



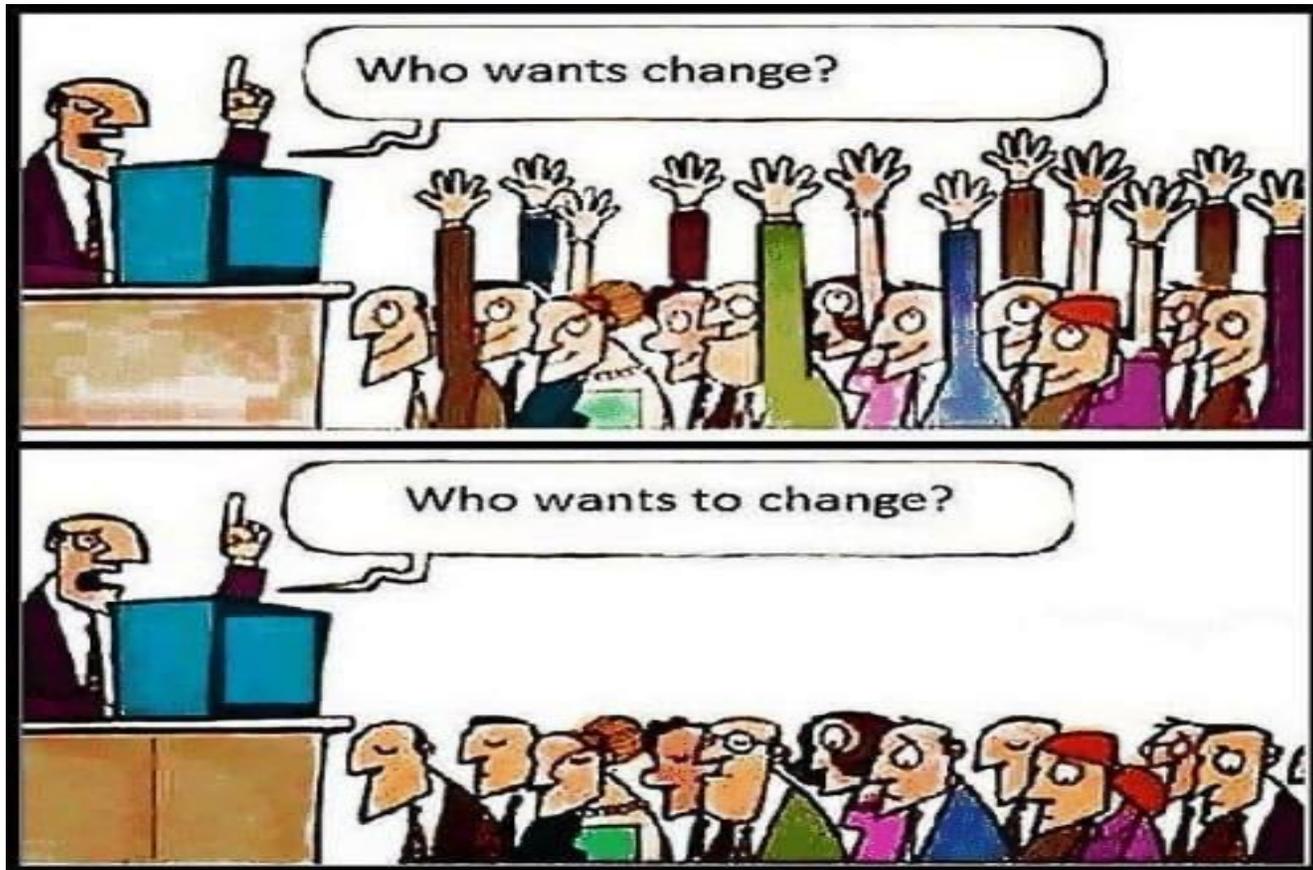
**PROCLAIMING CHRIST TO A
DISINTERESTED WORLD**

WHAT DOES DEEP CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CHURCH MEAN?

The pain. The possibility.
The work avoidance tactics.

**EQUIPPING THE CHURCH
FOR CHANGE**

IN A TIME OF CHANGE



“Because the problem lies in people, the solution lies in them too. So the work of addressing an adaptive challenge must be done by the people connected to the problem.”

(Ron Heifetz, in *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, p.74)



How can we equip the Church in such a context and time?

Disciples making disciples.



Lets start doing these three things:

- Praying for the 'privately faithful' and the 'spiritually uncertain' to come to Christ
- Trying some experiments to share the faith with people in these two groups, who we already have in our lives.
- Trusting that Jesus still calls people to himself



Some things to pray for:

- That God will draw us deeper into relationship
- That God will stir up the curiosity of explorers
- That God will make us aware of opportunities for conversations
- That God will give us a passion to share the faith we have



Even as a foundation of mission-focused prayer becomes normative practice, what else can we do?



Helping people take steps: Five thresholds in faith development

Moving from:

1. distrusting to trusting
2. trusting to curious
3. curious to 'open to change'
4. 'open to change' to seeking
5. seeking to following



From distrust to trust:

"Christians are okay."

- Share fun
- Share service
- Share needs/concerns
- Spend time together just hanging out
- Don't be fazed by distrust
- Practice trust building: pray, attend, learn, bond, affirm, welcome



From trusting to curious

"Jesus is kind of interesting."

- Be curious yourselves
- Address their questions
- Ask good questions yourselves
- Focus on Christ
- How his teachings connect to life today
- i.e. Jesus the Game Changer



From curious to open to change

"Jesus could be for me."

- More personal reflection & discussion
- How Jesus' teachings might connect to their lives
- i.e. The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey, Divorce or Grief Care



From open to change to seeking

"Jesus is worth taking seriously."

- The Alpha Course, Christianity Discovered, Emmaus
- Nua Film series
- Book Club (i.e. Gilead, Case for Christ, The Language of God, Not God's Type, Unapologetic)



From seeking to following

"I want to be a Christian."

- **Teaching:** Jesus as Saviour & Lord, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer
- **Baptism prep:** questions of renunciation and affirmation
- **Baptism, confirmation, reaffirmation**
- **Opportunity to bear witness**



What do you see as the implications of today's learning for ministry?



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Let's imagine a completely fabricated and crazy scenario

- A deadly mold has spread to all the church buildings in your region
- The health authorities have boarded up the buildings while they figure out how to get rid of this deadly mold
- The clergy were all infected by this mold and have all been rendered comatose; completely unable to move or speak
- What will happen on-the-ground in your congregation for worship, learning, caring, service, & fun: (1) the first week, (2) 3 months on, and (3) one year into this terrible scourge?



An experiment for churches: The Bible Study Project

Invite someone you know, who has no church connection, to read & discuss together three stories from the earliest biographies of Jesus' life

Meet weekly (Zoom, Facetime, in person) to read and discuss one Gospel story:

What words or phrases stand out for you?

What do you think this passage tells us about the culture of the day?

What do you think this passage wants us to know about Jesus?

Do you see any connections with our lives today?

A Question for Ezekiel (and us):

“Son of man, can these bones live? I said, “O Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.’”

Ezekiel 37:3-5

God's word to Isaiah (and us):

Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you, with my victorious right hand.



Isaiah 41:10

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