RICK JAMES

INSPIRING CHANGE

CREATING MORE SPACE FOR GRACE IN ORGANISATIONS

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Digni

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To Cathy, Steffie and Chembe – my inspirations for change.

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Preface

Digni was established in 1983, with the name Norsk Misjons Bistandsnemnd. The organization had a two-fold objective. It was established by Norwegian Churches and Mission organizations in order to negotiate project agreements with the Norwegian government office for long term development work, – Norad. From Norad's side, Digni was expected to do a thorough quality control of the projects implemented with funding through the Digni channel.

Over the years, Digni has grown in terms of budget received from Norad, employees in the office, focus areas and organizational self understanding. The identity of the organization has been sharpened, and in 2012 the organization is developing its first identity document. Other changes which has been taking place, is the partial shift from project focus to framework agreements. In 2011, three member orgaisations applied to have framework agreements with Digni. The applications are being handled in 2012, and as of 2013 it is expected that these organizations will have a framework agreement with Digni.

As Digni has been growing, the focus on competence building and communication has been steadily growing. When framework agreements with some of the members are in place, it is planned that these foci will have a stonger emphasis still.

Apart from thematic areas like gender, HIV/AIDS, indigenous people, environment, peace etc., Digni has also been focusing organization and leadership. In 1995 Stein Erik Kruse wrote a booklet on Organisationa Assessment. From 2003 to 2006 Digni were running an organizational development program with three members and six partners. The process and results of this program is presented in the books "Enabling organizations. Stories and tools" and "Enabling organizations. Supporting Articles".[1]

Over the last few years, Dr. Rick James has been involved in our activities linked to competence building within the fields of organization and leadership. We are happy to present this book – Inspiring Change – which

[1] All three books are available at the Digni office. Enabling organisations. Stories and tools are available in English, French and Spanish

is a book on organization and change. With his great experience from working with organizations in several parts of the world – and his respect for the identity of Christian churches, Dr. James presents a book with a model for working on change in our organsations. The model is practical and should be useful to any organisation.

May this book contribute to civil society organizations that will continue to fight for changes that will enable people in all countries to experience dignity in their lives, and that will reduce poverty!

Oslo January 20, 2012

Jørn Lemvik
General Secretary of Digni

Introduction

'A new crisis has just engulfed the Brothers of Mary Immaculate in South India. They have split into caste and ethnic lines. We thought the six-year process of professionalising the governance and organising the structure had resolved these issues. Obviously not. But where did we go wrong?'

A Dutch staff member of a Catholic development agency wrestled with this painful question. Yet his experience is far from unique. Such issues of culture and conflict could have come from almost any denomination in any part of the world. We are slowly learning that taking a purely secular approach to organisational change rarely makes the difference to churches and Christian agencies that we hope for. We have to go deeper and further. Because all organisations are full of people, we have to move beyond the rational to engage with the emotional and spiritual dimensions to change.

Inspiring Change is about how we integrate Christian faith into a professional process of organisational change. It is about going beyond human effort and techniques to intentionally create space for God's grace to bring transformation[2]. 'Inspire' literally means to 'in-breathe'. At the heart of any organisational change, whether acknowledged or not, is common grace – God's spirit breathing life into dry bones. This breath of life reconciles relationships, removes unjust structures and creates shared direction and energy for the future.

'I have worked in OD for more than 20 years. But I have never once made the connection between my faith and organisational change'.

We need to integrate faith in organisational development (OD) if we are to experience deep change in churches and Christian organisations. The Christian faith has a lot to say about change – how it happens and who makes it happen. Yet so often we carry out our visioning exercises, strategic planning, evaluations and change management processes as if God was not there. We leave faith out. At best we are functionally agnostic, if not indeed

[2] Developed further from http://missioncouncil.se.loopiadns.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/04_02_space_for_grace.pdf

atheistic. As one staff member of a large Christian NGO said to me: 'I have worked in OD for more than 20 years. I have studied it at university. I have been responsible for OD in Christian institutions. But I have never once made the connection between my faith and organisational change'.

This book takes you through the essential stages in any organisational change process highlighting learning from working with churches and Christian organisations[3]. As well as good professional practice, it also reveals ways in which people have sought to integrate a spiritual dimension at the different stages of the change process. The stories of resulting change are truly inspiring. But they are not always neat and tidy. Change is out of our control and is never perfect. Experience also tells us how careful we must be in seeking to integrate our faith.

Integrating faith in OD is high risk. Most, if not all, readers have painful personal experiences of Christians using their faith as a painful weapon. Some have been badly wounded emotionally and physically by Christian leaders abusing their spiritual authority. My wife has been helping a secular NGO in Nigeria set up to advocate against supposed 'church' leaders who encourage their flock to maim, burn and torture their children whom they accuse of witchcraft. Spirituality can also be evil as well as good. Such extreme cases of child abuse reach the media, but there plenty of other, more mundane, instances of spiritual power being used in a damaging way. Spirituality is too often exclusive and judgemental. No wonder, it is so tempting to separate and avoid the spiritual – to put it safely away in a secure box – or just use it for decoration purposes.

There are very good reasons to avoid the spiritual. But whether we like it or not, faith plays an important role in influencing behaviour, particularly in Christian organisations. If we want to influence behaviour change, we have no choice but to engage with the spiritual. The big question is how. We need to engage with spirituality as a force for good and not let it be manipulated in negative ways. To work with integrity, our actions in organisations should be consistent with our beliefs. We need to integrate spirituality in OD with great care, avoiding

If we want to influence behaviour change, we have no choice but to engage with the spiritual.

[3] Many of the examples come from a global learning group of more than 300 people involved in OD with churches and Christian organisations http://developingchurches.ning.com/

the inherent dangers, while at the same time being true to ourselves and our faith.

This book is for any of us interested in helping churches and Christian organisations improve and change. The changes might be minor and small scale; or the organisation may be in crisis. We might be leaders trying to help our organisation become more relevant, distinctive and effective. We might be internal change agents committed to helping our own church, congregation or Christian NGO improve to better achieve its mission. We might be external consultants working with specific OD processes (like strategy development) or more broadly in learning or evaluation work. We might also be a staff member of a funding agency in Europe or North America, supporting partners to implement development projects on the ground. Our change agent role may be through field visits, through responding to proposals and reports; giving ideas about ways forward. Whichever role we are in, we are all change agents and the underlying principles remain the same. We are trying to get human beings in an organisation to change their behaviour. But we cannot force this. We can only disturb the system. To ensure that our disturbance has the most potential to catalyse positive change we need to understand how these organisations function and how people change.

Yet working on change with any organisation is highly sensitive. Many people get a sense of self from their work. If we are intervening in organisations, we are interfering in people's lives, even their very identity. To dare interfere, we must at least be thoroughly professional in how we do it. Otherwise we may do more harm than good. We need to understand how organisations behave and why. We need to understand what it is that makes them change. We need to understand our own roles as facilitators, or change agents, in these complex and complicated processes.

Almost 2000 years ago, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius advised: 'Make a habit of regularly observing the universal process of change: be assiduous in your attention to it and school yourself thoroughly in this branch of study: there is nothing more elevating to

Make a habit of regularly observing the universal process of change: be assiduous in your attention to it and school yourself thoroughly in this branch of study: there is nothing more elevating to the mind

the mind'[4]. His words ring true for us today. We cannot hope to help much if we do not know what we are dealing with. We need a professional approach to understanding organisations and managing change.

Working with Churches and Christian Organisations

Churches and Christian organisations are peculiar entities and are often in need of change. We know only too well how dysfunctional they can be. They rarely deliver on their dreams. Too often people are over-stretched and over-stressed by the good work they are doing. Simmering conflict can often undermine performance. In too many cases, leadership does not remotely resemble the 'servant leadership' taught in the Bible. While transformation is the core purpose of most churches and Christian organisations, they are often not so good at their own transformation. We yearn for the churches and Christian organisations we are a part of, and those we support, to be more effective at achieving what they set out to. We want them to change themselves so they can better change the world.

Yet churches and Christian organisations also appear particularly resistant to change. Management solutions imposed from the business or NGO[5] world frequently fail to make much difference. This may be because we do not really understand how they operate. They have different cultures, structures and ways of working. Consider leadership for example. Where spiritual authority exists, leadership will be enacted in a different way to a secular organisation. Failure to appreciate such differences can seriously hamper our efforts to facilitate change. Unless we understand and engage with the beliefs that make Christian organisations who they are, our efforts to promote change may remain superficial and inappropriate.

Organisation development (OD) is a particular people-centred, process oriented approach to change. It offers the opportunity to help churches and Christian organisations better achieve their mission.

[4] Quoted by Kaplan 2002: 113

[5] Non-government organisation

What might OD look like in churches?

A few ways in which OD can help churches is with:

- **Leadership**, with power more distributed amongst people, more service-oriented to others, with greater integrity, more gender-balanced
- **Clearer focus** on their mission and long-term goals – what changes in communities they would like to see
- **Learning and** a**dapting** ways of working in response to evaluations of performance
- Sound **planning and management**
- **Conflicts resolved** between people
- Clarifying **roles and responsibilities** through re-structuring
- Paying greater attention to the **skills and attitudes** people need to play their roles

Integrating the secular and the spiritual

Inspiring Change takes you through OD processes with illustrations and examples from working with churches and Christian organisations throughout the world. At its heart is the belief that professional OD needs a spiritual dimension to reach the required depth to sustain change in demanding circumstances. This book is not abstract theory. It emerges from first-hand practical experiences of working with churches and Christian organisations in Europe, Africa and Asia in particular. These global experiences inspire us that change is possible in seemingly intractable situations. They reveal that change is more likely to happen if we:

1. **Take a thoroughly professional approach to organisational change**. If we dare to intervene in an organisation's life we ought to develop the understanding and skills to be able to facilitate change processes effectively. We need to understand and adapt to the particular characteristics of Christian organisations and churches. There may be unjust structures and systems that are at the root of the issues.

2. **Integrate faith in the change process**. People's faith influences their behaviour and we need to be able to engage with that faith to facilitate change. Furthermore, Christianity believes that God is involved in human change today. People are spiritual beings. Therefore if we are to

> help organisations to change we should integrate a spiritual dimension to change.

It is not about separating the secular from the spiritual, but about bringing them together with integrity.

We all know from our own personal lives that people do not behave by brute logic alone. We are rational beings certainly. But we are also emotional and, many would believe, spiritual beings too. The issues that all organisations struggle with (whether Christian or not) often go much deeper than simply management issues. Technical solutions may be part of the answer, but are rarely the whole answer. Dysfunctional behaviour often needs more than just a rational solution. Emotions and beliefs can have a strong influence on how people behave at work and how they change.

To bring authentic organisational change requires us to engage with the emotional aspects of change. Unless we work with peoples' fears – one of the main constraints on change – our processes remain superficial. To address fears and connect with the values that drive behaviour we have to go deeper still. Faith influences attitudes and actions, especially in churches and Christian organisations. If faith is part of the worldview of the people we are working with, we must take it into account in any change process (whether we share that faith or not).

Christians also believe that humans are spiritual beings. We have beliefs about the process of human change – explored further in 'Towards a theology of change' in Appendix 1. People cannot perfect themselves by human effort alone. God is involved in the process of change. What is true for individuals may also be true for organisations. So Christians would also believe that just as there is a spiritual dimension to individual change, there is also therefore a spiritual dimension to organisational behaviour and change. Furthermore many also believe that sin is not just an individual phenomenon, but can be embedded within unjust systems and structures. Our beliefs about God, what he calls us to be and how he is involved in human change should be at the centre of any facilitation of organisational change.

Yet, in Europe particularly, we automatically tend to make a clear distinction between the spiritual and secular. Like oil and vinegar in a bottle, they naturally separate. This is a false dichotomy. They are not mutually exclusive. Instead to increase the likelihood of change in churches and Christian organisations the professional and the spiritual need to be integrated. For the best outcome, you have to continually shake the bottle of oil and vinegar together. St Augustine said the same many centuries ago: "Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you."

"Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you"
St Augustine

Others are highly sceptical of trying to integrate faith in OD. Some have been scarred by past experiences where faith has been abused as a tool for manipulation and judgement. But if we ignore the spiritual dimension of change, we rely solely on human effort. This is not always enough – especially when the issues often require a change of heart and attitude. I believe God's power is needed to change the human heart.

Such an approach, however, does not always guarantee success. Integrating faith is not a magic formula. Prayer does not work like a vending machine, whereby you put in the money, punch in the numbers and out drops the answer you were hoping for. It may also make things 'messy'. Allowing space for the spiritual also allows space for people to bring in their own agendas now disguised in spiritual terms.

But simply avoiding the spiritual is not the answer if you are interested in authentic and long-lasting change. Just because fuel is flammable, does not mean you do not put it in your car. Taking an intentionally spiritual approach to OD creates more space for God to work. This makes it more likely that the change process is in line with God's will and power and that real change will result.

Obviously faith and spirituality is highly personal. What is meaningful for one person will not suit everyone. Working with the spiritual needs discernment and also flexibility – accepting and engaging with approaches to spirituality that quite different to your own. The examples described in the book not meant to be a dogmatic template to follow, but are just some ways in which people from a variety of countries and backgrounds have

sought to intentionally bring their faith into an OD process. Different individuals from different denominational traditions will have their own ideas. The examples are given to show that it can be done, not prescribe how it should be done.

What about secular contexts?

Integrating faith in OD is not just for Christian organisations. While the language needs to be different with secular organisations, the underlying principles are the same. A colleague was telling me about some work McKinseys, the global management consulting firm, had asked him to do. They were having problems with their younger staff who were not taking enough risks. These staff feared failure and blame. They asked my colleague to help them instil a culture of 'forgiveness'. As Charles Handy the management guru from London Business School said: 'It may sound odd for a professor of business to say this, but I reckon that our organisations could do with a deal more loving, a bit more forgiveness and a lot more faith in other people. Such things, however, in organisations are only possible if we feel we are in the grip of something bigger than ourselves'. (1991:78)

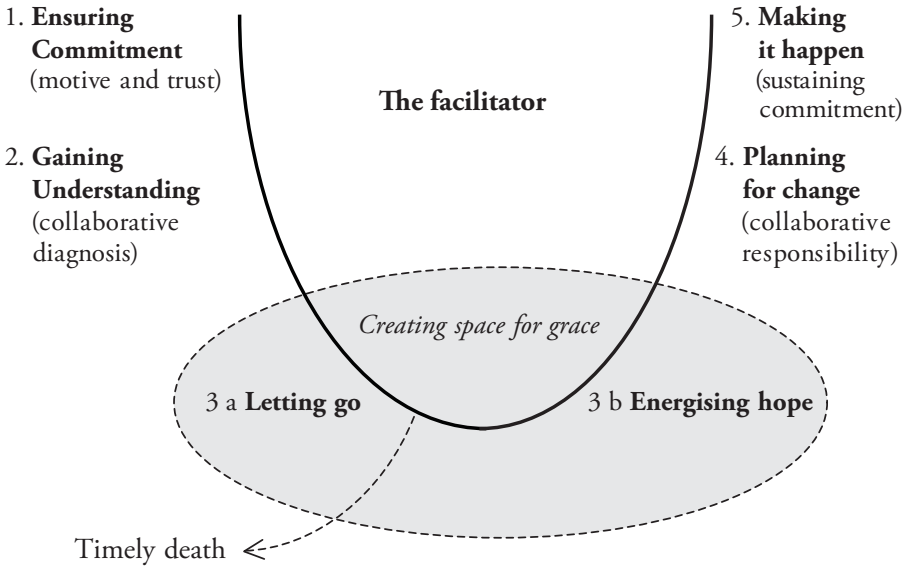
'It may sound odd for a professor of business to say this, but I reckon that our organisations could do with a deal more loving, a bit more forgiveness and a lot more faith in other people. Such things, however, in organisations are only possible if we feel we are in the grip of something bigger than ourselves'

Before going further, it is worth clarifying some terms (ver Beek 2000:32):

Faith – what we believe in
Spirituality – how we relate to the supernatural to give meaning and a basis for reflection, decision and action
Religion – an institutionalised set of beliefs and practices regarding the spiritual realm

A U-seful model of change

Diverse OD experiences suggest the following model may be useful in thinking about the process of organisational change.



Henry Box said: 'All models are wrong, some are useful'. This model of change which has emerged from practical OD experiences clearly over-simplifies reality. The phases are not as linear as shown here. They merge, flow together, zigzag, overlap, and iterate. They do not have to follow this idealised sequence. Sometimes you may only complete a part, yet be successful. At other times you might be engaged at different parts simultaneously. Some suggest that the end point of this model should be higher than the beginning to signify improvement. Others that there should be no end-point, but a feedback loop at the top to show that change is continuous. So going through this U model is not a one-off event, but a continual re-creation.

Provided the model is not used as a restrictive blueprint, it may shed some light on the process of change. It highlights some key elements of good practice and illustrates the most important learning points in the process of facilitating change with churches and Christian organisations. It shows the centrality of a spiritual dimension at the turning point of change.

Consequently this book follows the same structure. Each chapter highlights essential learning about OD with churches and Christian organisations at the different stages. They also explore how faith can be integrated at each stage in an appropriate way that can inspire change.

Chapter 1 Ensuring commitment
Any significant change process requires considerable commitment – the will to change. At the outset there must be a strong motive for change from leadership and a critical mass of staff. It is not enough for others outside the organisation to want it to change. Any facilitator of change, whether internal or external, has to interrogate this motive. They also have to earn trust. People change out of trusting relationships. There is no point in going beyond the first stage, until there is genuine will to change.

Chapter 2 Gaining Understanding
To assist organisations to change, we must first understand them. Much of what goes on in any organisation is not just the public face, but what happens less visibly in private. Much of the way organisations behave is profoundly affected by the culture and contexts in which they work. To facilitate effectively requires good understanding of context. To know what makes an organisation tick, we have to look under the surface (the 'underview'). External facilitators also have to enable an organisation to come to its own collaborative understanding of the priorities and direction of change. This may mean withholding their own diagnosis in order to facilitate effectively.

Chapter 3a Letting go
The third stage in this model is about assisting the organisation and individuals let go of past ways of behaving and thinking (some call this 'unlearning'). This often involves facing fears and taking personal responsibility for your contribution to past poor performance; and then choosing to change. It is an inside-out process. It usually involves some expression of regret (in religious language called repentance). Too frequently we try and by-pass this essential, if painful stage. Yet without it there is no turning point – only cosmetic change.

Indeed sometimes there is no turning point. The most positive step forward may be to accept the life of an initiative or even organisation is over. Death is also a part of life.

Chapter 3b Energising Hope
At the turning point of change in organisations, there is a positive injection of energy – a relief at letting go of burdens and excitement that change is actually possible. This is the flipside to the pain of the previous stage. Without one you do not get the other. At this stage there is vision for change. Trust begins to be restored and relationships reconciled as people open themselves up to change. This often involves forgiveness. This turning point can be quite a spiritual process – God breathing life into dry bones. The facilitator needs to create and maintain room for the organisation to turn around – to create space for grace.

Chapter 4 Planning for Change
The resulting excitement needs to be channelled productively. Clarity on the desired outcomes helps. What is the change we want to see? What does it look like? How will we know when we have changed? How will we measure the difference? Change processes usually involve difficult choices. You cannot go in lots of different directions simultaneously. This stage involves prioritising and rigorous planning to focus efforts on making the desired changes. It involves deciding what will change, how, who will be involved and by when. People need to take collaborative responsibility for making it happen. This can be exciting and rewarding, yet still painful as people may be adversely affected. The process needs to be well-managed with sensitive understanding of the human costs involved.

Chapter 5 Making it happen
We sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that we have we have already arrived once we reach the planning stage. Planning to change and actual change are not the same thing. Change is a journey, not a one-off event. Frequently external consultants exit before this stage happens with clients reluctant to pay for follow-through and consultants anxious to move on. Yet this stage is arguably the most important. This is where change becomes embedded (or not). Organisations often need internal change agents or external consultants to accompany them in implementation. They can provide a vital accountability mechanism for ensuring that the plans are put into practice. Systematic monitoring of how the change process is going, what is going well, where it is stuck and what corrections need to be made are vital. Leadership frequently needs on-going support to make sure the organisation changes (and they themselves change) in the desired ways.

