FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR HELPING YOUR CHURCH ADJUST TO CHANGE
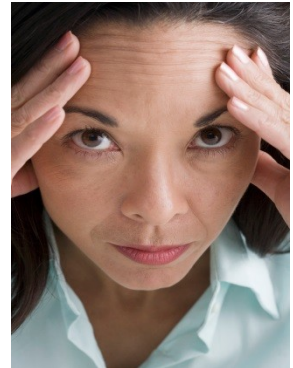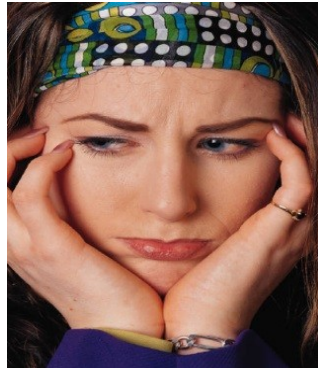
DR. JIM BOHN
CHANGE MANAGEMENT EXPERT

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, USA

05/17/13

A BIT OF BACKGROUND

Managing Change is my work and educational pedigree.

- Business

- Volunteer groups

- The Church

- I have led major change projects in these domains.

PEOPLE ARE PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF THE CHANGE DOMAIN

❑ People worry about how the change will affect them.

❑ People worry about what a change will mean to their families.

❑ People have limited time to understand change.

❑ People want to know the answer to "Why are we changing?"

❑ People either trust or do not trust their leadership during change.

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH IS MADE COMPLEX BY THESE REALITIES:

❑ There are as many universes in a church as there are people, *causing complexity in change communications.*

❑ Programs designed to 'meet felt needs' cause some church members to believe they are owed something, *creating barriers to change.*

❑ A text of Scripture in the mouth of a church member can be well-intentioned, but *cause barriers to change.*

❑ People bring baggage from their former successful (however you measure that) churches. *They will hold on to what they know.*

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH IS MADE COMPLEX BY THESE REALITIES:

❑ **There are as many universes in a church as there are people,** *causing complexity in change communications.*

❑ People in a church have dramatically differing backgrounds, needs, levels of pain, maturity, experience, training, and giftings.

❑Companies hire people according to their ability for a specific purpose.

❑In a church, we get people as they are. We rarely know their backgrounds, hurts, fears, experiences, sins, and other dynamics.

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH IS MADE COMPLEX BY THESE REALITIES:

❑ **Programs designed to 'meet felt needs' can cause some church members to believe they are owed something, *creating barriers to change.***

    ❑ Someone's 'felt need' is a serious matter … to them.

    ❑ People form groups around their 'felt needs'.

    ❑ One person's felt need is another person's sin. One person's felt need may be perceived by others as a spiritual problem.

    ❑ A program serving a 'felt need' is hard to dislodge.

    ❑ Felt needs can create an individual customer service mentality.

    ❑ *More seriously, leaders may project their felt needs onto others.*

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MANAGING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH IS MADE COMPLEX BY THESE REALITIES:

❑ **A text of Scripture in the mouth of a church member can be well-intentioned, but *cause barriers to change.***

❑ Scripture may be taken out of context.

❑ Scripture may be a favorite of many people for nostalgic reasons or sentimental reasons. "Old John Smith loved this passage in the book of Acts." This emotional context can override even the best intentioned change.

❑ Scripture can be a powerful weapon in the hands of some.

MANAGING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH IS MADE COMPLEX BY THESE REALITIES:

❑ **People bring baggage from their former successful (however you measure that) churches. *They will hold on to what they know.***

❑ For many, there was a point in time where church was done 'right'. Their experience was wonderful, the leadership was wonderful, and everything was right (code for, they felt good and they accomplished things).

❑ People hang onto the 'good old days', *even if those days did not exist.*

❑ For some people, the 'good old days' of one group could have been the 'bad old days' for others.
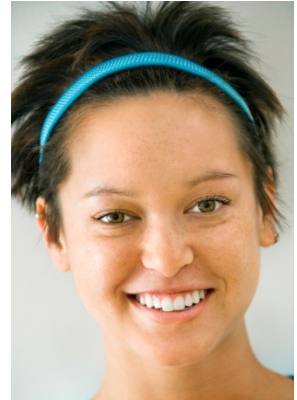
FIVE GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CHANGE ...

1. **Reduce anxiety** to increase adaptation ...

2. **Simplify** to increase adoption ...

3. **Follow-through** to assist integration ...

4. **Measure** for correction and celebration ...

5. **All change builds or destroys trust** ...

