisfied in the midst of perceived success?
- There has to be more, but what is it?
- Why do I feel stuck and trapped?
- What worked for me earlier is not working now—why?

Courageous leaders are not afraid to ask the real questions. They delve deeper into re-contemplation. But, it all began with a thought.

As organizations grow and mature, leaders slide into the role of “doers” rather than “thought leaders.” Thinking becomes a luxury most leaders cannot afford, given their hectic schedules of doing.

When God created us, He created human beings. However, the fall and the subsequent curse transformed us into human doers. This conflict between doing and being is the limiting factor.

In the U.S., the average effective life of a church is 20-25 years.

There are two ways to understand this phenomenon:

CHURCH TIME LINE

1-5 years	5-20 years	20-25 years
Starting years	Most effective years	Needs new start
Getting on track	Staying on track	Changing tracks

In the beginning, growth is driven by the energy of the **pastor**. Now, years later, it is built on the **team's** (leaders') commitment to grow. The leaders, not the pastor, grow the church at this juncture. The church then cycles through several phases of development.

FIVE PHASES IN THE LIFE OF AN ORGANIZATION

PHASE	RECOGNIZED BY
Entrepreneurial	Viability – It can be done. THINKING
Emerging	Credibility – Leader can be trusted. WORKING HARD
Established	Stability – Systems are in place & functioning. ENJOYING the recognition of others.
Eroding	Vulnerability – Signs of decline are obvious. HURTING
Enterprising	Adaptability – Adjusting to grow again. THINKING AGAIN

The only way not to enter the eroding phase is to keep going back to being entrepreneurial. The more successful an organization has been in the past, the more likely it is to fail in the future.

Churches must “re-dream” the dream or discover a new compelling vision for their existence. For a congregation to continue developing and growing, it must focus on the organizing principles of the stages ahead.

Leadership styles and the key issues to be addressed are different for each stage of the cycle. Effective leaders understand the cycle and are able to adapt their leadership to the corresponding needs of the cycle.

The danger is in the chance that the old models will remain in place mentally and the desire for security and familiarity of the past will win out over the opportunity of the moment to embrace and live out a new dream. Your thoughts will create your attitude, and your attitude leads to action.

The Chinese letter that illustrates the word “crisis” is a combination of *danger* and *opportunity*.

“Generally, religious organizations start out with a goal orientation ... deteriorate to a task orientation ... and finally degenerate to a bottom-line control organization.”

– Olan Hendrix

Which one will your organization be? Effectiveness will always depend on your ability to see the future. To be an effective leader you must understand the difference between *change* and *transition*.

Change is the event (the first vision is realized, the founding pastor is gone, or the community has changed) and transition involves the emotional, psychological and social response to that change.

In most situations, not enough attention is paid to the transition, and leaders move forward without realizing that the congregation and/or staff is not processing the change at the same rate they are.

In the following chapters you will be challenged in exciting ways to re-contemplate.

- 1. RE-tooling the church** – Discover how politicians in the most recent elections changed the playing field by creating new funding mechanisms that were “cause” driven. We need our people to have a cause bigger than themselves.
- 2. RE-structuring the church** – Read about how yesterday’s structure is now becoming an impediment for effective Kingdom ministry.
- 3. RE-ordering the church** – Learn how order in the church has deteriorated to almost anarchy described

in the book of Judges and learn about the need to re-establish Godly order.

4. RE-covering the church – Find out how the concept of “covering” has sunk in opinion to the level of a multi-level marketing enterprise and has become totally misunderstood.

5. RE-connecting the church – Explore how we need to reexamine who we are connected to. Delve into the concept of the Body’s need to be connected appropriately.

This is not a how-to book or a formulaic approach to “doing” church. Our prayer is that we can encourage *ways of thinking* and, by the end of this book, thought leaders will emerge who will re-contemplate their direction for this new age.

Unlike strategic *planning*, this is a book about strategic *preparation*.