Chapter 6 The Facilitator

The book concludes with a chapter on the facilitator themselves. Ultimately it is not about what tools a facilitator uses in a change process. The facilitator is her or his own best tool. How much an organisation changes will be influenced more by the facilitator, their actions and even their character. If we dare to intervene in other peoples' lives we have to make sure we are spiritually and professionally fit in order to do it to the very best of our ability. We need the courage to grapple with our own faith and relationship with God. We need the self-awareness to struggle against our temptations and the self-discipline to cultivate virtues of authentic humility, patience, compassion…

At the end of each chapter we highlight some 'Useful Tools' that members of the learning group have found helpful at the different phases of organisational change processes. Digni hope to describe these and other tools in more detail in an intended forthcoming *OD Toolkit* publication.

To develop this self-awareness as facilitators of change, each chapter also ends by highlighting questions we should ask ourselves at each stage of the process.

As Manfred Max-Neef says: 'We know a lot, but we understand very little. We can achieve knowledge about almost anything we like with the scientific method – even love from a theological, anthropological, sociological, psychological and bio-chemical perspective. But we cannot understand love, until we fall in love'. We hope this book contributes to your knowledge, but even more, makes you more understanding of change and more able to integrate faith with your work.

Please do contribute your own learning and experiences with us. Sign up to the web-forum: http://developingchurches.ning.com/ and share your comments, questions, dilemmas or your own stories of change or email me: rjames@intrac.org

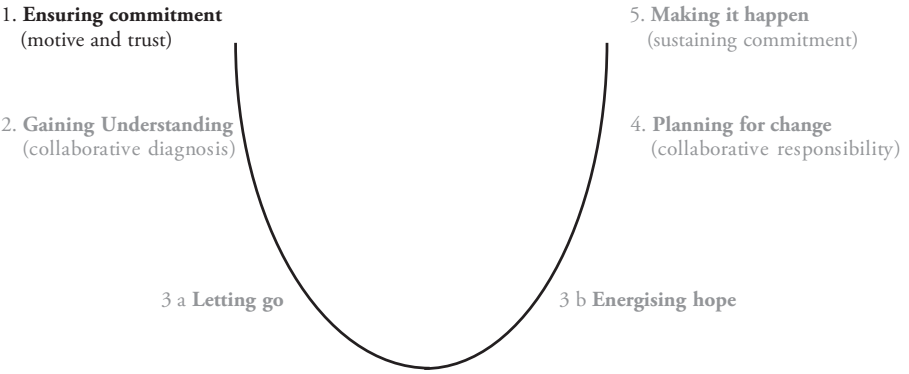
1. Ensuring Commitment

'Our church partner in Zimbabwe is a disaster. They have been silent in the face of all these human rights abuses and are politically compromised. They have lost credibility amongst their members and funding from donors. They need radical change. Can you help?' I was so excited when two colleagues from a Dutch and a Swedish donor organisations asked me this back in 2007. For years I had been longing to be practically involved in responding to the deteriorating situation in the country. I eagerly asked them, 'What does the General Secretary and the Board think about the need for change?' They replied 'Oh they are completely against it. In fact they are the main problem.' But if the leadership was so set against change what could anyone do? With a heavy heart, I said 'Until the leadership is open to change, there is very little I can do to help'.

'Until the leadership is open to change, there is very little I can do to help.'

Two years later the same donors approached me again saying there was now a completely new board, who were wholly committed to driving change and removing the General Secretary, but were not sure how to go about putting the organisation back on its feet. They had asked the donors: 'Please find us someone who can help us out'. This was the beginning of one of the most meaningful change processes I have ever had the privilege of being involved in.

This first stage of change is about ensuring commitment by interrogating the motives and earning trust.



This chapter will analyse the key elements of good practice OD at this first stage of change and explore how to integrate the spiritual element by:

- Interrogating the motive for change, and in particular how much leaders want change and why;
- Discerning whether God seems to be already at work in this situation.
- Examining your own motives and commitment
- Establishing trust between the change agent and the client

Interrogate the motive for change

The first principle of any change process is to ensure that the organisation has a strong enough motive for change. It is the same for secular or Christian agencies. This motive provides the energy to keep going when things get tough (as they almost undoubtedly will). Change is costly. It is not simply about learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge. It is also about giving up bad habits and behaving in new ways. It sometimes involves admitting error or ignorance. Change is often painful, sensitive and personal. The motive for change must be stronger than the powerful incentives to remain the same.

There also needs to be a sufficient sense of urgency amongst the relevant people. Unless people feel that the status quo is intolerable and that they have to move fast, they will tend to stick with what they know. Complacency is a real block to change.

Questions to explore

- Where has this initiative come from?
- What were the triggers, prompts, or drivers?
- What is the attitude of the leadership and board? Are leaders taking responsibility or externalising blame?
- Who is the process for? Why do they want it?
- Who is taking responsibility for the problem?
- Where do they see the problem?
- Who within the organisation is motivated to change? Who needs to be motivated to change?
- What will happen if they do nothing? How intolerable is the pain?
- What have they already tried? How much have they invested in this?
- What are they prepared to invest in the future? Time? Money?

- What are they prepared to stop doing? Give up? What is the extent of change being contemplated?
- What is up for discussion? What are the sacred cows?

In the aid system this motive for change is more complicated. As the Zimbabwe example illustrates, change processes sometimes are not initially owned by the organisation itself, but suggested by an outside funder. It is easy to be fooled into thinking that an authentic desire for change exists, when really it is just acquiescence to a donor's wishes (to secure future funding). The most common fault of all efforts to build capacity is that the motive for change is external to the client, usually from the donor. It is not demand-driven. At best this only leads to superficial change.

At the outset it is useful to try and identify who are the people (and organisations) who have a stake in the change process. It may be helpful to further analyse how important they are in terms of their power to make it happen or to block it from happening. One simple tool for doing this is called 'stakeholder analysis':

Stakeholder analysis

There are many variants on the simple stakeholder analysis. In its most basic form it involves identifying all those groups who have a stake or an interest in your work. These can be drawn as circles of different sizes (illustrating power to influence the organisation) and placed closer or further away from the organisation (illustrating the extent of or frequency of contact). A stakeholder analysis can be useful in deciding who should be involved in the change process and at what stage. It can help identify who has power to drive or block change. Detail can help. For example, some board members are central to any decision-making, whilst others are more passive. A facilitator can ask about this at the initial stage of discussing the assignment with the client.

Finances can often be the trigger for change. On the face of it a self-centred desire for survival, might not be an ideal motive (as compared with the motive to have greater impact for others). But this survival instinct is an incredibly powerful one. We need to be realistic and work with the triggers that are there. It may be worth starting with the financial

imperative, the presenting motive, but quickly deepen the analysis to touch on underlying causes of the financial challenge. As one Swedish colleague Nils Nordung, relates:

> 'Last year a church district asked me to help them prioritise as they faced a bleaker economic future. It was about funding. But I have found in similar situations before that focusing on the financial imperative can limit the search for solutions to a narrow economic perspective. I have learnt the value of not just chasing the money, but looking up and focusing on ultimate goal –identifying the overall and often unstated aims behind their activities'.

Whatever initiated the process, OD facilitators should rigorously interrogate the motive for change. A strong motive exists when the organisation is already investing time and money in finding solutions without looking for outside support. It exists when people, particularly at leadership level, are taking personal responsibility for a situation, not just externalizing blame. A motive for change comes when people put organisational interests above self-interests.

Getting a clear understanding of these motives is much easier said than done. The motive is often easier to see with the benefit of hindsight or 'in rear view mirror'. At the time of starting a change process, the motives do not appear so clear cut. People may not even be aware of them themselves. Motives are mixed. Self-interest always competes with altruistic intent. Motives are messy and changing. Accepting this should not stop us trying to find out at the outset whether we believe there is sufficient positive motive to outweigh the inherent costs of change. We should also keep revisiting the motive for change throughout the process as it will not remain constant over time.

Leaders' motives

In examining motive for change, the attitude of leadership is absolutely critical. Leaders are at the centre of any significant organisational change. They can drive or derail the process.

From Grace to Greed

I remember one development department of a church that a colleague, Joyce Mataya and I were asked to help in Malawi. Over the years they had grown to an annual budget of $1 million with 100 staff. But they were facing a rapidly changing external environment which was making it hard for them to prioritise between the conflicting demands of church donors, beneficiaries and staff. They wanted a clearer strategy for the future. We undertook a highly participatory process which gave clear direction for the way ahead. As part of the change process, they also felt they should strengthen and restore relationships with the church leadership. But instead of the hoped-for reconciliation, when the new strategy was presented for consultation, the Bishop (with the encouragement of some pastors) decided that the church should have much greater control of the development work. They unconstitutionally dissolved the independent board, fired the Director and made the staff redundant. Clearly we had not really interrogated the motive for change of the wider church. The positive noises the Bishop had made earlier in the process turned out to be a smokescreen disguising his real motive – change in a completely different direction. We were trying to create space for grace; it turned out we created space for greed.

But when the leadership motive for change is positive, then there is incredible potential for improvement. In 2003 a large Christian NGO in Africa was in crisis. Fear, division and apathy were endemic. Staff were demoralised and demotivated. Yet within three years it had been transformed. Trust, openness and commitment became more the norm. Income had quadrupled. Its impact and influence had grown to unprecedented levels. Leadership had brought the change. A new Director worked with the leadership team to model the change they wished to see in the whole organisation. They worked hard and often painfully to improve relations and decision-making within that team of six. They used every team meeting to discuss the harsh realities as honestly as possible. The principles of openness, trust, care and love for each other were set in place in these team meetings. These guided the change process over the next few years. When visionary yet humble servant leaders have a strong motive for change the potential for transformation is remarkable.

Leaders have to be profoundly committed to organisational change because it often affects them most personally. As Robert Quinn points out 'When I discuss the leadership of organisational change with execu-

tives I usually go to the place they least expect. The bottom line is that they cannot change the organisation unless they first change themselves' (2000:106). As Daft put it, 'Leaders cannot simply decree new thinking, leaders first have to change themselves' (1998: 52).

Research with NGO leaders in Africa reinforces this private sector experience. It concluded that 'leadership commitment to organisational change is in practice synonymous with their commitment to their own personal change' (James 2003).

Leadership commitment to organisational change is in practice synonymous with their commitment to their own personal change

Organisational change is inextricably tied up with leadership change. We therefore need to understand the nature, extent and source of leadership's commitment to change. We need to find out whether they are prepared to consider themselves as part of the system that has caused the problem and also therefore part of the solution. Research in the corporate sector attests that the leading cause of failure of so many change efforts is that change efforts are directed at fixing the system below the manager and do not involve the manager's own change (Daft 1998, Hurst 2002). It makes all the difference if leaders are passionate enough about change to put the organisational interests above their personal interests.

Complexity of Christian leadership

In churches and Christian organisations, leadership motive for change can be more complex due to their particular governance structures as well as the notion of spiritual authority.

Different churches have different governance structures, which influence how decisions are made and where the motive for change needs to lie. To generalise, in Episcopal structures (such as the Catholic or Anglican denominations) the Bishops and Archbishops may have an important influence on change, whereas in Congregational denominations (such as Pentecostal churches) it may be more about the individual church leader. Whichever governance model prevails, the leadership motive for change is more complex due to the relationship between the religious leadership and the leadership of the development work. As the example from the Malawi church development department showed, the formal leadership professed commitment to change, but different elements within the church later

undermined this. You may think you are working with a development department or even a separate NGO of the church, but when matters come to a head, spiritual authority can transcend legal governance. So any change process with a church-related agency has to also ensure that the overall church leadership shares the motive for change.

Spiritual authority often gives church leaders extra power to drive or resist change. In many cases leaders have spiritual authority given by followers, on top of the political authority from their position. What church leaders say may be given greater weight if it is thought to come from God. This extra dimension to power can be used well or badly. One of the most extraordinary OD experiences of my life was with an African evangelical fellowship. It was the sickest organisation I have ever come across. The Board Chair and Vice Chair were said to be receiving bribes from the State President to remain silent about human rights abuses. Internal conflict was so rife that members were even burning down each other's churches. But the voluntary General Secretary, a respected church leader, refused to accept such a situation. As a last resort he called the board and all the members to a workshop, which he persuaded a highly sceptical donor to finance. This process led the Bishops to publically repent of their failings and allowed for the subsequent transformation of the organisation. This change was brought about by one respected and humble leader refusing to accept the shameful behaviour of his organisation.

Spiritual authority often gives church leaders extra power to drive or resist change. This can be used well or badly.

Yet the motive for change needs to be shared by many more than just the individual leader. The governance must be committed to change. It is usually really important in any OD process to find out what the board think. When my own church leader asked me to help developing a strategy for the church, I asked for a meeting with the church council before going any further. I explained to them the likely costs and pain of change. I then asked how much they were really prepared to change. They gave in confidential responses on pieces of paper, explaining why they wanted change. It turned out that the whole church council said they were completely committed to change. This gave the leader and the facilitators the mandate to push ahead.

Sharing and maintaining motive

But even having leadership on board is not enough. There needs to be a critical mass of support from members and staff. A participatory process can often help develop a general dissatisfaction with the status quo into a collective motive for change. People become more committed to change when they feel they have had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to identifying the needs for change as well as the appropriate process for moving forward. In the next chapter we go into more detail about how this can be done.

A motive for change is not fixed. Just because it was there at the outset, does not mean that it will remain. This motive for change needs to be nurtured, maintained and even strengthened during an OD process. It can easily be lost, especially when things get personal and painful. It also needs reinforcing at the stage of implementation, when fine ideas have to be put into practice. This means the methods we use as facilitators and the way we work throughout the process has to reinforce the organisation's ownership of the need for and willingness to change.

Timing the wave

So much of change is about timing. I imagine this to be a bit like surfing. Sometimes you can catch the wave just right and you are in for a very fast, smooth, exhilarating ride. At other times you get the timing wrong, and then you are likely either to paddle furiously to no effect or to be smashed painfully onto the beach. I remember an early experience in OD in Malawi when I was asked to help the NGO coordinating body with strategic planning and addressing organisational issues. But when it came time to start looking at these internal issues, the Director (who was embroiled in financial mismanagement) stage-managed a pre-planned intervention from a drunken board member to ensure that there was no discussion of any internal issues whatsoever. I was accused of witch-hunting even before the session started. There was clearly not the slightest leadership commitment to change. The timing was not ripe for such an intervention.

Stein-Erik Kruse in BN's publication 'How to assess NGO capacity' highlights a useful table for assessing readiness for change:

Factors that can affect readiness to change	
You must have • Acceptance of the process by leaders in the organisation • A champion • Adequate internal resources (time and people) • A compelling reason	**These are mixed blessings** • Other changes going on at the same time, some of which you cannot control • An organisation with a history of change • Past experience with evaluations (positive and negative)
It is nice to have • Leaders with credibility • A clear vision in the organisation of where it wants to go • Additional resources for the change process	**These can be major barriers** • Past failures and frustrations with change • Superficial motives • Low levels of skills and capabilities • Negative incentives

Discerning God's activity

Many Christians believe that God is the author of change. As Andrew Kirk says: 'It is God, not human beings, who has taken the initiative to show his love to creation… 'Christians believe that salvation comes from God and not from our own efforts. We are but agents of God's activity' (2003:11&17). Consequently, as Myers states: 'A Christian process of change must begin with an affirmation that at the most fundamental level transformation takes place because God wants it and enables it' (Myers 1999:121).

If we believe that God really is the author of change, then we need to discern whether he is already active in a situation. Therefore at this initial stage of the process I ask myself, do I perceive that God is already working in this situation. My own faith tells me I should be joining in on a process that God has already started. Timing is critical. And it may not be right for now. After all, as Ecclesiastes 3 says, 'There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven….' As facilitators we may need to wait patiently. It may be the time to refrain… When Jesus told the rich young ruler what he had to change in order to get eternal life, the ruler walked away sad. He had free will not to change and Jesus did not chase after him.

I rarely get a clear supernatural sense that God is behind a process (after all you could argue that he is always at work). In such cases, I usually use 'leadership commitment to change' as a proxy indicator. I believe that if God wants to bring change to a situation he starts by prodding people to shift.

Sometimes, however, God's involvement seems surprisingly clear. In the Zimbabwe assignment (mentioned at the start of the chapter) the situation looked hopeless on arrival. The church organisation was completely bankrupt with no money for salaries, the corrupt and politically compromised General Secretary was still around (while they did the auditing process and appointed his successor). The necessary change process was much greater than I had imagined in an impossibly fraught and unstable context. It did not seem that much was happening. I was asking: 'Where is God in all this?' In preparation for the intervention I tried to understand more about the churches who were members of the Council by randomly visiting a number of them on the Sunday morning. As I walked into one church someone handed me a verse Isaiah 43: 18-19. It is one of the few times in my life that any verse has spoken so powerfully to me about a work situation. I believed God was directly answering my question with the words:

> Forget the former things:
> Do not dwell on the past.
> See I am doing a new thing
> Now it springs up: do you not perceive it?
> I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland

Prayer is another indicator to look for. When God is behind change people seem to get a sort of 'holy discontent' with the current situation. This leads them to pray. I found out that the most extraordinary OD experience that I had in Kenya had been preceded by three days of fasting and praying at the venue by a group of women. People were passionate for change. I believe God had stirred them to pray.

Earlier this year I was asked to facilitate a process with a Christian NGO in Canada. The dates did not look great as they overlapped with my daughter's 16th birthday. But more fundamentally I was unconvinced that

the leadership really wanted it. Every time I was due to Skype the Director or talk to them by phone, another commitment seemed to come up for them. I turned down the assignment saying simply that I was too busy. A few days later they came back to me apologizing for the Director being unavailable, saying that he was completely committed to the process and asking if they shifted the dates (away from my daughter's birthday), would I reconsider. I had mentioned nothing of my concerns to them and they had answered them all fully. It seemed to me that God was already working in this situation. I accepted the work which proved to be one of the most positive events I have been involved in.

Examine your own motives

A change agent who integrates their faith in their work will focus on those organisations that have the potential to make a meaningful contribute to a better world (this includes businesses). There may be many civil society organisations that actually do more harm than good. An extreme case like the Klu Klux Klan is an obvious example, but there may be others whose operations have a negative consequence on those they are meant to be serving. A facilitator is never neutral. They should be able to believe in the value of the organisation they are working with. Otherwise they are wasting their time and talents.

Integrating my faith in an OD process forces me to examine my own motives. They are not always as pure as I would like. I always bring my own agenda into every situation. I have mixed motives for getting involved. There is always a fair degree of self-interest in the work I do. It may be that I need the contract financially. I might want the organisation to change, so that I feel I have made a difference; that I look good; that my reputation as a facilitator increases… If I simply pretend this darker side does not exist, it may surface later in a dysfunctional way. Being more aware of my mixed motives can help me manage them (Chapter 6 explores these ideas in more detail).

And if I do believe in the organisation, how committed to them am I? How much do I pray for them? Or is my motive for their change pretty lukewarm or merely financially driven? Am I taking God's involvement for granted? I find it so easy to reduce prayer to asking God to bless my plans for an organisation – that he would enable it to change in the way I think it should. I often have to wrestle with myself and put God back

at the centre of this change process. Prayer is about opening up myself to be used by God in ways which he sees fit, not asking him to join my side. I am reminded of the sovereignty of God in change by the story of Joshua meeting the angel just before he was to attack Jericho. The Bible relates: 'Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come"'[6]. God is at the centre of biblical change processes, not humans. We are trying to get onto his side, not endeavouring to persuade God onto our side. As the Psalmist writes: 'Unless the Lord builds the house [or organisation], its builders labour in vain'[7].

Prayer is about opening up myself to be used by God in ways which he sees fit, not asking him to join my side.

Establish trust

Another critical aspect at the 'ensuring commitment' stage is building trust between the client and the facilitator. OD needs to understand the failures in the past and present in order to help create a new future for the organisation. This is highly sensitive stuff. There is potential for misunderstanding and even damage. It takes a lot of trust to allow someone in to see the 'dirty washing'. Trust is also needed to energise change. People change in response to what others say, but only if they trust them. Emotions are at the heart of change. People only feel safe if they trust the facilitator.