These principles were developed through leadership
of multiple projects, research, and direct observation of change.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

1. **Reduce anxiety** to increase adaptation …

❑ Pastors and Leaders have natural gifts of concern.

❑ Reduce anxiety during change and help people adapt by:

   ❑ Providing a **thorough rationale** for the change.
      ❑ [Hint: A biblical rationale is even stronger].

   ❑ Effectively communicating the change.

   ❑ Meeting one-on-one to hear concerns.

   ❑ Regularly updating people on what's happening.

❑ **God regularly tells people *not to fear*. "Do not be frightened …" Joshua 1:9.**

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

1. Reduce anxiety to increase adaptation …
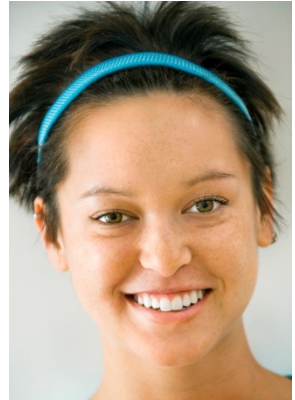2. **Simplify** to increase adoption …

❑ Pastors can simplify the change by:

   ❑ Using pictures or graphics that articulate a change.

   ❑ Developing simple and clear communications.

   ❑ Pointing people toward a direction that <u>supersedes everyone's personal agenda.</u>

   ❑ **"Prepare your provisions, for within three days you are to pass over this Jordan to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess." Joshua 1:11**

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

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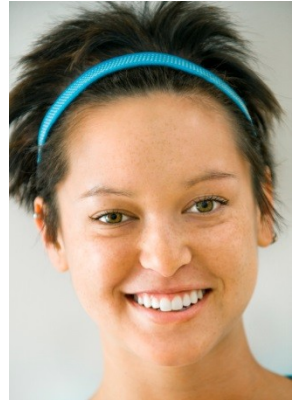
❑ With volatile change, concerns increase at the change drags on.

❑ If the change is boring or uninteresting, people get distracted.

❑ Leaders understand the concept of "follow-up or foul-up."

❑ **"I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder." II Peter 1:13**

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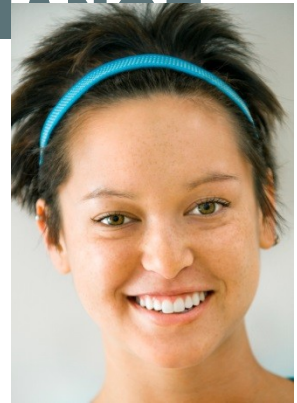
❑ Leaders understand the need to 'check-in' and find out how things are going.

❑ Leaders understand the need for celebration during change!

❑ **"Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests' feet stood firmly ... that this may be a sign to you." Joshua 4:2, 6a.**

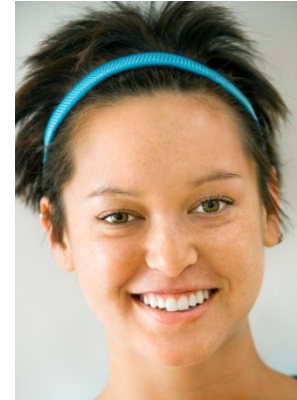# FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING CHANGE

1. Reduce **anxiety** to increase adaptation
2. **Simplify** to increase adoption
3. **Follow-through** to assist integration
4. **Measure** for correction and celebration …
5. All change builds or destroys trust …

❑ What church members experience with their leaders during today's changes builds their assessment of how they will participate tomorrow. Trust is easy to lose, hard to earn.

❑ **"Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say 'Yes, Yes' and 'No, No' at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No." II Corinthians 1:17-18**

EMPHASIZING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES DURING DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHANGE WITHIN YOUR CHURCH.

Communicate ←——————————→

BUILD TRUST

Type of Change	Reduce Anxiety	Simplify	Measure	Follow-Up
Staff Change	X	X		X
Volunteer Policies		X	X	X
Schedule Change		X	X	X
New Programs	X			X
Cutting old programs	X	X		X
Conflict management	X			X
Volunteer Requests	X			X

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MY BACKGROUND

Leadership and Ministry Experience

- Elder for three decades

- Led Building Construction Project for New $2.2M Facility in 2007

- Preaching

- Counseling

- Teaching Adult Education Classes and Workshops

- Conducted Funerals, Weddings, Baptisms, Administration of Lord's Supper as a layman

- Earned Doctorate, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

- Four decades operations and change management experience

A WORKMAN NOT ASHAMED

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