



CHANGE INITIATIVE

The following may be a useful tool when having to work through a change initiative with your Board. There are multifaceted, complex challenges facing churches these days. Leadership and organizational change expert, Ronald Heifetz identifies two types of challenges: Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges.

STEP ONE (1 minute)

NAME A CHANGE

As a board, decide together in one minute, using one sentence, one significant area of change that your congregation is experiencing or you are planning on leading the congregation through. Write this one sentence on a white board.

STEP TWO (4 minutes)

TWO TYPES OF CHANGE

Have one person read the description of Technical Problems and one person read the description of Adaptive Challenges

Technical Problems

Adaptive Challenges

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Easy to identify | 1. Difficult to identify (easy to deny) |
| 2. Often quicker and easier (cut-and-dried) solutions | 2. Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships & approaches to work |
| 3. Often can be solved by an authority or expert | 3. People with the problem do the work of solving it |
| 4. Require change in just one or a few places; often contained within the church's established boundaries | 4. Require change in numerous places; usually across the church's established boundaries |
| 5. People are generally receptive to technical solutions | 5. People often resist even acknowledging adaptive challenges |
| 6. Solutions can often be implemented quickly – even by an edict | 6. "Solutions" require experiments & new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement & cannot be implemented by edict |

Examples

| | |
|--|--|
| Providing better quality financial statements | Developing a culture of stewardship & generosity |
| Introducing new instruments and worship songs | Establishing an atmosphere of intentional God honouring worship |
| Starting a prayer meeting | Fostering a commitment to prayer throughout the congregation |
| Tweaking and updating board agenda's and minutes | Empowering the Board to provide leadership and serving the needs of the congregation |

STEP THREE
(5 minutes)

CLARIFYING THE CHALLENGE

When considering the challenge before you, as identified in STEP ONE, how, break into two groups, have one group answer the question under the **Technical Change** category and the other answer the question under the **Adaptive Change** category.

Technical Change

Identify three ways in which the challenge before us is a technical issue?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Adaptive Change

Identify three ways in which the challenge before us is an adaptive challenge?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

STEP FOUR
(5 minutes)

Open discussion as a board...

What given what we know about the nature of the change before us, what do we need to do to operationalize the ideas we just identified?

Further questions for consideration

1. Is there an “elephant in the room” that we haven’t named yet?
2. Do we have a working discernment practice to tackle this?
3. How can we use this situation to develop leadership capacity?
4. How can we think theologically about this situation?

CBOQ Leader’s Prayer

Lord, give me
the heart to seek you
the wisdom to discern your leading
the courage to risk my comfort
the perseverance to follow through with what I said I
would do.
Amen.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Church and Change Workshop
- Ronald Heiftz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*