There is an interesting correlation between discerning God's activity and being trusted. In the Zimbabwe example above, I was amazed by the remarkable levels of trust that the board gave me. I had not met any before I arrived. But when I told them I was really concerned about the process planned for a forthcoming donor meeting (which would determine their existence or closure), they immediately said: 'Do whatever you think might work. Redesign it completely yourself'.

A key element at the first stage of change is for the facilitator (whether external or internal) to build trust amongst the staff. They usually have a lot of fears about what will happen and what will come out. In most OD processes staff have a number of questions, which they are unlikely

[6] Joshua 5:13-14
[7] Psalm 127:1

to vocalise. To build trust, an OD facilitator should allay people's fears as much as possible and answer the unasked questions:

Some typical 'unasked' questions of OD

How will this affect my job? Will I get fired?
How will this affect our funding?
Who sent this person?
Why? Do I want this?
Is there anything in it for me?
Whose side are they on?
What power do they bring?
How competent are they?
Can I trust them? Will they keep secrets?
What will others tell them about me?

Trust cannot be demanded – only earned. Outside facilitators have to earn peoples' trust and become credible in their eyes. One African proverb says: 'You have to earn the right to speak by listening'. As one Ethiopian Patriarch explained:

A message to outsiders:

"If you knock on our door, we may let you in.
If we let you in, then you may enter.
If you show you care, listen and respect us,
then you can start asking questions, not giving us answers.
If we change it is because we develop our own answers.
It will take time".

Earlier this year I was meeting a Chief Executive of a large children's charity. I began to ask about the issues they were facing and the OD task they wanted me to do. The Chief Executive stopped me. He said: 'No, before we get onto all that, first, tell us about yourself. Tell me about what matters to you in your work. Tell me about your life journey. Then we'll see whether we can work together.' I was initially taken aback and then as I thought about it, deeply impressed. He knew the most important question was 'Do I trust this person to care for my organisation?'

For internal change agents, this issue of trust is slightly different. Sometimes it can be more difficult for insiders. Chiku Malunga explains two different reactions he had as a change agent within his own church, and externally with other churches:

Prophet without honour – Chiku's story

A while back my own pastor asked me to help him 'think through the issues the church is facing and then facilitate a strategic planning process'. We had a number of conversations, but it never really got off the ground. I eventually discovered that the strategic plan had been formulated, but the pastor had decided to work with another person. In contrast, around the same time, the Bishop and leadership from a completely different denomination asked me to do a very similar task. This one went ahead and they have implemented really significant changes – one of my best OD experiences ever.

I found a real difference in how I was viewed as an internal and as an external facilitator. I felt like a 'prophet without honour' in my own church. Perhaps the fact that I had been in the church since childhood meant that I was still viewed as young and inexperienced. I am not sure. But certainly as an outsider in the other church, they looked at my professionalism, my qualifications and experience as a consultant and writer. Strangely enough being an outsider can sometimes give you a head-start in building trust. In Malawi we have a proverb that says: 'It is the stranger who brings the sharper blade'.

Chiku's example shows how important it is to be trusted. For internal change agents it may be about proving professional competence. Internal change agents have to work hard to ensure that they get more than lip-service support from leadership. It is an on-going process for them to build a coalition of support throughout the organisation.

Internal change agents have to work hard to ensure that they get more than lip-service support from leadership. It is an on-going process for them to build a coalition of support.

For external consultants it may be more about proving spiritual credentials. The church may well be asking: Do they really understand us and our beliefs? Are they one of us? Do they share our faith? Do they behave in ways which are appropriate to our faith?

Facilitator questions in interrogating motive

- *Is there enough leadership commitment to organisational change? Does the pain appear to be greater than the cost of change? Do they appear open to their personal change too?*
- *How urgent is the felt need for change? Is the timing right?*
- *Are there individuals willing to champion the change?*
- *Do they have the resources to carry out the process?*
- *What is their past experience of change?*
- *Why am I getting involved? Do I believe God is in this? Do I feel this is something that God wants me to be involved in?*
- *Do I believe in this organisation and its work? Will it extend God's kingdom? Do I share their motive for change? What are my more self-centred reasons for doing this?*
- *Have I answered the questions they have of me? What do they need reassurance on?*
- *Am I motivated enough to pray for this organisation and this process?*

Useful Tools mentioned

Questions to explore – see page 22
Stakeholder analysis – see page 23
Readiness for change framework – see page 29

2. Gaining Understanding

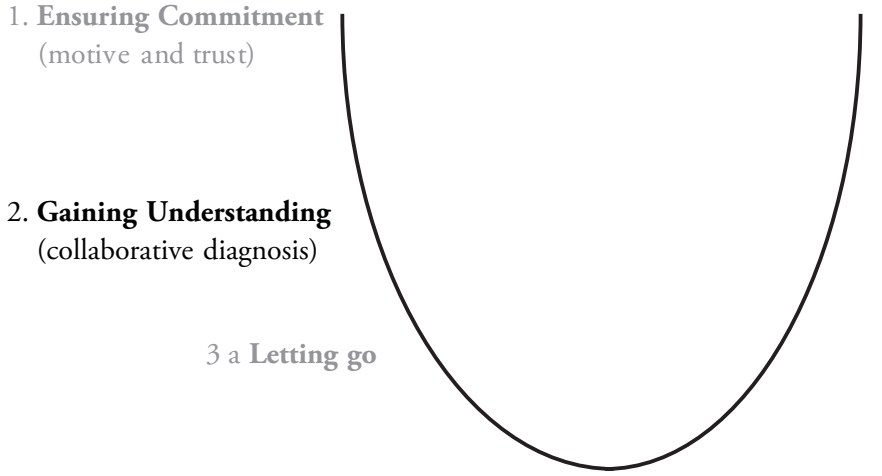
Quick and dirty data gathering

The emailed terms of reference asking me to facilitate a strategic planning process with a fellowship of evangelical churches was brief. It only mentioned in passing that 'the secretariat was closed for three years due to resource constraints, weak leadership and a lack of clear direction'. Reading between these lines, there were obviously major issues. My problem was that due to prior commitments I could only arrive in the country a couple of days before the workshop was due to start. Yet I needed to find out what was really going on under the surface before planning what to do.

Together with the two local consultants I had insisted on working with, we visited as many of the organisation's members, trustees and other key informants as we could to ask them some questions. In just a day and a half, the situation was all too clear – the board chair and vice Chair were being bribed by the State President; there was considerable conflict amongst members (two had burned down each other's churches the weekend before); and many participants suspected that the workshop would be bugged by the secret police…

Frightening though this was, it was so much better to know what was really going on than to step naively into such a volatile situation. That short investment of time to talk to key stakeholders proved invaluable in determining how best to proceed….

Once we are convinced that there is sufficient commitment to change, the next stage of change is gaining understanding – diagnosing with discernment. So much of what goes on in an organisation happens under the surface. The visible may bear little relation to the real situation. To appreciate what makes an organisation tick, where the life force is, what values are lived in practice, we have to look below the surface – get an 'underview' and do it in such a way that the organisation recognises itself.



This stage of diagnosis is crucial in two respects. First, obviously the diagnosis has to be right, but just as importantly it has to be owned by the organisation itself. We need to diagnose in a way that continues to strengthen the motive for change and continues to build trust. The term diagnosis is probably not quite right. It gives an impression of a doctor diagnosing a patient. The expert works out what the problem is and tells the patient what to do. In OD, this process is much more about helping the organisation understand itself better and prioritise its own issues to work on. The facilitator is there to guide the process, not tell the organisation what to do. But to do this effectively, the facilitator has to be able to 'diagnose', or some would say 'read' the organisation with wisdom and discernment.

This chapter explores gaining understanding by:

- Diagnosing with humility and empathy.
- Starting with purpose and performance.
- Analysing the influence of the local context and culture.
- Looking below the waterline to read the organisational culture.
- Gathering information from a variety using different methods and tools, including discernment.
- Using simple frameworks to make sense of the situation.
- Withholding your analysis to allow self-diagnosis.
- Facilitating them to prioritising issues.

Diagnose with humility and empathy

In seeking to read organisations we would do well to heed Gareth Morgan's advice: 'If one truly wishes to understand an organisation, it is much wiser to start from the premise that they are complex, ambiguous and paradoxical' (1986). We know how complex one individual can be. When you put a group together in an organisation, this complexity increases exponentially. Charities and NGOs are even more difficult to read because they have no easily measureable bottom-line, they have a voluntaristic element, and they are often an intermediary between donors and beneficiaries... When McKinsey's, a leading private sector management consulting firm, did some work in the non-profit sector a few years ago, they expressed surprise: 'Almost everything about building capacity in non-profits takes longer and is more complicated than one would expect.' (2001) In seeking to understand Christian organisations and churches we add the further dimension of faith. This increases the complexity yet more, particularly because we know that people interpret Christian faith differently in different denominations; within the same denomination; and even within the same church. So in seeking to understand any organisation, we need to know how partial and simplistic our understanding may be.

'If one truly wishes to understand an organisation, it is much wiser to start from the premise that they are complex, ambiguous and paradoxical

Sometimes we expect churches and Christian organisations to behave much better than secular agencies. We expect them to be driven by Christian values. To a degree this may be the case (though many secular agencies are also driven by similar values). What is clear is that churches and Christian organisations are full of human beings, not angels. Christian organisations and churches have been the best, but also the worst of all the organisations I have worked with. Some have displayed incredible commitment to the poor, breath-taking servant leadership and inspiring visions for a more just and Godly society. But church agencies have also been the sickest and most corrupt organisations I have worked with.

Churches and Christian organisations are full of human beings, not angels.

In working with churches and Christian organisations it is vital to remember that first and foremost these are profoundly human institutions. Just because they have a spiritual mission, does not make them divine. As Charles Handy graphically puts it: 'In my worst moments I have thought that organisations were places designed to be run by sadists and staffed by masochists – and I'm not just talking about business, some of these things happened in the holiest of places and the nicest of people' (1991:76). If we subconsciously expect people to behave like angels, our expectations will be so inflated that our efforts to bring change will inevitably fail. For example if people tell us that there is no internal conflict because we are Christians, we should not accept such aspirations as the reality. There will always be dark sides and mixed motives. Pretending they do not exist means they may surface in manipulative and unhelpful behaviour later. If we are facilitating churches and Christian organisations, we have to be prepared get engage with the human complexity and chaos – even mess – in a realistic and non-judgemental way.

In my worst moments I have thought that organisations were places designed to be run by sadists and staffed by masochists – and I'm not just talking about business, some of these things happened in the holiest of places and the nicest of people

Start with purpose and performance

Purpose and performance is a good place to start. While financial issues may have triggered the intervention, these are often symptoms of something else. What is really important is whether the organisation is achieving what it was created to do – if it is making the difference it hoped. Starting with questions of impact focuses the intervention on what really matters, on what will make a difference in peoples' lives. This taps into the reasons people work for, belong to and support the organisation. It does not limit change to merely how to raise more money. It therefore often helps if an organisational change process starts from or directly follows from an assessment of performance.

An OD Approach to Evaluations

The NGO world is littered with evaluations. These are often an exercise in external judgement whereby a consultant(s) is brought in to say whether the project has been run according to plan and had an impact. Evaluations can be massive opportunity for learning (after all they should be looking at whether the organisation is achieving its mission), yet all too often they fail to catalyse change.

This is because many evaluators take an 'expert' approach to change, hoping that by simply telling the organisation what they think has happened this will promote change. But we know that people rarely change when an outsider comes and tells them what to do. Evaluations offer a real opportunity to take an OD approach of helping the organisation reflect on and deepen its own understanding of whether or not it is achieving its purpose and together to identify areas for improvement and change. An OD approach to evaluation gives much greater likelihood of the organisation actually implementing the results of an evaluation. Evaluations can be a powerful entry point for OD.

Sometimes the overall goals are not clear. Nils Nordung suggests a useful *'so that'* exercise for making the purpose of different activities more explicit. In working with the Church of Sweden he asked people to finish the following sentences:

So that approach

The Church of Sweden is present, *so that*...
We celebrate worship, *so that* ...
We practise service (diakonia), *so that* ...
We teach, so that ...
We practise mission, *so that* ...

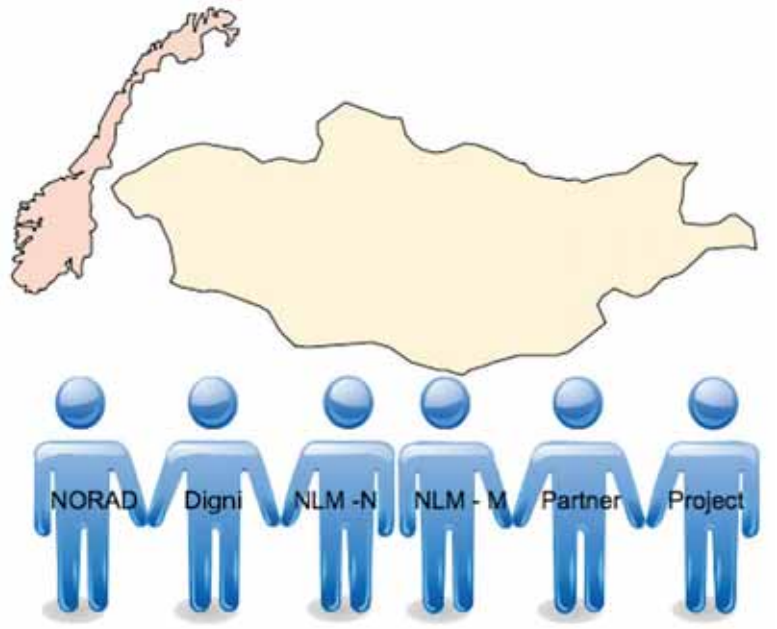
It is valuable to get the opinions of people who are outside of the organisation here. Sometimes external reference points bring a more dispassionate analysis because they are not part of the situation.

Analyse the context of the client

No organisation is an island. Every organisation is profoundly affected by its context, the other organisations and situations it relates to. Even

local church congregations are affected by what goes on outside. Events in their community, issues in their denomination, and trends in their international relationships all have an influence. To understand an organisation, we need to situate them within the web of their inter-connected relationships. Organisational issues are usually the product of both internal and external factors.

A simple stakeholder diagram can assist see the chain of relationships. In the example in the diagram below we see the connections between NORAD in Norway, to Digni, to Norwegian Lutheran Mission to their field office in Mongolia and then to partners and projects in Mongolia:



Organisations are also products of their local environments. Just as plants will grow differently in different soils, so organisations will be different in different places. They cannot help but incorporate the values and ways of behaving from their local environment. In the ten years I worked in Malawi, almost every NGO and church I worked in also reflected the dependence, fear and insecurity characteristic of wider society. Many of the churches I have visited in Zimbabwe mirror the chaos and political polarisation in the country. In the UK it is no different. The church I go to here reflects the culture of comfort and complacency that pervades the city.

Leadership is also clearly affected by the culture and context in which it is enacted, particularly because leadership is a relationship between people (something socially constructed). Therefore different cultures view 'good leadership' in different ways. For example, in many parts of Africa the church operates in a context where the stereotype of 'big man' leadership still exists (Oladipo 2005). In such contexts leaders are expected to be seen as all-powerful, fearsome, all-knowing, all-owning, all-pervasive, multi-faceted problem solver, infallible, aloof and a leader for life. Women are rarely encouraged into formal leadership roles. We see some of these stereotypes lived out by politicians, but also some church leaders too. In many cases such beliefs about leadership come largely from followers. They put their leaders on pedestals and pressurise them to behave as 'big men'.

Local proverbs can give a good insight into the context and culture. In Malawi when you asked about leadership, people often quoted the following proverbs:

Two cocks do not crow in one kraal (there can only be one leader, so if others are talking they are competing with the leader)

A big head will not dodge the fists (the leader is responsible for sorting out all our problems)

If a duck with a long beak cannot pick it up then a chicken certainly cannot (if a leader cannot solve something, then the followers certainly cannot)

He is old...therefore he is right (a leader's decision is not open for discussion)

But we must also beware of stereotypes. For example, people sometimes think that OD with its emphasis on confronting problems and participative decision-making does not fit in Africa. But closer appreciation of any context reveals that there are contextually appropriate ways of confronting issues and sharing decision-making (though these may be invisible to outsiders). When Nelson Mandela was challenged about the undemocratic nature of leadership in Africa he told the story of the decision-making processes of the Thembu people of which his grandfather was chief,

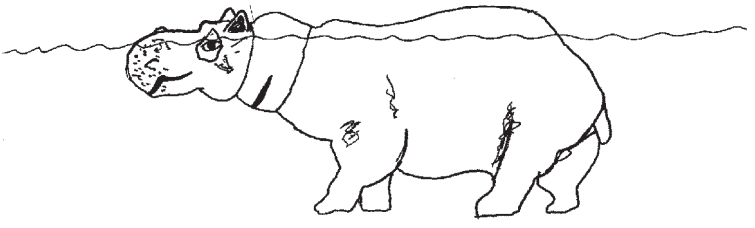
> Everyone who wanted to speak could do so. It was democracy in its purest sense. There may have been a hierarchy importance amongst the speakers, but everyone was heard ...Only at the end of the meeting as the sun was setting would the regent speak. His purpose was to sum up what had been said and form some consensus among the diverse opinions. But no conclusion was forced on those who disagreed. (Mandela 1994:20)

To work effectively with change we need to read the influence of this local context on individual and organisational behaviour.

Look below the waterline

Much of what happens in any organisation goes on under the surface. What we can see (websites, reports, organisation charts, constitutions, mission statements, proposals, plans) are only a fraction of what is really going on. Just as a CV does not give us a complete understanding of a person, so what we can see of an organisation may bear little relation to the real situation. To really appreciate what makes an organisation tick, where the life force is, what values are lived out in practice, we have to look below the surface. We have to read the culture of the organisation (which people describe as 'a pattern of learned underlying assumptions about how to behave' or simply 'the way we do things round here'). The informal but influential things, such as the way people relate unofficially, the political manoeuvring, the personalities involved, the ways decisions are made, the role that women play... occur below the water-line.

Seeing an organisation like a hippo may be a useful analogy[8]. During the day, they prefer to remain in the water with much of their body invisible. They can easily be mistaken for a rock or a log. It is the same with organisations.



[8] Seeing an organisation as an iceberg is another popular analogy

To assist organisations to change, we need to find out what the hippo looks like below the waterline. Often what external consultants are first asked to look at is not the real issue. It is just the presenting problem. As we delve and find out more, we find that this is just a symptom of something deeper. Unless we engage below the waterline, we may limit ourselves to superficial and cosmetic efforts at change. In order to find out more we have to use a variety of data gathering methods. Also as organisations become more conscious of their culture, this becomes a source of energy and creativity. This awareness can turns culture from being a block to change into an asset.

Yet the analogy of a hippo also helps us appreciate how sensitive and even dangerous this process is. Hippos, like organisations, do not like to be exposed, which is why they only come out on land at night in order to eat. If they get frightened and there is someone between them and the water, they charge for the safety of the river (often crushing the person on the way). I can think of a few occasions when organisations (leaders especially) have charged for safety in the midst of a workshop when the real, rather than the hoped-for, culture is exposed.

Gather information from a variety of sources

A prime principle for good diagnosis is to use a variety of methods to listen to a variety of sources. If three or more say roughly the same thing, it is likely to be accurate. This is the principle of triangulation.

Some of the common data gathering methods which we explore further include:

- Public documents, including accounts
- Observation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Group exercises – time lines, characterising, drawing organisation, sculpting
- Organisation Assessment tools/questionnaires
- Spiritual discernment

Public documents

The public face of an organisation is an obvious starting point – seeing what is written on the web, in reports, in proposals, in strategy papers

and in evaluations… Programme evaluations if they exist are ideal as they should analyse what actually happens in practice with the beneficiaries and what impact this has had. Evaluations shed light on whether or not an organisation is actually achieving its mission. Public documents, like annual reports and accounts, can be important sources of information too. If an organisation has the self-awareness and self-assurance to be honestly self-critical in their marketing and public relations information (not just pretending to be perfect) this says a lot about how strong they are.

The financial statements are a critical instrument with which to read an organisation, but one which few OD facilitators use as much as we should. Tracing the sources of money can be a good way to understand why an organisation behaves as it does. Assumptions about what donors want and do not want can have a major influence on an organisation. Good reading of accounts can expose many supposedly hidden issues. One time I was working with a national NGO coordinating body on their strategy. I skipped through the audited accounts and marked with a highlighter a very large staff loan which the gender officer had outstanding. I then forgot about it, until some weeks later I discovered that there were major internal conflicts and leadership issues. Staff felt the gender officer was wielding too much power – a consequence of her having an affair with Director. It was all there in the accounts if I had bothered to follow up.

Observation

You can tell a lot about an organisation by what you see. You can observe how people relate to each other and the leadership. You see who talks in meetings and how; and who does not talk and what is not said. You can learn a lot from what notices and posters are displayed on the walls. The layout of the offices, the ways things are stored, the tidiness all tell a story. To some extent as facilitators we observe naturally. But often we do not bother to pay much attention to what we see. We ignore the incredibly rich information that is freely available. While this data is highly subjective and can very easily be misinterpreted, it can raise questions at least for us to probe in semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews and group discussions

Semi-structured interviews are one of the most commonly used methods for understanding organisations. Interviews with staff, leadership, sometimes board members, sometimes donors, sometimes other stakeholders and key informants often form the bulk of the data gathering process. It is useful to

develop a short series of questions to give some structure to the interviews, but to also give yourself the freedom to probe further and make up new questions as you go along. This text box contains some of my favourite questions that often unearth what is really going on in an organisation.

Good questions to pick from

- Why does this organisation exist?
- Where does this organisation's heart lie?
- What currently gives you the most joy and satisfaction from what you do?
- What is working well?
- What are some of the challenges / frustrations you face in fulfilling your job? (or is hindering achieving your mission)
- What do you like most/like least about working here?
- What struck you on first joining the organisation?
- If a friend was to start working here, what would they need to know to do well/to get them fired?
- Looking back at the last three years in this organisation, what are you most proud about/sorry about?
- How do you learn from experience?
- Who makes decisions here? In practice, how are priorities set?
- What are the areas of tension or conflict?
- If your organisation did not exist, what would be lost?
- Who owns this place? Where is the life force?
- Who loses sleep over the organisation? What keeps you awake at night about your work?
- What would outsiders say about your organisation?
- If you could change three things here, what would they be?

Focus group discussions are another way of eliciting information. This involves sitting with a few people to look at a particular topic together. The benefit is that you can see a number of people at the same time. They sometimes build on each other's ideas, deepening the analysis and sharing conclusions. But there are also costs in terms of peoples' openness in a group and the inability to probe further with specific individuals.

But even more important than the questions you ask, is the way you listen. Active listening is a vital skill that facilitators need in order to read an organisation. Community Development Resource Association (CDRA)

in South Africa have done a lot of work on this. They talk about the importance of listening on three levels (see text box below). They advise us to actively listen to the thoughts, to the feelings and to the intentions behind people's responses.

Three ways to listen

"Listening to the Head" – the Thinking Level – to thoughts, facts, concepts, arguments, ideas and the principles behind these. This is the most obvious way to listen and the one we are most familiar with.

"Listening to the Heart" – the Feeling Level – to feelings, emotions, mood, experience and the values behind these. Listening to feelings can give us important clues about what really matters. Strongly expressed or strongly denied feelings can provide fruitful entry points to key issues that lie behind experiences. These may be "heard" more through the tone of voice, facial expression, gesture, etc. than what is actually said. Silences are also important to "listen" to as they often express the real feelings of the speaker.

"Listening to the Feet" – the Will Level – to intentions, energy, direction, motivation, the will. If the will does not shift nothing will and so our ability to read a person's or group's will is a prime enabler of our ability to work effectively, in a real way. To sense the real intentions of another person, what they want, why they are telling you this or that, can be one of the hardest aspects of the art of listening.

Adapted from CDRA 'The Barefoot Guide for Social Change'

Participatory exercises

There are also a number of useful participatory exercises you can do with a staff group that help understand an organisation. We are all products of our history to a large degree and therefore there is considerable value in gaining understanding of an organisation's history – the highs and lows, the turning points. Two common methods for doing this are:

- **An organisational timeline** – where dates from the beginning of the organisation to now are written along a line in the middle of a flip-chart (or series of flip charts together). Members of staff write the positive events above the line and negative ones below the line. In a relatively short period of time people collaboratively develop the critical moments in an organisations history. These events will say a lot about

how the organisation still behaves today. There are many variants of this – you could use a washing line with items representing marker moments pegged on and then find artefacts to represent each phase.

- **A river of life** – similar to the above, but here participants in smaller groups draw their organisation's history as if it were a river. They illustrate key moments (both good and bad) with twists and turns, rocks and obstacles, waterfalls, rapids, new tributaries and ox-bow lakes along the way. This can be an extremely useful way of eliciting quite sensitive information in a non-threatening. It allows opportunities to probe further asking for example: what good things came out of the difficulties? Or what problems came out of the apparent good moments?

Other participatory exercises that can be revealing about an organisation is to get people to **draw their organisation**. You could let people use any image they liked to characterise their organisation or give a bit more direction by suggesting they draw it as a mode of transport, a music group or an animal for example. The important thing is to get people using different parts of their brains to explore what their organisation is really like. They reveal what is below the waterline. One time, the staff of a Christian Council I was working with used animals. Almost every single person individually decided on either an elephant, a venomous snake or a rat. People explained how the organisation was fine until you got too close and then it was very dangerous. Even those that chose a rat described how rats at night would quietly eat away at the skin on the soles of your feet if you were not careful…

Sculpting – Bruce's story

During a workshop to examine tense partnership relationships between an NGO in Ghana and its Scandinavian partner, we used a number of tools such as life-cycle analysis, parallel timelines and partnership mapping to examine the relationships between and within the two organisations. These tools were effective at identifying the management and organisational issues but overlooked the genuine mutual regard which lay at the heart of the relationship. Since it was this mutual concern that provided the motivation for resolving the problems I felt it was important to acknowledge this more emotional side of the partnership. To do this I asked a small group of participants from each organisation to become human sculptures representing how they saw the relationship at present. They arranged themselves as two groups reaching out to each other but somehow being unable to connect

no matter how hard they tried. We talked about what this felt like physically (they were in uncomfortable postures) and emotionally. I then asked them to create a sculpture representing how they would like to be. They immediately got into a close group, with their arms round each other and beaming smiles on their faces. We then talked about how this felt. It was clear that the energy levels and feeling of togetherness and willingness to change had increased enormously. Together with the more technical analysis we were then able to move into the next stage of the partnership strengthening process.

Organisation assessment tools

A number of international agencies are keen on using organisational assessment (OA) tools. These can not only assist them make funding decisions (is this organisation strong enough to deliver?), but can also be used to identify the key capacity challenges. There are literally hundreds of such tools. They tend to have a large number of questions which can be filled in confidentially by staff. Most tend to look at a similar series of universal issues such as governance, leadership, mission, vision, staffing, structures, systems, funding. Many enable aggregation of scores to highlight strengths and weaknesses. Some plot findings on graphs or spidergrams and others give red, green and amber lights. Some provide different scales/indicators depending on the different stage of growth of the organisation. A few enable comparison between responses at different levels of staff which may highlight important differences of perspective.

Quality Improvement System

Viva's Quality Improvement System (QIS) is a capacity building tool which introduces international quality standards and principles and provides a framework for child-centred learning networks to make improvements towards those standards. QIS focuses on six core areas that are of central importance for work with children at risk: people care; governance; child protection; financial accountability; project planning and design and child wellbeing.

QIS enables organisations to assess their performance against the standards and to define areas for improvement. Capacity building support is given to assist organizations to reach the relevant quality standard. These improvement strategies include mentoring, coaching through change and peer to peer learning.

Organisations participating in QIS then have the opportunity to review their progress and celebrate improvements against each of the six areas. The methodology employed at the review stage of the QIS cycle is a combination of self-assessment and spot check verification. At the end of the QIS cycle, organizations receive certificates according to the level of quality they have reached.

Such tools can be extremely useful and systematic. They comprehensively cover all the main issues and enable individuals to have a confidential input. Being aggregated findings are more 'scientific' and less based on individual personal opinion or who shouts loudest. But if organisation assessment tools are used in isolation, they may not work so well and can become counter-productive.

Fearing Assessment

At first, the directors seemed enthusiastic and very positive about using QIS. But when the time came to do the organisational assessment exercise, they were not so keen. They felt they were being judged and did not want to admit any weaknesses. They had not really understood what QIS was about or what it could help them to achieve. The process slowed.

A two–day spiritual retreat with directors and their spouses proved helpful. They became more motivated as they felt they were being accompanied and supported. Personal work with the directors helped them to relax and trust the QIS facilitation team. This helped them to understand that the purpose of the assessment was to see what they were doing well and recognise areas where they needed to change. It was really important to invest time in the process of motivating and informing them so the directors could take up the challenge of QIS.

Tools in isolation can be mechanistic and lifeless. They may focus on the visible and formal, thus missing what is below the waterline. They find it difficult to describe issues of changing relationships and power. As an organisation develops and becomes more self-aware, scores may go down. Furthermore OA tools often miss out how changing context is affecting the potential or otherwise for organisational change. All too frequently the tool itself becomes the main focus, losing sight of the thinking behind it or the ultimate aim of the exercise.

Spiritual discernment

In seeking to gain understanding of a situation it can be helpful to try and put our judgement to one side. To try and hear from God, I find I have to consciously make an effort to switch off the rational, analytical part of my brain that whirrs in relentless activity and instead try and visualise the situation through God's eyes. I find this incredibly hard to do. All of my being is so desperate to think and plan and analyse. But in every consultancy I do, I now try to not rush headlong into solutions. Instead I make time to stop and listen to God about a situation. Stopping and trying to see the situation through God's eyes has opened me up to the emotion and pain involved in the process as well as importance and urgency of change. At times I have felt strong confirmation about the importance of certain issues.

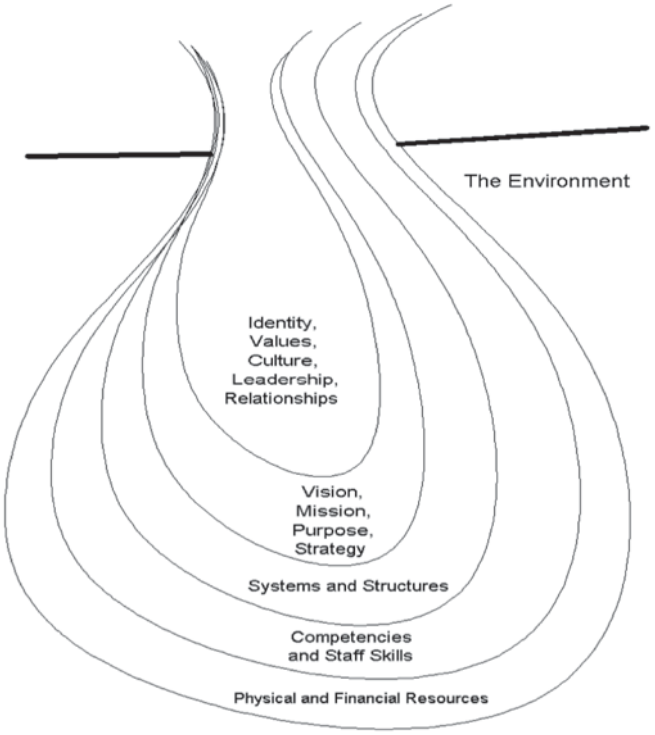
But opening up to the spiritual is risky. What you think you hear may not be from God at all. It is easy to believe that your human thoughts now have spiritual significance and inflict them on others as a result. We can confuse our own emotions and opinions with God's voice. We all bring our personal experiences, our cultural upbringing our spiritual traditions into a situation. For good reason, the Bible advises us to 'test the spirits' (1 John 4:1).

'So what did God say to you about where we should be going?' Mark asked me. Mark is the Chief Executive of a big children's charity with whom I was working on a strategic review. At the outset I had told him I would be trying to integrate my faith in the consultancy. The problem was that I felt I had heard nothing – other than what was obvious by using my professional common sense. After a long time praying, I felt that this common sense was probably God's word in this situation. God has given us our faculties for a purpose.

Analyse for yourself

Once you have got all this data (and you often feel completely overwhelmed with the amount of information you have), you need to find ways to make sense of it and draw conclusions. Models and frameworks can be useful to draw out particular themes and issues. They can provide a sort of filing system for all the information. This necessarily involve simplification, but not so much that it becomes simplistic. As Oliver Wendell Holmes said: 'I wouldn't give a fig for simplicity this side of complexity but I'd give my right arm for simplicity on the other side of complexity'.

Just as with organisation assessment tools, there are a myriad of models of organisation, ranging from the most famous like McKinsey's 7-S Model to the more esoteric like Morgan's Psychic Prisons (Morgan 1998). They are simply different lenses through which to view and read organisations. No model can tell the whole story. Find some you find useful and work with them. My personal favourite is for seeing an organisation like an onion. An onion, like an organisation, is something living and organic that grows underground and is profoundly influenced by the environment in which it grows.



The onion model says is that any organisation is made up of a number of interrelated elements or layers.

- The outermost layer of the "onion" represents the physical and financial resources.
- In the next layer, we find human capital including the staff's knowledge and skills.
- The next layer has the systems and structures needed to carry out the work.

- Moving to a deeper layer we have the organisation's vision, aims, objectives, and strategy.
- Finally, in the core of the onion is the organisation's "soul" – its identity, basic values, organisational culture and "world view"/ conceptual basis. Leadership and relationships influence this core

All the layers are important and each is essential for the organisation's existence, they are also inter-related and mutually dependant. Consequently there needs to be a coherent fit between them. If you work on one component, it will have ramifications for the rest of the organisation. The membranes between the layers of an onion are impossibly thin. Changing one element, like M&E systems for example, necessarily influences all the others (such as staff skills, resources needed, organisational culture, relationships…).

The onion-skin model also clearly demonstrates that the heart of the organisation is key. There is a hierarchy of capacities. If it is rotten at the core (for example with corruption) there is little point in addressing problems in outer layers (such as lack of resources). The complexity of an organisation increases as you move towards the centre of the onion. It is easier to solve the problem of a lack of financial resources than of self-serving values or an unclear purpose.

An organisation's vitality and creative energy comes from its heart – its identity. Its life force is at its core. Onions, like people and organisations, grows from the inside out. Working with an organisation's identity demands care and respect, as it has to do with its innermost essence – its very soul. We all know that cutting into an onion can make you cry.

Let people see and feel for themselves

But having reached the stage of doing your own diagnosis, the facilitator then has to have the self-discipline to withhold their analysis – to enable the organisation to diagnose itself and with feeling. John Kotter points out that in successful change: 'the central activity is not formal data gathering, analysis, report writing and presentations' (2002:8). His extensive experience of change leads him to conclude that 'good analysis rarely motivates people in a big way' (ibid:12). It is about enabling people to see and feel the need for change themselves.

OD is more of a 'process', not an 'expert' approach to change. The client needs to be in charge of solving its own problems. (In fact if the facilitator has used participatory tools for data gathering, the organisation will already have largely self-diagnosed and this 'withholding' will be less on an issue).

To facilitate others to decide on their own priorities, I find it helps to be clear in my own mind first (provided I do not manipulate them towards my answers). This clarity helps me know when to push and when not to. It may be about choosing the right moment to share my opinions – confirming or perhaps adding to what they have said; or sometimes challenging them to go deeper and be more honest with themselves. But whatever conclusions they reach, these must be theirs and not mine.

Collaborative diagnosis is essential to maintaining ownership of the need for change and creating energy for new directions. It should strengthen the precious motive for change. Missing out key players in this diagnosis can prove counter-productive. I remember working with one church agency a while back (mentioned earlier as 'creating space for greed'). Because we failed to engage sufficiently with the church pastors during the consultation about the role of the development agency of the church, when it came to the strategy feedback session with them, they sabotaged the meeting. Instead of discussing the future direction of social action of the church they used the session simply to complain that the development department had all the vehicles and all the privileges. This quickly escalated and resulted in the Bishop closing the whole organisation down.

But when the key players are present, it is mostly about getting them to open up and talk honestly about the situation. The facilitator needs to create a safe environment for this to happen as well as a structure to ensure the right questions are discussed. Facilitating a shared diagnosis is not about presenting an expert's report, instead it is more like holding up a mirror. Reflecting back what people are saying, so that the organisation can see itself as others do.

We can also integrate our faith at this diagnosis stage by getting the organisation itself to actively listen to God's priorities and leading. A couple of years ago my own church leader asked me to develop a five-year vision for the church. But instead of putting together a plan, a colleague and I suggested to the church council that we embark on a six-month listening process. We set up a steering group to ensure wide participation of church members in this listening process. People listened to God in their different groups in whatever way they felt was appropriate. This phase tried to clear space, suspend the relentless activity of different groups, to wait, be still and listen. People also listened individually. People listened in church services. They listened to the community. At the end of six months, we typed up all the submissions – amounting to over 50 pages. We then had another listening evening for the church leadership and the steering group to pray about what we had heard and to listen for God's priorities. It proved remarkably easy to distil the 50 pages to just two main points. And two years on we are still motivated by the powerful images that were communicated. Villagers seeing us as 'the church on the hill' inaccessible to the community below; or the members seeing us as stuck inside our beautiful old building and needing to break down our walls.

A vital aspect of change in a Christian organisation is to listen to God for his direction. We should not limit ourselves to human wisdom alone. We need to create opportunities in any change process for the organisation to listen to God regularly. Such space, even if not named, is useful in secular contexts too.

Focus on the bees that are stinging

In any organisational diagnosis it is easy to come up with issues at every level. After all no organisation has perfect leadership or perfect systems. There is always room for improvement everywhere. The secret is to discern what are the priorities or underlying issues. Any organisation can only move one or two steps forward at a time. A comprehensive diagnosis leading to 58 recommendations is likely to go nowhere. Without prioritising, analysis leads to paralysis. As one Malawian proverb says: 'Many, many are the bees, but tell me about the ones that are stinging'.

'Many, many are the bees, but tell me about the ones that are stinging'

The important thing for the facilitator is to push the organisation to prioritise and not let them settle for a long and unrealistic shopping list.

I remember a management consultant with a private equity firm once telling me that he charged many thousands of pounds a day to get the client to answer just one simple question: 'What one thing would this organisation need to do differently to make more of a difference to sales?' (or in our world impact at grassroots level).

Churches and Christian organisations working in development display the same range of organisational issues as secular agencies, but there are certain issues that they experience in a different way. To facilitate OD processes well with churches and Christian organisations it makes sense to start looking at the bees that most usually sting them. Whichever type of church organisation we are dealing with, they usually all face these common challenges to differing degrees:

- **Relationship between the development work and the religious body** – the development work of the church is likely to be separated in some way from the pastoral work of the church. There are different structural options here, each with advantages and disadvantages. Whichever option is chosen, there are almost always tensions over assets, flow of resources, and even status.
- **Leadership and culture** – as mentioned before, spiritual authority confers extra power on church leaders. This often needs considerable care to make sure it is well-used.
- **Strategy** – churches often find it difficult to say 'no' and sometimes take a more welfare approach to development. There are also strategic issues about whether they work through the local congregations or implement development programmes on behalf of the church.
- **Staffing** – churches attract motivated staff who feel called to the work. They often pay below the market rate, which means that their best professional staff can be attracted away by higher salaries. They also find challenges in recruitment, whether on the basis of belief, affiliation, or competence…
- **Systems** – churches are notoriously resistant to developing systems. Sometimes this is because they see financial systems for example as 'quenching the Spirit' or unnecessary because they are 'accountable to God'.

The SMC publication 'Churches in Development'[9] goes into these in more detail.

9 http://www.missioncouncil.se/download/18.244c2fbe120dce4c6af80002276/Churches_in_Development.pdf

Facilitator questions

- *What is going on under the surface here?*
- *Where is the pain or expected pleasure? Is it enough to bring change?*
- *To what extent do they really own the need for change? Have they prioritised these needs or just have a long shopping list?*
- *How is the relationship with the church body?*
- *How much of an issue is leadership?*
- *How does the theology of the organisation affect its current behaviour?*
- *What does this theology have to say about change?*
- *How do I create space to listen to God myself?*
- *How do I create space for people to listen to God together?*
- *What is God saying about this situation?*
- *Where would God be saying to this organisation 'Well done, good and faithful servant'? Where would God be saying 'You have lost your first love'? or 'You are neither hot nor cold'?*

Useful tools:

Partnership mapping – page 42
Favourite interview questions – page 47
Timeline – page 48
Rivers of life – page 49
Drawings and characterising – page 49
Sculpting – page 49
Quality Improvement System – page 50

3. Creating Space for Transformation

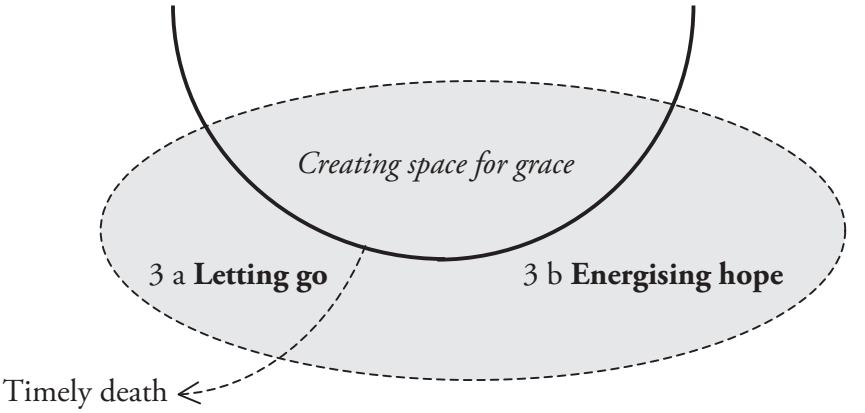
On holy ground – Grace's story

I felt stuck. What had seemed like an ideal and fairly straightforward intervention was proving beyond me. It was taking up so much time, and yet despite my best efforts, it felt like we were going nowhere. The Directors of this American mental health NGO kept going off at tangents. They seemed to have lost hope.

I found myself desperately praying for perspective and direction. I knew that they genuinely wanted to change but a sense of paralysis hindered internal and external movement. Scanning through my OD tools for inspiration I came across my copy of, "Creating Space for Grace: God's Power in Organisational Change." Re-reading it, I felt firmly hopeful. At the next session I handed it out, but with trepidation and uncertainty. I asked them to read it carefully and consider what it meant for them…

Had I gone too far? Had I got too personal? The following meeting began with an air of anticipation. I glanced around the table and saw highlighted lines, and notes in margins. The discussion lasted three hours, during which I probably uttered twenty words. The directors identified ways that they had been ungracious with other staff, they confessed that they had invited each other to measure their worth strictly in tangible output; they admitted they felt hopelessly burdened. They acknowledged that they had sacrificed God's provision for plodding along at their work through their strengths and energies. The meeting ended in what the directors called 'a major paradigm shift'. Even their body language had changed, there was lightness in their posture and a resolve in them that I doubt could have been created using every OD tool I possessed. It was a privilege to witness. It was one of those moments where you just want to take off your shoes. I felt I was on holy ground.

We now come to the turning point of change. This is probably the most critical stage:



Many organisational change processes fail because they remain too superficial – at the same level as New Year's resolutions. We try and take a shortcut from diagnosis to planning. This does not work because it fails to help people let go of past behaviour. But if we try to change without letting go, we find that nothing really changes. Old habits die hard. Change is as much about letting go as it is about taking on the new. William Bridges states that 'the failure to identify and be ready for endings and losses that change produces is the largest single problem that organisations in transition encounter.' (1995:5) The starting point for organisational transition is not the outcome, but the ending that you will have to make to leave the old situation behind. Facilitating OD effectively involves helping people identify what they need to let go in order for them to then move on. However much we would like to quickly skip through this stage, moving too soon can be counterproductive. We need to endure the emotional pain of letting go in order to reap the emotion of hope and energy to bring change.

In this chapter we see that good practice OD at the turning point of change requires us to help individuals and organisations:

1. Let go by
   a. Addressing fears
   b. Engaging their conscience
   c. Saying sorry
   d. Making hard choices
   e. Allowing good deaths

2. Energise hope by:
   a. Creating spaces for grace
   b. Restoring relationships and
   c. (Re) connecting with sources of energy.

As the spiritual element to this stage of change is particularly pronounced, so we also explore how we can:
- Integrate prayer
- Make appropriate use of the Bible

The two essential elements of letting go and energising hope at the turning point are distinct, yet inextricably linked. It is like breathing out and breathing in. You get rid of the bad air and breathe in the good. One without the other is useless. Yet many OD processes tend to concentrate on one or the other. Sometimes you get a consultant who just focuses on the negatives. It leaves you feeling depressed and with a sense of hopelessness. Other more appreciative approaches only concentrate on the positive, which feels good and releases energy, but often leaves you still tied into past unhelpful ways of behaving. This chapter artificially separates these two stages for purposes of clarity, but in reality they are often so interlinked that it is impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins. Sometimes you need a sense of acceptance and hope, before you can look at the things you need to let go of. The pain of admitting failure is mixed with the joy of discovering the root of the problem and letting go of past burdens. Transformation is essentially a process of death and rebirth, with all the pain and uncertainty and joy that comes with it.

At this turning point, individual change interweaves with organisational change. Change takes place on an individual level first. It is an inside-out process. As soon as individuals change, then relationships between them change and organisations are able to change.

Relentless busyness suffocates attempts to change. Creating and holding space is essential

Change requires space. Just as you need space to turn around in a car, so too with organisations. Relentless busyness suffocates attempts to change. Creating and holding space is essential – space for the organisation to stop and think about how things have been; how they are now; how they want them to be in the future. These are challenging and sensitive questions.

Organisations need safe spaces acknowledge they need to change direction and turn.

While the fundamental change of direction takes place at this turning point, it is vital to remember that this does not mean that actual change has taken place yet in organisational behaviour. Change is a journey and the turning point is not the same as arrival.

The spiritual dimension to change may be more critical at this turning point, even if unnamed or unrecognised. Research undertaken a few years ago with three leading change consultants and theorists (Peter Senge, Bill Torbert and Ellen Wingard) concluded that the cause of transformation could not be expressed with rational, logical words. Each was able to give a rational logic for pushing the organisation to the brink of transformation and after the point of transformation. But the 'actual 'cause' of transformation, according to the data, was expressed by these practitioner/theorists in terms of 'grace', 'magic' and a 'miracle'. By definition these are phenomena that cannot be scientifically or logically explained; supernatural events going beyond theory and rational action.' [10]

3 a Letting go

Letting go is a vital, yet often unacknowledged, part of any change process. As French philosopher Paul Valery says, "Every beginning ends something" (quoted in Bridges 1995:17). Positive and lasting change can be likened to an 'inner revolution' that arises from a shift in our mindset – a change in our perception of reality. When enough new information contradicts the worldview we have built up about ourselves or our organisation, we question and even revise our thinking and behaviour. We have to take it personally. This is never easy. We all find it difficult to change comfortable, habitual ways of working and perceptions of the world, which have become deeply ingrained. It often involves admitting failure. Such pain is an integral part of change. Any major organisational change is a profoundly emotional process. It involves addressing the fears that keep us locked into present ways of operating.

[10] (Neal, Lichtenstein, Banner: 1999:180)

Daring to be Vulnerable – Joyce's story

When people are facing extreme problems, their organisations often embody those same challenges. The Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS was one such agency. Having grown quickly, but haphazardly, it was on the brink of tearing itself apart.

Relationships between the regional offices had broken down. They had each lost faith in their National Committee. The donors were moving away in frustration. Having done an assessment, I convinced the different stakeholders to involve the whole organisation in the feedback process.

The first day was extremely tricky. Tensions and fears ran very high. The women felt extremely hurt on all sides. The participants from the National Committee refused to speak. It was only when we started to look at their achievements that the situation began to thaw. The Committee members suddenly broke their vow of silence, commenting excitedly 'But we never felt we had achieved anything. We felt we were nothing in the eyes of the donor'.

I took that opening as an opportunity. I told them a story from the Bible. Although COWLHA was not a faith-based organisation, many of the women were Christians. I told them about the journey of the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land. I highlighted the choice that the children of Israel were given. They discussed and agreed that they were ready to leave their Egypt.

But they could not ignore what had brought them to this situation. I said: 'If you really want to get to the desired future, we need to confess, talk about what unhelpful behaviours we were doing so that we can let go'. I split them into groups and encouraged people to be as open as possible, explaining we have to let go of the past to hold on to the future. I asked them how they had contributed to the gaps. As the groups dispersed I was worried. The donor group was muttering, 'there is no need for this'. The National Committee group looked angry. I had no idea what would happen next. I could only pray.

But when they came back after discussing in their groups I was amazed by what had happened. This was the turning point. The donor started. They started sharing the things that they were sorry about. They did not point fingers, but just looked at themselves. This example provided the room for others to be open. All shared. People courageously confessed what they felt they did not do well and what they would do differently. Some were crying for what they had done wrong. People asked for forgiveness from each other and they gave it. They publically forgave the National Committee members. Trust began to return. People committed themselves to work together again.

Address their fears

Fear is what most often holds us back from letting go. 'Fear is one of the greatest diseases of mankind and it is rampant in organisations and group decision-making processes' (1997:110) says Dorothy Marcic. John Kotter advises us: 'ever underestimate how much complacency, fear and anger exists, even in good organisations (2002:36).

Fear about the future is what keeps people locked into old ways of behaving. It is like a lock on the steering wheel that stops people from turning. Fear has pervaded every single organisational change process I have ever been involved in. As facilitators we have to be able to engage with people's fears. We often need to surface these fears in a safe and sensitive way (with clear ground rules and boundaries). This can help convert fear into a positive energy for change.

A lesson from monkeys

A woman was sitting watching the captive monkeys in a zoo. All of them jumped energetically and playfully from one branch to another. Holding one with one hand, the other stretched in the air toward the next branch, up he went. But one monkey sat alone and did not mingle. She asked a passing staff member what was wrong." He is different", replied the worker. "He can't climb because he's afraid to let go of the branch. If you hold a branch with both your hands, you cannot move up. This is his fate." he commented sadly. "He sits on the floor all day like a person in mourning, isolated from the life around him."

Fear makes people risk averse. They make sure they cover their backs – some preferring to do nothing rather than risk doing something wrong. Initiative and innovation are stifled. Rather than confront issues constructively, staff often prefer the safer option of grumbling and gossiping behind peoples' backs. In Malawi where I worked for ten years, the political history of the country meant that fear pervaded the whole culture. This fear infiltrated organisations in a variety of ways. In many workshops participants were afraid to publically state their concerns, which they have already spoken about with me in private. Many feared speaking out would result in them losing their jobs.

In working with Christian organisations, it can help to use illustrations from the Bible in surfacing fears:

Naming the Giants

I remember one OD process with an umbrella church body that was firmly stuck in a strategy dilemma. It had been talking about shifting its strategy from implementation of projects on behalf of member churches to facilitation of members to implement themselves. But for three years there had been no discernible change. Fine intentions remained at the level of rhetoric. People were clearly held back by their fears and were unwilling to change. Using the Exodus story, I asked staff and leadership to imagine they were the Israelites in the wilderness who 18 months after leaving Egypt were looking into the Promised Land. What were the giants that they saw? They each wrote down their giants. It was like a dam was broken and suddenly all their fears poured out onto pages and pages of flip chart. This helped unblock the situation allowing people the space to let go of their fears and move forward.

If we ignore such fears, they do not just go away. Instead they will surface unhelpfully at a later stage. Until those fears have been acknowledged people find it very hard to think positively, let alone creatively. Sometimes simply voicing fears is enough to reveal that they are irrational and unsubstantiated. It gives opportunities to clarify misunderstandings. But many times these fears highlight very real concerns that will need to be properly dealt with in planning and implementing the actual change process. Fears can be helpful in reminding us what we need to avoid in future.

One large Christian NGO was starting the process of restructuring and asked for help. Changing people's jobs affects their lives and even their sense of identity. It is therefore always a tense and highly sensitive process – especially when job losses are not out of the question. At a meeting of the 20 senior managers we tried to actively engage with peoples' fears in a few ways. After presenting some of the future options, the top leadership openly shared some of their own fears. They said how they were feeling and 'named the elephants' that they thought were in the room. We then gave space for the managers to ponder the options overnight. But we asked them to try and look at things in their leadership role in the whole organisation, not just as managers of individual departments. We asked for them to think prayerfully overnight. We asked them respond the next day with 'grace and truth' to two questions:

- What would really worry me about this option would be…;
- What would make this work for me is…"

Another time during an OD process with a 'family' of European Christian NGOs we asked them to note down on cards two things they feared (and two things they hoped for) as they looked ahead to their proposed change process We put them on a wall, ensured that people understood them and grouped them. As the relevant people were not present they decided a more appropriate forum for dealing with these fears.

Awaken conscience with honest feedback

People and organisations change when they realise that their behaviour is not consistent with their values – when they realise there is a gap between who they are and who they want to be. The power for change comes from our consciences – of knowing we have failed to live up to our own standards. The key to change in organisations is holding up a mirror for the organisation to see itself as others do. Honest feedback is essential in helping people become aware of their blind spots. People will then respond to their own conscience.

The power for change comes from our consciences – of knowing we have failed to live up to our own standards. The key to change in organisations is holding up a mirror.

Moving from a shift in perception to a willed response involves taking responsibility. The father of organisational change theories, Kurt Lewin (1958), pointed out fifty years ago that a key part of the first stage in change is the 'induced anxiety or guilt – a realisation that I am in some way responsible'. To confront any issue requires us to take responsibility, by acknowledging weakness or failure. As long as organisations or individuals externalise blame for a situation they will not change.

Using emotion is a key part of awakening conscience. As Kotter and Cohen advise: 'Go after the emotions with concrete and almost smellable evidence' (2002). We need to use visible pictures, not just words. Reports rarely awaken conscience as much as an image, a conversation or a video which provides valid and dramatic evidence of how things are.

In working with Christian organisations, again the Bible is powerful resource for awakening people's consciences. It can have a big impact by revealing the difference between aspired and actual behaviour. In the critical area of leadership, for example, the Bible offers extremely clear and direct teaching about the need for servant leadership: "The Kings of the Gentiles lord it over them: and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors**.** But you are not to be like that. Instead the greatest among you should be like the youngest and the one who rules, like the one who serves…But I am among you as one who serves"[11] and at another time, 'whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant'[12]. In fact this notion of servant leadership has been picked up by writers, academics, consultants and secular businesses too.

So many times change processes require us to create spaces for people to stop blaming others for a situation, but to reflect on their own role and contribution to the mess. We should not avoid healthy lament. As Bishop Niringiye of Uganda says: 'I am a firm believer in lament. We have to get to grips with what went wrong and not gloss over things. We rarely appreciate the magnitude of how far we have gone wrong. This hampers our ability to transform. We should stay in the valley longer than we would like. We should not be quick to prescribe solutions'.

I am a firm believer in lament. We have to get to grips with what went wrong and not gloss over things. This hampers our ability to transform.

In all my OD work, I have found one key question incredibly useful for getting people to take personal responsibility. I often ask people to prayerfully reflect on and answer:

'How have I contributed to this situation?'

I tend to send people away on their own to prayerfully listen to God about how they have contributed to a situation. It is a bit like the Psalmist praying "Search me O God". In dealing with hurt and frustrations it is important to get people out of a 'blamestorming' attitude. It allows God to bring conviction, not people to condemn each other. I have often found

[11] Luke 22:25 – 27
[12] Matt 20: 20-28

that changing people's physical environment helps in this, suggesting they listen to God while going for a walk or sitting outside. What is important is that they do this on their own.

St Ignatius' Examen

With one Christian NGO which had experienced a particularly rocky time over the last few months, I used St Ignatius Examen process, asking people to stop and consider for 30 minutes individually and then in departmental groups:

- Consolations – where was God in this experience? What are you grateful for?
- Desolations – what have I contributed to this problem?

I then put them into carefully chosen, 'safe' groups to feedback what they felt they heard from God. Outside facilitators usually stay out of these groups, but may appoint someone well-respected to lead the process. This public confession amongst peers gives more chance for making change. They do not want to let themselves or others down. Sometimes the group leaders feedback to the plenary the substance of what came up (obviously without names).

Saying sorry and turning around

This core principle of 'letting go' or taking responsibility is something which we would call 'repentance' in religious language. Repentance is an unfashionable word in many contexts including churches. It is seen as too religious, judgemental and negative. But perhaps we should not be so frightened of it. Repentance is about turning around. *Metanoia* is perhaps a more accurate Greek term. It goes beyond the English word 'repent' to encompass the hope that also comes. Metanoia means transformation, the result of repenting and having received forgiveness – it is not just the downside of the curve, but the upside too. Yes it describes the penitence, sorrow element, but also embodies the hopeful, positive element of grace, healing and forgiveness that results. Metanoia sees every problem as an opportunity for transformation rather than blame. Whatever we call it; this process of intentionally turning away from past behaviour is a core part of a Christian's understanding of individual change. It is the same for organisational change in churches.

It is not just about recognising that our past ways of operating were not ideal; we have to make a willed response to that situation. We have to choose to change. One sign of this commitment is being prepared to say sorry for past behaviour. Public apology can restore trust and provides peer pressure to embed the change.

'Sorry' – Ian's story

Just a small word. But what a big difference it can make. For a number of years, the leadership of a Christian NGO had been trying to make some far-reaching organisational changes. Changes to people's jobs, their locations, the systems they used, even the culture of the place. But the harder the leadership pushed, the harder the organisation pushed back. Relationships deteriorated, morale sapped away and people left.

When I was taken on to manage the change programme, I thought that I would be drawing up plans and doing critical path analysis and all the rest of that good logical planning stuff to get this change off the ground. Instead I found myself listening to people: sometimes in groups, sometimes one-to-one, sometimes planned and many times impromptu. Everyone wanted to talk about the 'Change'. I listened to frustrated people and angry people and people in tears. For two months I went on listening.

In the end, there was only one thing to do. All affected staff were invited to a meeting. I presented the lessons from the previous few years of attempted change. Much of it was the familiar change stuff about the importance of a compelling case for change, a clear and succinct vision, building and sustaining a guiding coalition, and engaging the staff involved. I illustrated it with specific examples of the actions, good and bad, of all the parties.

But more important than my analysis was what happened next. The general director stood up. 'Sorry', he said on behalf of his fellow directors. Sorry for the mistakes the leadership had made and for the pain they had caused. At first there was silence. And then one of the middle managers stood up. 'I never thought I would hear that word from the lips of our leadership team', he said with tears in his eyes. 'Only my dog knows what I have been through in the last few years.'

That was the turning point. It was the point at which reconciliation began to take place and life started to get back to normal. It took a brave leader to say 'sorry' that day, but God honoured his humble action.

An important final element is pronouncing forgiveness. Once people have confessed it is important to pronounce forgiveness and pray for the situation. This can be done in the small groups or in plenary. This paves the way for reconciliation. In one case we ended the session with a short communion service. The example below illustrates the power of letting go and forgiveness in change.

Forgiveness in Swedish Mission Council

Just over 10 years ago, SMC was in crisis. Relations with members were deteriorating; we were in conflict with the Swedish Council of Churches (SCC); internally we were deeply divided and stressed. Added to that Sida was increasingly aware of our management problems and was drastically cutting our funding. Our very existence was under threat. Yet key leadership changes coupled with a participatory and prayerful OD process enabled us to rediscover our identity and role. We were able to reconcile internal issues and transform our relationships with our members, with SCC and with Sida. But it was an incredibly painful process.

Yet the most memorable element of the whole change process was the symbolic process of letting go of our failures and resentments. A spontaneous forgiveness ceremony was the turning point.

At a meeting of staff out of the office in the Old Town of Stockholm, a pastor spoke to us of God as the God of reconciliation. He reminded us that we have to bring problems into the light to move forward. He said: 'You cannot be healed from something which you cannot acknowledge'. We have to confess to let go.

After he finished speaking we sat in a circle and reflected for some minutes. Then the General Secretary suggested we write down on a piece of paper all our frustrations and sorrows. Things we wanted to leave behind. We put our papers into a basket. You could feel something happening in the room. We lifted up the basket and prayed asking God for forgiveness, asking for his help as we continued and thanking God for taking us this far in the process. It was short, but intense ceremony. It felt like the old had gone; the new has come.

Many later said, 'This was the decisive moment. It was such a relief to be able to leave behind those things. The burden is now gone'.

Making hard choices

'Leadership is the risk of deciding when the alternatives are equal. It does not require leadership to choose when one choice is obviously better. Leadership is the risk of choosing when every choice might be right or wrong.'

But simply saying sorry and being forgiven does not stop having to make hard choices. As the external environment changes, the organisation has to change. There may be programmes or activities that have to be stopped. These may have implications on staff. Difficult decisions necessarily involve leadership courage. Max De Pree says: 'Leadership is the risk of deciding when the alternatives are equal. It does not require leadership to choose when one choice is obviously better. Leadership is the risk of choosing when every choice might be right or wrong.' (Wright 2006:15).

Change so often requires hard choices about what to do and also about what not to do. It is so often a question of having to prioritise and choose options. Organisations cannot head off on different paths for long. Prioritising is a painful process, but it can be so healthy too. When Cathy James used the Willow Creek exercise below with a Nigerian NGO they all looked miserable during the start of the process. But at the end they were jubilant. The Director said: 'It was like being in a dream and someone comes and forcibly turns your head to heaven'.

Willow Creek prioritization exercise

1. Write the names of all your ministries and programmes on a flipchart or whiteboard.
2. Put out three buckets (or boxes or just identify three piles) on a table. Label them A, B, and C.
3. Ask the question, "If revenue were to drop by 50%, which ministries or programmes would we stop doing first?" Have each person write down the ministries on small pieces of paper or post-it notes and put them in the bucket/box C.
4. Next ask, "If revenue dropped by 75% and we had to move onto the next round, what would we stop doing?" Have each person write down the ministries on small pieces of paper or post-it notes and put them in the bucket/box B.

5. Last ask, "What would we never stop doing?" Have each person write down their response and put them in the bucket/box A.

6. When everyone has finished, take out the pieces of paper from each bucket/box/pile and discuss the results:
   i. What is it clear that you should stop doing?
   ii. What is it clear you should never stop doing?

Christian organisations and churches find this particularly difficult when dealing with staff issues. On so many occasions they fail to take the hard decisions that a certain person is no longer right for the job. Concerned about the person's welfare, they put off making a decision until the problem has got so bad they no longer have a choice. Delay can make a minor infection spread to and affect the whole body. In one Christian NGO I have worked a lot with they faced a relatively common leadership issue. The current director had lost the trust of all his staff and was accused of financial mismanagement. But rather than take the necessary decision at the time, the church trustees delayed for more than 18 months, by which stage almost all the donors had left, the best staff had gone and it had become much harder to save.

Allowing 'good' deaths

Sometimes there is no turning point. We all have encountered good initiatives, good projects, even good organisations that have come to the end of their natural life. A good death is sometimes best way forward. We spend so much time, energy and money on nursing terminally sick initiatives and organisations. We invest heavily in life-support systems that do little except keep the entity breathing, while other more successful initiatives go unsupported. It may be that the right consequence of the letting go stage is the death of the organisation. This can release unhappy and under-performing staff into new opportunities. As the saying of Native

American Indians goes: 'When you are riding a dead horse, the best thing to do is dismount.'

Doug Reeler of CDRA writes eloquently about 'A Good Death: In search of developmental endings' (CDRA Nugget 2000). He explores how all of us struggle with the Eastern notion of a 'good death'. Yet we know from nature that death is an intimate part of any life cycle. As OD facilitators we may have to genuinely consider how we can help responsible closure, ensuring that as many of the existing commitments are met; ensuring that the needs of beneficiaries are transferred to other organisations.

Assisting the organisation to die with dignity may be about conducting a strategic funeral. A good funeral appreciates all that has been achieved, gives thanks and celebrates the life that has passed. It is an opportunity to reflect back and learn from the good and bad of what has happened. It provides an opportunity for people to express their grief and mourning and in doing so to begin to clear the space to move on. The good death of an organisation should help people to be freed from the burden of guilt, regret and blame for any failures. It should be a gentle process of resolving and forgiving, of letting go…sacred processes'

Interestingly Doug Reeler points out the spiritual role of the facilitator in these circumstances. He says that at such times: 'Our work becomes more clerical – to conduct a funeral, to help the people to find a good death, a gentle death'.

3 b Energising Hope

Inextricably linked with the 'letting go' stage is the 'energising hope' aspect. They are as inter-related as breathing out and breathing in. You breathe out (and let go) in order to be able to breathe in fresh oxygenated air. Energising hope is often the direct consequence of letting go. This energising hope comes from restoring relationships and reconnecting with sources of energy.

Create space for grace

Many people who may not call themselves Christians would also see a spiritual dimension to this turning point. Some describe this as 'Presence' (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers 2004); other as 'Grace, magic, miracles (Lichtenstein 1997). There is a realisation that there is something supernatural taking place at the turning point of organisational change.

There are powerful Biblical images of this throughout the Bible from the first page with the Spirit brooding over the chaos and creating order and light; to God breathing life into dry bones in Jeremiah, to the renewed heaven and earth in Revelation. All of these stories have God at the heart of the change process.

This turning point is not something that can be manufactured. It cannot be created or controlled by the facilitator. All you can do as facilitator is create a large enough and safe enough space for turning and get out of the way:

From Anger to Laughter – Joyce's story

I was afraid. I could sense how bitter these church leaders were. Their international partner of 25 years had just announced they were registering as an independent organisation, outside of the church. The church leaders felt angry and betrayed. I prayed: "Oh God, help me to work with these people so that they will be able to see the bigger picture"

I asked myself: How do I begin to enable these people to shift in their thinking? Working with a church, I looked for biblical stories they could identify with. I started by getting the top leadership of the church to envision their church in five to ten years. I linked this vision with the land of Canaan.

I reminded them of how the children of Israel had to move from Egypt. We remembered how difficult it was for the children of Israel to accept the change, especially when they encountered problems in the wilderness. This image helped the church to slowly shift from their bitterness. They began to focus on what they could do.

But there was still a lot of anger and fear in the room. It came to a point where I felt they had to make a choice. I could not force these people to agree with each and everything that international partner had proposed. All I could do was to highlight the pros and cons of the process for both of them. I had to put them on the spot. After all they were the ones responsible.

So I gave them questions to reflect on and asked whether they were willing to start the journey to Canaan. This was a difficult time for me as a facilitator. The whole general assembly was there. They had to make a decision. I could not do much if they were not ready to change and go forward. I left the conference room for them to discuss and all I could do at this time was to pray for God's intervention in their decision.

I was called back into the conference room. I was still worried. Yet I heard laughter. People were very open. They had agreed to start the Exodus, to the land flowing with milk and honey.

Getting out of the way and giving up control is challenging for any facilitator. It is not what they are paid to do. It is so tempting to fill those spaces with activity. But being able to give up control at the turning point is the ultimate test of who the facilitator really believes is in charge. Integrating faith means the facilitator lets go of control. Ultimately all we are doing in OD is being 'stewards of grace' (1 Peter 4 v9). We cannot change an organisation ourselves.

Restoring relationships

Without improved relationships in organisations there is no organisational transformation. Restoring relationships is critical in change. Reconciliation is not simply the goal of change, but it also provides the energy for the process to continue.

A colleague and I were doing some work last year with a Christian NGO which had 14 different European Offices. The problem was that these

European offices did not collaborate enough. They were too isolated, were not making the most of each other's strengths and spent too much time duplicating efforts and reinventing wheels. But they had lots of ideas as to how they might cooperate. In fact these ideas had been around for many years. The problem was not a lack of knowledge; it was a lack of trust and will. Relationships had broken down. To energise hope that the existing isolation could really change, trust had to be earned. This involved reconciliation.

Reconciliation and forgiveness are at the heart of the Christian gospel. They are essential if we are to realise the restoring of trust and the shifts in relationships that we know to be essential for organisational change. As Desmond Tutu entitled his book on social reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, 'there is no future without forgiveness' (1999). But forgiveness militates against human nature – grace appears as a 'scandal' (Yancey 1997:139). It cannot be bought or earned as Jesus demonstrated in his parable of the unforgiving servant[13]. It is not a passive event, but a process that liberates and empowers change.

Forgiveness is not about a lack of consequences. It is not about pretending nothing happened. It is not a soft option. There is often still a price to pay. It may involve restitution. It may well involve changing things, moving people, so that these things cannot happen again. It is not about putting people back in way of temptation or playing to past weaknesses. Neither is forgiveness the same as forgetting, but it is remembering in a different way, in a 'non-toxic' way (Schreiter 2003:21) that frees the wrongdoer from guilt and the wronged from bitterness and hatred.

So many organisational issues are relational. Living with a 'cease fire' at work is not really good enough for Christian organisations who wish to model the Christian gospel. And sometimes, relationships can become so dysfunctional that organisational behaviour is affected. Tensions can only be resolved through listening to each other deep enough for reconciliation. Facilitating with faith involves building love, trust and healing in organisations. It involves 'shalom' – the presence of right relationships, not simply the absence of conflict.

[13] Matthew 18

Conflict resolution – Alastair's story

To bring about change required us to resolve existing tensions in our department. A lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities had already resulted in the breakdown of trust between some individuals which made the working environment challenging. Defensive and blaming behaviours were not uncommon.

We used a reflection on Philemon from the Bible suggested in 'Relational Leadership' by Walter C. Wright. The attendees were asked to read Philemon in advance of two sessions of two hours each. We followed the following process:

Session 1

Step 1	Defining session expectations
Step 2	Reflecting on Philemon
Step 3	Discussing how diversity can leads to conflict
Step 4	Addressing conflict positively – Caring Confrontation or Criticism
Step 5	Sharing honest observations of unhealthy conflict
Step 6	Worship and reflection time

Session 2

Step 7	Identifying diversity by contrasting work principles we hold dear
Step 8	Sharing positive examples of personal outcomes to conflict
Step 9	Agreeing next steps and accountability
Step 10	Reflecting on initial session expectations

We realised in order to actually change, we had to resolve dysfunctional conflicts. People needed to hear feedback, change behaviour; forgive and be forgiven. We integrated honest feedback and also prayer. Too often our faith makes us think we have to be 'nice' rather than truthful. We used our shared Christian faith as a strength in this difficult process, not as a constraint.

Connecting to sources of energy

After the turning point of change, organisations need energy to move in the new direction. At this point, it is vital to (re) connect with the motivations and inspirations that created the organisation in the first place or persuaded them to join or that keeps them there. It is about connecting people back the source, their motivation and their will.

This can be done in a number of ways. At times I have encouraged people to start telling stories about how it was that the organisation came to be formed in the first place. It can be amazingly powerful to connect again with the original dream and reason for creation – the life force of the organisation. At other times I have asked people to tell their own stories about what made them join. Other times I have asked people to highlight the most meaningful moment in their time at work, when they felt most connected to their reason for being there. This taps into their most powerful reason for being there.

All of this reinforces an 'appreciative' approach to change that inspires hope and releases energy, rather than just focusing on the problems. One technique that encapsulates this is 'Appreciative Inquiry', described briefly in the text box below. Appreciative Inquiry can also be used earlier in the process – frequently at the collaborative diagnosis stage.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is a positive approach to change. It assumes that if you ask people about their problems you emphasise the problem. If you ask them about what works, they can learn how to replicate and develop positive behaviour. It is a cooperative search for the best in people, their organisation and the world around them. It asks questions such as:

- Describe a high-point experience in your organisation – a time when you felt most alive and engaged.
- What is it that you most value in yourself, your work and your organisation?
- What are the core factors that give life to your organisation?
- What three wishes do you have to enhance the health and vitality of your organisation?

Such an approach enables people to acknowledge and appreciate each other's abilities, thus helping to generate increased self-esteem and sense of togetherness. It engenders vital ingredients of change – hope, trust, unity, identity, and ownership.

Some might describe this source of energy coming from a sense of calling. I remember one organisation I was working with. I was asking people to tell their stories of how they came to join. The Director started by saying when he heard the job mentioned in church he felt sure it was for him. But when he got home and told his wife, she was set against it, saying that

it was going to be a step down the career ladder. A driver explained how he refused to apply for the job he was temporarily covering when it was advertised because it was too demanding. But the night before the deadline he had a dream and felt God was saying he should change his mind. Yet another explained how she was in two minds whether to accept the job as it would mean a severe cut in salary. Each of them related how they only came to take the job because a strong sense of calling overwhelmed all the good logical self-centred reasons not to join. Hearing these stories gave such hope and inspiration, not just for the listeners, but for those who were remembering back to why they joined.

Facilitating with faith is about helping individuals and organisations reconnect with the calling that was instrumental in them joining or setting up the organisation in the first place. When we realise again that there might be a higher purpose in our organisational life, we become filled with hope, direction and energy for the future. At this stage, the role of the facilitator is to instil hope, to inject enthusiasm that change is possible.

Integrating prayer

Prayer is obviously an essential way to integrate spirituality in OD. But it remains a mystery. I cannot pretend to understand why, how or when prayer makes a difference. I know it does not work like a vending machine, where you put the money in at the top, punch in some numbers and the product is delivered below. Yet I do see a correlation between amazing things have happened in my OD work and people praying. Jesus certainly found took time to pray. Before two of the most important events of his life (the choosing of disciples and his crucifixion), he spent whole nights in prayer.

So some of the ways I try and integrate prayer in my work include:

- Arriving at the venue early and walking around praying for the event;
- Starting with an exercise to share in pairs the burdens and gifts that we bring to the event. Each person then prays for the other. This can set the spiritual tone for the sensitive discussions that follow.
- Starting each day of the meeting with some form of 'devotion' or prayer. This is not a decorative Christian ritual, but can be the most important session in an OD process. These devotions offer an important opportunity to focus on God and his will for the organisation at the start of the day.

- Often during workshop (as Joyce also mentions in her story, The Power of Forgiveness), I find myself worried about what will happen next, so I pray. When I send people off into discussion groups this provides me with great opportunity to pray for them.
- I have often found it really important to pray after a particular session. I remember after one visioning exercise in Africa leading the participants in a prayer march around the room for this vision to become reality. The Chair of the Board said the surprise of a quiet Englishman leading African Pentecostals in loud marching prayer had been pivotal in him recognising the need to change.
- Sometimes I have found it immensely helpful to stop and pray in the midst of contentious discussions. One Christian organisation suggested that we have a 'prayer joker' – a piece of paper with praying hands that anyone could raise at any point of the workshop when they felt that prayer was necessary. Whatever was being said stopped and the person who waved the paper prayed. It rarely took more than 15 seconds, but the shift in atmosphere and direction of the discussions was remarkable.

Use the Bible appropriately

We have seen in the examples throughout this chapter that the Bible can have a powerful catalytic impact at the turning point of change. Most people in churches and Christian organisations consider carefully and listen to what the Bible says (although obviously some individuals, denominations and geographic contexts place greater weight on the Bible than others). Indeed the Bible may be the most important 'tool' to use in any change process. Yet we all know from bitter experience how easily it can be misused. The Bible can be abused when people use it simply to add religious weight to personal opinion. I remember feeling slightly queasy reading a completely unrealistic church funding proposal to donors starting with the verse: 'How good it is when we dwell together in unity'. If we use the Bible, we must do so with awe and humility. It should be allowed to speak for itself.

The Bible as a Power Tool – Bill's story

I was really worried. I thought my co-facilitator, Francis, was taking this Bible study stuff a bit far. After all there was a lot of training to cover. We had a lot of knowledge to get across and outputs to deliver. Yet some of these Bible studies were taking up the best part of a whole day (though this was significantly less than eight days that Francis had spent with one group in Nigeria looking at the Good Samaritan!)

We did not use the Bible in the traditional 'workshop' way, whereby someone reads a passage and gives participants a thought for the day. Instead we used the Bible more interactively. This helped participants read the Bible for themselves and gain fresh insights from familiar passages. But through this experience with the Anglican Church in DRC, I learnt that well-facilitated Biblical reflection can be critical in change processes with churches. Reflective Bible studies proved pivotal in changing prevailing negative attitudes and beliefs. They may be the reason for such a difference in so short a time. I ask myself, do we use the Bible enough in OD? And do we use it in an appropriate and empowering way?

The Bible has an incredible amount to say about the way people behave and change. It overflows with stories of change. Appendix 1 distils the essence of what I believe the Bible says about change that can be applied to organisations (this first appeared in Space for Grace 2004).

The Exodus story is one of the most powerful stories of change which many use in organisational change processes (even in secular publications and organisations). The principles of change that we read in the story of how the Israelites escaped from Egypt, spent time in the Wilderness and eventually entered the Promised Land, have profound relevance and application to OD in churches today. World Vision have developed a series of ten reflective Bible Studies entitled Celebrating the Journey of Change with God[14] using this as their theme. Studies focus on exploring the Current State of Affairs; the Desert Experience and Entering the Promised Land. They use this course as the foundation of any major OD work with any national office.

[13] Downloadable from http://api.ning.com/files/5oK7leNZe1ziAIlnAWhvQxxBb3Qllhh2Ja*moW13jaV7ebtcmOc8BhwThh0An5X3q0K0RXobGLNjYWh2Vekr9zLeC98ELIDs/CelebratingtheJourneyofChangewithGod.pdf

Doreen Kwarimpa-Atim explains how she used the Bible in addressing the common OD issue of the role of women and gender in the church:

Gender in the church – Doreen's story

I was in charge of a gender desk for a consortium of three mainline (traditional) churches whose view of gender varied greatly. One of my outputs was to develop a gender policy for the consortium. After months of various attempts to even get the issue of gender discussed, I realised that my first step would be to get all the three churches to at least a common understanding of gender, and what this meant for the church. With the support of a consultant, I developed a gender sensitisation tool that linked key gender issues to Biblical examples and teachings. The sensitisation process took three days for each church. The methodology was largely participatory and contextual (I had spent some time trying to understand each church's teaching and practice on gender), to enhance self-reflection and discussions. I cannot say that I influenced a theological shift, but I know that there was change in attitude and this has spilled over into practice. One participant who is a Reverend later confessed that this exposure has since then influenced his sermons and the way he treats women, especially his wife.

As Doreen explains: 'It is not so much about trying to change their theology, but about supporting churches to apply biblical teaching to their context and trusting the transformative power that God's word brings'.

The Bible is a book about acceptance, about hope, about forgiveness, about new beginnings. Its power is not just to convict people where they have gone wrong. Interestingly it is usually positive stories of forgiveness and grace that catalyse change rather than judgement. I remember one leadership team took half a day together to simply reflect on the Parable of the Prodigal Son and what it meant for themselves and their organisation. The next day the impact was obvious. It caused unparalleled openness, honesty, an encouragement to take positive steps forward. A Bible study changed the whole atmosphere in the meeting.

The Bible is the basis for and also a powerful tool to use in OD. But it must be handled with care. We must be highly aware of our own temptations to manipulate it towards our own purposes. The key is to give people the space and opportunity to let the Bible speak for itself. Different styles may fit different contexts:

Interactive Bible Studies	Lectio Divina
Interactive Bible studies are a different way of learning from top-down preaching. The strength of this is that individuals through the Bible study gain skills of reflection, group discussion and analysis. The key steps are listed below: 1. Reading the Bible for yourself 2. Reflecting on questions and sharing your observations with the group 3. Drawing conclusions together as a group and sharing it with others 4. Listening and learning from other groups as they present their reflections The four steps above represent four cycles of learning. As each member of the congregation goes through each cycle of learning their understanding of the issues and reflection of how the passage relates to their own experience deepens.	A short, slow, contemplative praying of the scriptures which enables the Bible to become a means of union with God. This ancient practice has been kept alive in the Christian monastic tradition. It is about cultivating the ability to listen deeply – to hear "with the ear of our hearts" (St Benedict). There are four stages: 1. Lectio – Slow reverential reading of a passage 2. Meditatio – Meditation – pondering it in our hearts 3. Oratio – Prayer – as a loving conversation with God and consecration 4. Contemplatio – Contemplation – wondering at the Word

Facilitator Questions

- *To what extent is the client taking responsibility for change?*
- *What do people really fear about change? How realistic is this?*
- *Have I created space to awaken their consciences?*
- *What needs to die here? What do they need to stop doing?*
- *Have they admitted their failings in some way and apologised if appropriate?*
- *Have I connected with people's vision and being part of the organisation?*
- *Have I allowed space for people to listen to God?*
- *Have people been forgiven for the past?*
- *Has my verbal and written communication been full of both 'grace and truth'?*
- *Have I left people feeling hopeful about the possibility of change?*

Useful Tools

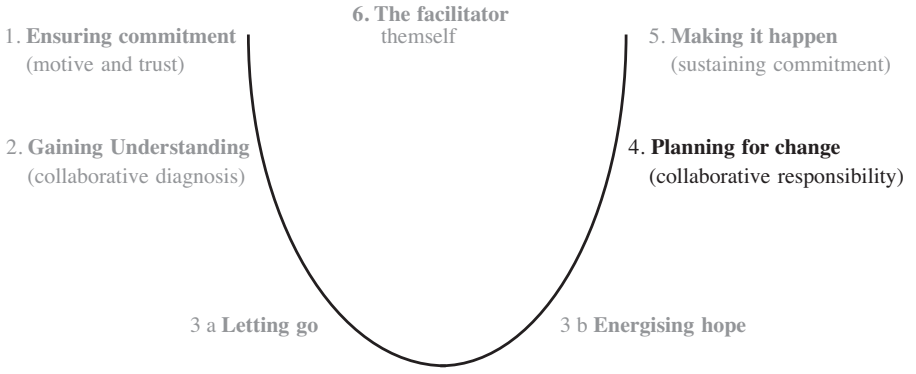
Naming the giants – page 65
Facing fears – page 66
My contribution question – page 67
Examen process – page 68
Willow Creek prioritising exercise – page 71
Philemon conflict resolution – page 77
Appreciative Inquiry – page 78
Interactive Bible Studies – page 83
Lectio Divina – page 83
Prayer joker – page 80
Exodus stories – page 81

4. Planning for Change

I can remember too many times where the good intentions and energy generated at OD workshops quickly disappeared. When people get back to their offices there are so many other things to do. They are quickly submerged by the relentless, urgent activity we are so fond of. Part of the problem is that I often leave the big positive ideas too general. I fail to get people to break them into bite-sized chunks that different people take responsibility for.

In my last OD assignment, the staff of the international department took it upon themselves to organise the action planning stage. They brainstormed the 20 or so actions that needed to be taken, got the whole group to prioritise how urgent each was and then gave each a deadline. One person was given ultimate responsibility for each. Sadly a couple of days after the event I learnt that one of the key staff members was leaving. This was a real blow as she had brought a lot of energy to the process. But having a clear plan, knowing what was needed to be done; by when and by whom, means that all the good work at the workshop is not lost. Despite the loss of a key player, they can still move ahead with the vital and collectively agreed change process.

The next stage of the change process involves converting and channelling the energy and enthusiasm into a clear plan of action. It is also about ensuring there is collaborative responsibility to make it happen. We can fall into the trap of feeling we have arrived once we have turned the corner. This is not the case. The group may be on an emotional or even spiritual high. But the next challenge is to bring people down to earth to work out how the practicalities of change – what needs to be done; by whom and when. It is about moving from the strategic to the operational – from shared vision to collectively owned actions.



This is very much the nuts and bolts, mechanical aspect of the change process. If insufficient attention is given to the practicalities of planning, inspiring visions for change remain as pipe dreams. Straightforward planning is most needed. But this planning must be done in a way that builds commitment and shares ownership. This is especially important to emphasise in working with churches and Christian organisations many of whom resist rigorous planning. This stage may be more about emphasising the professional than the spiritual. But this does require the emotional intelligence to deal with some of the inevitable fall-out when people realise more about what the changes might mean for them.

In this chapter we see that good practice at the stage of planning involves:
- An explicit and realistic theory of change
- An outcome-focused, detailed plan, with prioritised, timetabled activities
- Sharing responsibilities
- Operating in line with the organisation's values
- Supporting staff, including spiritual support.

An explicit and realistic theory of change

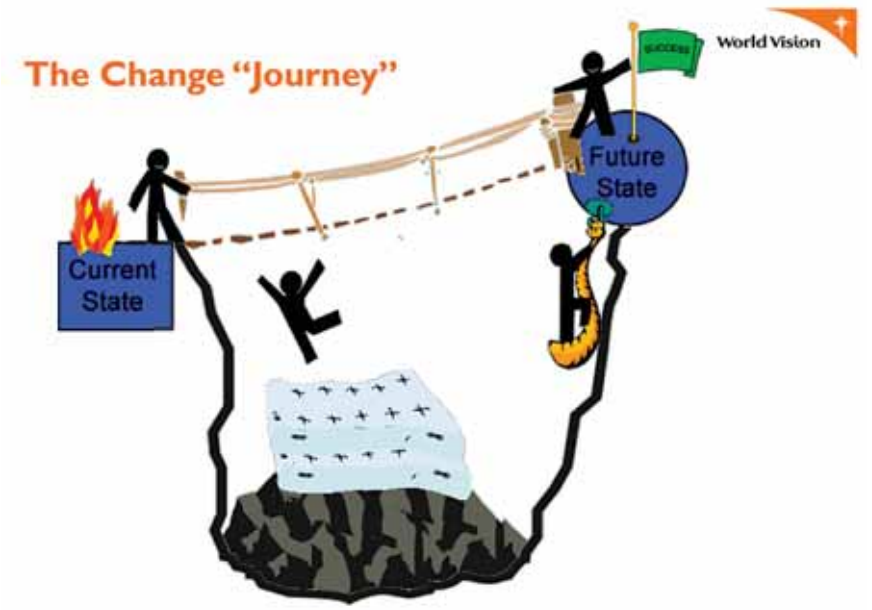
Any change process is based on an underlying theory of how change happens, whether we acknowledge this or not. In planning for change we need to agree on where we want to go, what needs to change and our assumptions about how that process occurs. There are a number of underlying, yet critical theory of change questions, which we should not gloss over:

Theory of change questions:

- What are the real issues we are trying to address?
- What long-term, meaningful changes do we want to see?
- Who and what needs to change for that to happen?
- What do we believe actually makes people change their behaviour and attitudes?
- How will we know and measure if change has happened?

For faith organisations, this theory of change will actually be a theology of change, because our beliefs about God affect how we think about the process of human change.

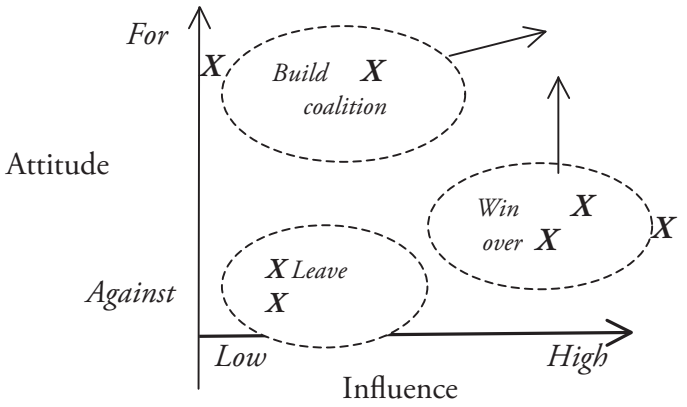
To make an effective plan for change we have to be realistic. World Vision, an agency which has worked particularly hard at managing change processes, developed the following picture to illustrate their understanding of change. The current situation is no longer tolerable – the fire is too hot. The picture shows an imaginary, logical, linear bridge between the current state and the future state. Unfortunately in real life this bridge is a fiction. What actually happens in change is that people fall – they lose roles, jobs, relationships, comfort… In order to avoid injury, a cushion of re-training, counselling, awareness of benefits, may need to be put in place. People can then recover and gradually begin the climb up the other side.



In managing any change process it is important to carefully analyse who will be affected by the change, to what extent and how important their support is to the process. Some people's support is essential, others only desirable. A good facilitator is politically aware. A stakeholder grid may help identify which stakeholders will be affected, their current attitude to change and their power in making the change happen (or hindering it).

If you plot people with an 'X', you can then work out appropriate strategies for dealing with the different groups. It is not always essential for everyone to be on board, but it is vital to get the support of those who most matter to its implementation. People should be able to see how the change will benefit the organisation and even themselves.

Stakeholder grid



Another method World Vision uses for analysis in planning change is to identify who is driving the change (sponsor) and who will need to do their jobs differently in order to implement the solution (adaptors). They then analyse how much of a disruption this will be to the current way of doing things and therefore how much of a 'jump' they have to make. They complete the following tables:

Who has to change?	How deep a "jump" (from 1 to 10)?	Why that rating?
	• A "1 meter jump" hardly disrupts someone's on-going work – like a new reporting policy. • A "10 meter jump" would involve significant disruption. For example, this would involve a change in job, skills required, relocating the family, etc.	

Outcome-focused plan

A clear operational plan for bringing about any change is good practice in project management. It builds on and makes more specific the underlying theory of change. It is simply about working out:

1. What do we really want to achieve in this change process? What does change looks like? What outcomes are we looking for?
2. What exactly will we do to make this happen?
3. Who will do what?
4. By when?
5. What resources will they need to make this happen? What will be the costs?
6. How will we know how we are doing? What are the milestones along the way? How will we know when we have arrived?

All these questions must be answered by a work plan, divided into years, months, weeks, showing the various tasks, budgets and sub-budgets.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	People responsible	By when	Costs

While such a plan is a useful starting point, it should not be set in stone, but regularly revisited and adapted in the light of what actually takes place. The plan should bring structure, but at the same time allow for flexibility.

In planning for change with churches and Christian organisations, it is sometimes important to address the allergy that some appear to have towards planning. Some churches see planning as something secular, something that will undoubtedly 'quench the Spirit'. They resist the level of detail needed to plan well. They also tend to ignore the inherent political dimension to change. Some assume that their staff are free of any personal interests and would never consider thinking 'how does this affect me?' or 'what is in it for me?'.

Clear objectives

The importance of clear objectives is obvious, yet still so rarely realised. A clear objective states what is it exactly that they want to achieve. This should be based on the problems in the current situation and a clear picture of what change would look like. It is not just about saying, 'we want better leadership' but about detailing what that might look like. It helps to be as concrete as possible. If the objectives are measureable this will greatly assist knowing how well you are progressing and what needs to be adjusted. We need to answer:

- What are reasonable results in the given time-frame?
- Who determines these?

In naming the outcomes, we may find that people have very different ideas of what change will look like. It is important to have shared understanding at the outset.

Prioritised, timetabled activities

In any change process prioritising is vital. You cannot work on everything all at once. It may be worth analysing each activity in terms of its importance – high, medium, or low. It is also important to think through how each activity relates to others. Change in one area should be supported by change in others. The activities may be a series of interdependent tasks which need to take place in a specific order – a critical path. It may be worth breaking down the objectives into a series of small clear steps, not one massive leap. It is also helpful to ensure that the activities involve a mixture of visible 'quick wins' as well as ones that build the foundations for longer term change.

These activities need to have a realistic, yet still challenging time frame. This keeps the momentum going without over-burdening people with impossible workloads.

It is important to plan for short-term wins. People need to feel they are making progress; that things are happening. This builds momentum and further commitment. People want to be involved with something that is successful. So it is worth focusing on key tasks that can quickly achieve unambiguous, visible and meaningful results – as the jargon puts it 'the low-hanging fruit'. Kotter and Cohen (2002:140) suggest a useful exercise for this:

Identifying short-term wins

Make a list of projects or tasks that could be tackled by empowering people within the organisation:

1. For each item on the list assess the following:
- When could you realistically get this done? How many months?
- How much effort and expense will it take? Grade it on a 1-10 scale, from almost no effort to huge time and expense
- How unambiguous will the win be? (1-10)
- How visible will it be? (1-10)
- Will this be viewed as a meaningful win? (1-10)
- Who will see it as meaningful? How powerful are they?

2. Given these assessments which of the items on your list should receive top priority?
- Pick the top five
- What is number one?

Sharing responsibilities

Collaborative process

Having only one or two people aware of this change process is not enough. A collaborative process is necessary. Organisational change requires organisational shifts. This means a critical mass of people have to be supportive of the change and pulling in the same direction. Everyone needs to play a part. If people are simply told what to do, they are more likely to resist. But if they have been involved in the process, they are much more likely to implement it. Collective responsibility is therefore a critical outcome of this planning process. Walter Wright would even say: 'We do not have a plan until each objective has been owned by someone who accepts responsibility to see that it is initiated and completed.'(2000:92)

'We do not have a plan until each objective has been owned by someone who accepts responsibility to see that it is initiated and completed.'

Internal guiding team

An internal guiding team (sometimes called task force, change action team or steering group) is often needed to oversee the change process. They

bring local knowledge. They can keep the energy for change alive. They empower others to act on the vision, reminding people of their responsibilities and deadlines. They provide on-going follow-through.

It helps if this guiding team is representative; has relevant knowledge about what is happening outside as well as internally; has credibility, connections and stature within the organisation; has formal authority; the management skills to plan, organise and control; and the leadership skills to inspire and motivate (Kotter and Cohen 2002). They also have to develop trust amongst themselves.

It is vital that this group has sufficient internal political power to continue to drive change and hold people to account for their responsibilities. They either need to have people with power or influence on the task force, or if not, then with clear and unequivocal support from leadership. If people get the sense that this is not a priority for the leaders or that they are preoccupied elsewhere, then the initiative is likely to fail.

Operating in line with values

Plans need to be consistent with the underlying values of the organisation. We have to practice what we preach. In times of change it is essential to maintain, not compromise, what organisations hold most dear. One Christian NGO I was working with recently reached a deeply painful decision about a major strategic shift they had to make. There was a lot of hurt and concern for how people would be affected. One trustee for the past 25 years was particularly adamant that there should be no change. It was only when another trustee suggested that the way in which the change process should be consistent with the agreed values of the NGO: caring; responsive; holistic; inclusive; hopeful; professional… that he suddenly relented and said: 'OK, in that case I can go along with this, though I am still not happy'.

Supporting staff

Organisational change and individual change are inextricably linked. There is no organisational change that does not result in individuals having to change. To be good facilitators we need to understand the process of individual change to help people adjust in a healthy way. We need to be able to help organisations take a people-centred approach to an inherently emotional process.

One of the classic models for looking at the psychological process of individual changes comes from Elisabeth Kübler Ross's work on bereavement. Her transition curve model describes the journey taken by an individual coming to terms with change. Many NGOs have adapted this model for use in organisational change. World Vision have also integrated this with the work of William Bridges (1995) seeing change in three phases: ending; neutral zone and new beginning:

1. **Ending**: When an announcement is made regarding a change, the first reaction is typically one of denial. People will often act as if nothing has changed. (I will continue to report to X regardless.) Once the reality of a change sinks in, people often respond in anger. (What do YOU mean, I no longer report to X?) As time passes, a sense of depression sets in. There is a real sense of loss around the change. (You know, I will really miss working with X.). The last ditch effort comes with bargaining—an attempt to preserve the old way. (I may not report to X, but he will still be on my 360 review panel.).
2. **Neutral zone**: As one reaches the bottom of the transition U, she/he is in the neutral zone. This is a place of "in-between-ness". One has left the old – yet has not truly entered into the new. This is really a time of decision. Will I remain in the old way? Or will I choose another way? Will I accept that things have changed and move on forward?
3. **New Beginning**: Having decided to move forward, people usually start cautiously by sticking a toe in the water. (I will take a couple of small steps in engaging with my new boss.) This is followed by experimentation—going knee deep (I will give more effort to engaging with my new boss.). This is followed by making choices and commitment, which clearly indicate that the person has jumped into the water of the new. The final step is one of integration, where one reflects on the journey and sees the distance travelled.

The horizontal axis on the transition curve depicts movement over time while the vertical axis represents energy levels. Knowing where people are on the transition curve helps managers to know how to move them along. At the Ending stage, it may be helpful to listen, as someone copes with the losses. When in the 'Neutral Zone', it is may be helpful to inspire people to leave the old way and move towards the new. This persuasion continues with concrete encouragement to engage more and more with the solution as part of the 'New Beginning'.

Everyone in the organisation will go through this transition process to some degree. The important thing is to be able to help people move continuously through the curve, rather than getting stuck in denial or depression (which can lead to dysfunctional organisational behaviour).

For some people this support comes from their faith. Even when people are not in a position to accept pastoral support from an institution that has been the cause of their problems, God can intervene. Sam Voorhies describes hearing God when feeling a victim of change:

On the receiving end – Sam's story

As a student, teacher, facilitator, and manager of change you would think that I would be well equipped to be on the receiving end of change. Far from it. I find change threatening. I like to know what is coming. And when I am not in control I feel insecure, anxious and stressed. I have been a part of at least four major organisational change processes. None were easy.

One time I was just returning from an international trip when my boss called me into the office. He sat me down and told me without warning that my job was being changed. It wasn't clear if I would have a job in future. Having moved my family half-way round the world for this job I could not believe what I was hearing. I was so angry I charged out of the building. I found myself out walking the crowded streets arguing with God. How could He allow this to happen to me – again? What had I done to deserve this kind of treatment? But in the middle of a street full of people, I suddenly felt the physical presence of God as He put His arm around my shoulder and shared the following thoughts with me. As I have pondered them and meditated on Psalm 37, I see five principles for growing through change:

Don't take things too personally
"Your faith about the future needs to be in me, not in an organisation. Do not fret it only leads to evil"

View things in light of Eternity from His perspective
"Take the long view. This is only a blip on the screen in the light of eternity. This will work to your benefit – hang in there. Keep this experience in view from an eternal perspective."

Focus on your call to ministry not your career
What can you learn that will help you better serve others and realise my call in your life? How might this prepare you for the next stage of your growth – ministry?

You are responsible for how you respond
"The Lord is laughing at those who plot against the godly. Don't allow this to get you down. Don't become angry and resentful or look for blame. That will only do you harm and start a downward spiral. Find something to laugh about and keep a sense of humour".

Know that God will never forget nor forsake you
"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved your name on the palms of my hands'. Isaiah 49:15-16

Facilitator Questions

- *Are the hoped-for outcomes specific and understood by people?*
- *Are these outcomes realistic given the activities planned?*
- *Do the planned activities lead to these outcomes?*
- *Is everyone who needs to be involved in the process? Are they clear about the part they are to play?*
- *Have they appointed a transition monitoring team?*
- *Are there adequate resources (time and money) invested?*
- *Where are people currently on the transition curve?*
- *What can we do to help them move?*

Useful Tools

Theory of change questions – page 86
Stakeholder change grid – page 88
Rating extent of change – page 88
Action plan format – page 89
Identifying short term wins – page 91
Transition curve – page 94

5. Making it happen – Implementing change

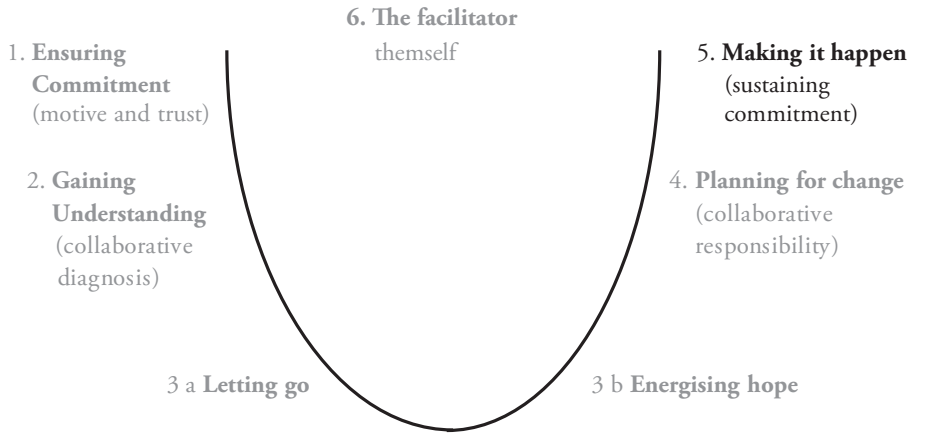
Journeying with OAIC

The OAIC (Organisation of African Instituted Churches) is an association of more than 1000 member churches across the continent. These members pull the OAIC in many different directions. In late 2005 they requested CORAT support in helping them develop a new strategy to bring greater coherence and direction. But doing the planning was just the start.

As Nicta Lubaale, the General Secretary remembers: 'As soon as the plan was done we took our foot off the accelerator and let things slip back. We realised we could do with CORAT's on-going support in helping us put our plans into practice. We asked them to accompany us on our journey.

For two years their support was quite intense, particularly in restructuring in 2007 to align with our strategy. We realised that our structure had not changed in 30 years! This meant developing job-descriptions, retrenching staff and shifting to one-year short-term contracts. But as we have gradually implemented the changes, CORAT has been able to step back and let us move on our own. Now they just regularly ask how things are going. This does not mean that we are not still grappling with major issues, but the nature of their OD support has changed.

This is the stage when real organisational change occurs. Until now change has remained largely individual and only planned for. The next stage is where change actually takes place. We need to pay much, much closer attention to this stage of change, even if it appears less exciting and creative. This is the nitty gritty reality of change – where inspiration gives way to perspiration. This is where the real work of actual change starts. Leaders and internal change agents take centre stage.



By now many external consultants will have disappeared off the stage. They may have fully played their part and now it is time for others to carry on the process. If they have played their role well, the organisation will have been left empowered to change, not dependent on their continued presence. Yet frequently during this critical implementation stage, there are important roles for external consultants still to play. These will be different from before and may require a different set of skills.

At this implementation stage, facilitators have to be prepared to go the extra mile. Personally I find that once the excitement of the turning point has passed, my interest in the assignment may wane. I have to discipline myself to keep going to see the assignment through. I have to remind myself that implementing change is what it is all about. I have to be faithful to the organisation and overcome the temptation to disappear off into another assignment once the planning stage is over. I therefore try to build in this follow-through time into the initial contract. Yet even without remuneration, a faithful facilitator should be prepared to go beyond the formal contract and invest unpaid time. We can only be effective as coaches if we are prepared to go beyond contractual obligation; and to walk alongside in the mundane moments. We have to stick around for the times of perspiration and hard work.

After planning for change, starting some implementation is urgent. If you do not act quickly organisational inertia soon reasserts itself. But because change is a journey, not an event, people take time to develop new ways of working; alter ways of relating and behaving. Change does not embed itself overnight. The main role for facilitators is to accompany

the organisation on its journey. There will be hills and valleys, highs and lows. Change often feels like an uphill trek. Reality will require shifts of direction to avoid obstacles that crop up along the way. A good change facilitator is willing and able to accompany the organisation on its process. Facilitators, both internal and external, may need to:

1. Support individuals to change through coaching and counselling
2. Monitor progress to maintain commitment
3. Communicate constantly

Supporting people to change

If organisations are to change, people inside the organisations need to change. Sometimes they may need individual support to make those changes. Some may need training to develop new skills and competencies. Others may need counselling to help them adjust psychologically (moving through the transition curve we mentioned in the last chapter). People need to feel listened to and understood. As the Philip Stanhope Earl of Chesterfield said: 'Many a man would rather you heard their story than granted their request' (Bridges 1995:24). Others may need coaching to help them reach their potential in their changed role. Leaders are often in particular need of support in implementing change. And not just individual leaders – this may include management teams and even key board members.

'Many a man would rather you heard their story than granted their request'

Faith makes an important contribution to implementing change. As Karl-Erik from SMC describes:

The contribution of faith – Karl-Erik's story

'The consultants made time for us to pray. They encouraged us to ask for guidance from the Holy Spirit and to look for God's hand in the process. They told us this over and over and over again. I can now see how unwilling I was. I was concerned with matters of efficiency. Later on it became clear. Today I can see how right she was. Without the Holy Spirit it would have gone nowhere. This was the decisive thing.'

Our faith brought us hope in midst of the depressing moments, when we felt so useless it could have killed us; when we were crawling along the floor. In such dark times, God really did bring us a sense of hope – a realisation we were a small part of his bigger plan. 'If you consider the work as God's work, then you realise you cannot solve problems without God's help. The spiritual dimension was a critical component in our OD.' Having the courage and faith to find identity and forgiveness with God's help is our secret to change.

Prayer is an important aspect to the implementation process in OAIC's experience quoted earlier. The General Secretary relates: 'Since the change process started we revived our prayer meetings. For the last four years we meet every Friday – something which we believe has been a key part of the renewal for us'. Spiritual support is important on both an organisational as well as individual level.

Leadership coaching and mentoring

Leading change processes is an essential skill for any leader. But few leaders feel they have the expertise to lead change. Few have been trained to manage change, though this may be a core part of their leadership role. Having someone like a coach, mentor or peer to come alongside and ask them the right questions about the change process will assist them manage the process well.

Typical coaching questions

1. What would 'b' the ideal situation look like?
2. Why do we need to change 'a' the current situation?
3. What might you do in the short-term, medium-term, long-term to make 'b' happen?
4. What are the main obstacles in moving from 'a' to 'b'?
5. How will you know when 'b' is reached?

Adapted from 'Coaching in the church', Snow and Thomas 2008, Grove Books

Furthermore, implementing change often involves changing the culture of an organisation. Leaders are uniquely placed to do this. They can have a major influence on the culture that is practiced within an organisation (even though leaders sometimes feel they only have very limited influence).

Edgar Schein (2004) highlights six primary ways in which leaders influence culture:

1. What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control;
2. Leader reactions to critical incidents and organisational crises;
3. Observed criteria for resource allocation;
4. Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching;
5. Observed criteria for allocation of rewards and status;
6. Observed criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, retirement, and excommunication.

Facilitators may need to help leaders become more aware of these tools at their disposal. They can also discuss what culture messages they are already sending and what they might need to do differently in the future.

Leading change is an incredibly difficult process. It can be isolating. Leaders often have few safe places they can turn to off-load their concerns or to seek advice about the way forward. It might be that coaches/mentors provide a place of sanctuary. They create and hold a space for leaders to withdraw from the pressure of daily work and life and reflect on what is going on.

It is especially difficult when the best way forward is not absolutely guaranteed. Machiavelli warned almost 500 years ago:

> 'There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things. Because the innovator has for enemies all those that have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders who may do well under the new'. (The Prince)

Compassionate leaders find it especially hard to take difficult decisions. A decision might be in the organisation's best interest, but clearly not in an individual's best interest. It is important to maintain the focus on the end beneficiary and the mission of the organisation. It is sometimes necessary to make people redundant or move them on. Delaying the process can make things much worse. As John Adair warns: "the sooner an organisation is willing to change – ahead of the time it has to change – the more options it has open to it… Always better to take change by the hand and lead it where you want it to go before it takes you by the throat and drags

you off in any direction" (Adair 2002: 219 & 221). Churches and Christian organisations sometimes delay too long.

Leaders, including boards, pay a high emotional cost in change. An outside facilitator can help bring a leaders perspective so that they take the decision they feel is best for the mission of the organisation.

"the sooner an organisation is willing to change – ahead of the time it has to change – the more options it has open to it… Always better to take change by the hand and lead it where you want it to go before it takes you by the throat and drags you off in any direction"

In addition, leaders are frequently the ones who have to change the most in order to implement organisational change. The extent to which an organisation is able to change may be strongly linked with the extent to which individual leaders are able to change (as we read about in Chapter 1). This personal change is extremely challenging, which is why it often best takes place through one-to-one conversations. They need people who will ask them the right questions and not be afraid to point out issues that need dealing with. Leadership coaching and mentoring is so often a critical aspect of any implementation process, but one which does not take place as frequently as it should, particularly in churches.

This is partly because self-deception is one of the most important challenges that leaders face. Self-deception causes pride, which as we know precedes a fall. A survey of business failure in the USA amongst NASDAC companies, identified 'pride' as the most significant cause. For leaders, pride is a particular challenge. In many cultures, followers place their leaders on pedestals. They are told how wonderful they are – how irreplaceable they are. They do not get honest feedback. Leaders start believing myths about themselves. The Romans were well-aware of these dangers. When their generals were being carried on chariots in triumphal processions, they had a slave constantly repeating: 'Remember you are only human' (Carr 1998:28)

Research has shown that when leaders become proud and unwilling to hear constructive feedback, this severely jeopardizes their effectiveness. So it is vital that Christian leaders have people who hold up a mirror to them – just as the prophet Nathan did with King David. But this is hard. None of us actually like hearing negative feedback.

One way Sam Voorhies has found it useful to enter such sensitive discussions is to use McIntosh and Rima's Five Leadership Dysfunctions (1997). He asks them which type of biblical leader they most identify with and why. They then start thinking about how to avoid their failings:

Five Leadership Dysfunctions – which are you tempted to?

Compulsive: (Biblical Example: **Moses**) Compulsive leaders are status conscious, looking for reassurance and approval from those in authority. They try to control activities and keep order and usually are workaholics. At times they are excessively moralistic, conscientious and judgmental.

Narcissistic: (Biblical Example: **Solomon**) Narcissistic leaders are driven to succeed by a need for admiration and acclaim. They may have over-inflated sense of importance as well as great ambitions and grandiose fantasies.

Paranoid: (Biblical Example: **Saul**) Paranoid leaders are suspicious, hostile, fearful and jealous. They are afraid that someone will undermine their leadership, so are hypersensitive to the actions of others, attach subjective meaning to motives, and create rigid structures for control.

Co-Dependent (Biblical Example: **Samson**) Co-dependent leaders are peacemakers who cover up problems, rather than face them, in an effort to balance the group system. They may be very benevolent with a high tolerance for deviant behaviour. They are willing to take on more work so they do not have to say 'No'. They react rather than act.

Passive-Aggressive: (Biblical Example: **Jonah**) Passive-aggressive leaders are stubborn, forgetful, and intentionally inefficient. They tend to complain, resist demands, procrastinate, and dawdle as a means of controlling their environment and those around them. On occasion they will exert control through the use of short outbursts of sadness or anger.

Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction by Gary McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, Sr. Baker 1997

But I find writing about leadership coaching and mentoring easier than actually doing it. Leaders always seem so busy, with so many more urgent issues to deal with. I often feel embarrassed about encroaching on their limited time. In some cases this has meant that I have not pushed enough to meet with them. At other times I have just seen leaders briefly in their

office, squeezed into a short gap between meetings with a long line of others waiting patiently outside. But where my coaching with church leaders has worked best, I have insisted on them getting out of their office, even if only for a quiet lunch.

While I am often tempted to rush in with advice and answers, I have found questions are more powerful than answers in provoking change. Change comes from within, when we realise ourselves we need to do things differently. So as coaches, we need to have a series of good questions at the front of our minds to avoid the temptation to give advice. Some of the useful questions I often select from include[15]:

Useful Mentoring Questions

- Why did you become a leader? What made you accept this responsibility?
- Why should anyone be led by you? What sort of leader do you intend to be?
- What do you want to be known for? What legacy would you like to leave?
- If I asked members of your staff about 'which gods you follow?' what would they respond? What are you teaching through your leadership?
- What would your daughter/granddaughter learn about God, life and work by following you around the office all day?
- How and what are you communicating to your followers?
- Where do you experience conflict? How are you managing conflicts?
- What is important here? What is really at stake?
- To whom and how are you really accountable? How do you ensure their effectiveness?
- What do you pay attention to, measure, affirm, reward?
- What do you fear?
- Where are you most vulnerable?
- Where do you spend your time?
- What does stewardship look like?
- When did you last change as a leader?
- Tell me about a recent risk you have taken? What happened and what did you learn?
- Where do you get your energy? Who gives you energy? What gives you hope?
- What have you learnt from failure?
- What do you need to learn next?
- Whom are you preparing to take your place? How?
- When will it be time to leave?

[15] Inspired by Walter Wright 'Mentoring'

But in working with churches and Christian organisations as coaches and mentors, we may need to use different words. As William Ogara from CORAT says: 'I never call myself a leadership coach with church leaders. They would not know what it means. But if I describe myself as a fellow-traveller this makes more sense to them.'

It may also be appropriate to pray for Christian leaders during the implementation stage. Many leaders are constantly giving out to others and some do not have their own support groups. Praying for leaders as part of coaching support can be helpful. One time my church leader in Malawi was wrestling with issues of developing second-line leadership and potential succession. I drove him away from the office, out of town to a waterfall by a mountain. We spent half a day trying to listen to God about his plans for the future. We then discussed and further prayed about what we heard. My main coaching input was simply to create and hold a reflective, spiritual space.

Peer Mentoring

Viva Network uses the method of peer mentoring to encourage implementation of change. Peer mentoring involves letting partners take responsibility for one another, caring about how each one is doing on the journey of improvement, offering support and encouragement where people are struggling, and praise and recognition where organisations have made improvements. Often it is those who are doing the same job as us or facing the same situations that we can learn from most. If organisations in the network have built up skills or experience in certain areas, they should be encouraged to share those skills and that expertise with other participants, perhaps through exchange visits and practical examples.

Viva Network does this mentoring on a peer to peer basis. They find these a powerful part of the change process where 'learning together' really takes off. These meetings might take about four hours and consist of the following elements:

Viva Peer Mentoring Workshops

Review improvement of work over the past month. Encourage members from each organisation to talk about:

- What they did (within the plan and outside of plan)
- What they didn't do (that they had planned to do)
- What was difficult

- What was good, exciting, surprising or to be celebrated
- How they used the word of God and prayer in their improvement work
- What they can add to the collective toolkit (for example a process they have developed, a policy document or a book or article that helped them)

Reflection and questioning: After each group has given their feedback, make time for other participants to:

- Reflect back on what they have heard. This is a way of providing affirmation, empathising, encouraging and recognising work done. Sentences starting with phrases such as "I hear…", "I sense…", "It would seem that…" work well.
- Ask for clarification: "Am I right in thinking that…"
- Ask questions to aid thinking and action: "Would it help if…", "What would it take to…"

Learning: In most peer mentoring workshops it is useful to make time for introducing new information. The topic could be decided by the group at the previous workshop and training in the agreed area may be done by an outsider (if no–one in the group has the knowledge and experience) or by one of the group if it is an area in which they are experienced.

Planning for the next month of improvement. Each group reflects on their development plans and shares what they intend to accomplish during the coming month. This is the time when people make themselves accountable to each other and commit to reporting back in terms of what they have said they will accomplish. At this point, encourage organisations to contact one another if they get stuck or if they feel that they would like to encourage one another in their journey.

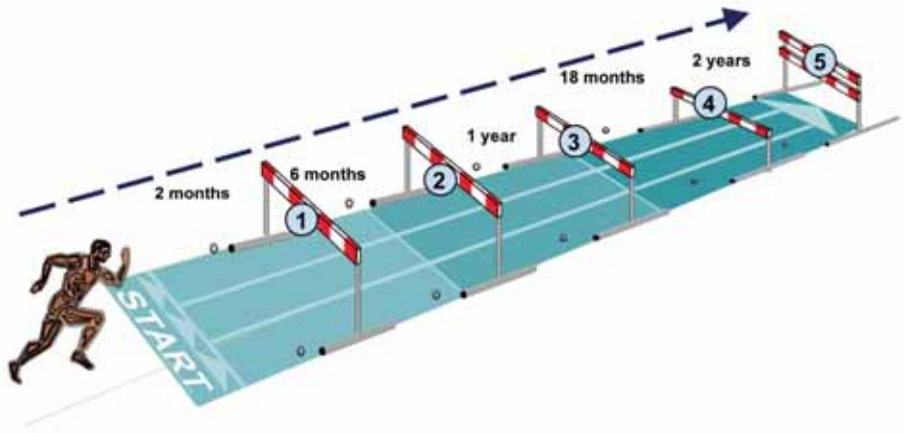
Monitoring progress

How are things going? This basic question is central to embedding any change. It should be regularly asked of different groups and in different ways. This monitoring will be much easier if the plan developed has named people with responsibility for doing things by a certain date. If done well this monitoring can maintain energy and build commitment to the process as people realise they are moving forward. People want to join something that is heading in the right direction. It is really important then to monitor what has changed already and celebrate those successes along the way. It is also important to highlight what has not shifted yet,

what difficulties are being encountered and then to adapt and work out the next step.

Some key questions to use in monitoring include:
- Are our current priorities still valid?
- What is going well in key areas of change?
- How do the facts compare with our workplan?
- Did our workplan work according to plan?
- What are some of the blockages?
- Do we need to make adjustments?
- What has surprised us?
- What do the results (or their absence!) say to our strategies?
- In brief: are we on the right track?
- What are we learning?

Sometimes it helps to show this visually:



Facilitators can play a key role in continually monitoring the change process. They provide an accountability mechanism as well as peer pressure to fulfil commitments. Unless change activities are made an explicit part of the work schedule, they are likely to be lost amidst the tyranny of other more 'urgent' work. In addition, because the internal or external facilitator is outside of the traditional power structures, they may be able to get a better quality of response with people being more honest and open. Some suggest for example, having a 'transition monitoring team' from as wide a cross-section of the organisation as possible to meet regularly to take the pulse of the organisation.

Some of the methods which you could use to find out how things are going include: focus group discussions, workshops, observation, question and answer sessions, staff surveys, staff representatives, comments boxes, confidential hot-lines…

In implementing change with churches we should keep our timescales realistic. Change in churches tends to take place more slowly than we predict. Given their histories and cultures, most churches are not quick to take on new ways of working. But if we think of the church as a marathon runner, rather than a sprinter, this may keep expectations realistic and help us to be patient.

Evaluating Results

There are a myriad of techniques for evaluating impact. Many of these can be used in evaluating OD (see James 2005 and 2009). Two very simple ones include:

After Action Review:

1. What was supposed to happen?
2. What actually happened?
3. Why were there any differences?
4. What can we learn from that?

'After Action Reviews' – are simply a set of four questions that you can use after an intervention has taken place:

Others like CABUNGO have used the Most Significant Change method to evaluate the impact of their OD work:

Most Significant Change

CABUNGO, a Malawian based organisation, used MSC to evaluate its capacity building services as a pilot project. The pilot enabled CABUNGO to identify changes in organisational capacity such as shifts in attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviour. Changes were also seen in relationships and power dynamics. Most of the stories generated described internal changes within

the recipient organisation, but some also described changes in their external relationships with donors and the wider community. Participants in the evaluation process felt that the story-based approach was useful in helping CABUNGO understand the impact it had on the organisational capacity of its clients, and how its services could be improved. The key advantages of using MSC were its ability to capture and consolidate the different perspectives of stakeholders, to aid understanding and conceptualisation of complex change, and to enhance organisational learning. The constraints lay in meeting the needs of externally driven evaluation processes and dealing with subjectivity and bias (Wrigley 2006).

Communicating constantly

Communication is an essential lever to implement change. But it is not just about data transfer. You need to show people something that addresses their anxieties; that accepts their anger; that is credible and that evokes faith in the vision (Kotter and Cohen 2002). To do this requires listening first. We need to find out what people are thinking, asking and feeling in order to speak directly to these.

Therefore during times of change, communication should be both constantly and two-way. This stage of implementing change is an uncomfortable time – having left the old ways, but not yet really entered the new. People are still uncertain of change and what it means. They need reassurance about those things that will be staying the same, as well as having their own losses openly acknowledged and sympathised with. This requires relentless listening. Compelling and creative communication is vital for sustaining commitment within the organisation.

There are always good reasons or excuses not to communicate: "they don't need to know yet", "we already sent an email"; "we are not sure ourselves yet"…, but people do need to know where things are going and how they are going. People may need information again and again and again. The case for change needs constant repetition. People also tend respond well to honesty – even if the message is not necessarily the one they want to hear. People can easily see through hollow words.

Actions obviously are an even more important way of communicating. If the Director or church leader gives up their large desk or moves out of

their oversized office or gives up their 4X4 vehicle, this says more than any statements about being humble or cutting costs. Symbols are a vital form of communication. They need to be consistent with the change process.

It is also important to communicate externally, particularly if donors have been funding elements of the change process. Donors do have a right to know how their money has been used and what difference it is making.

Facilitator Questions

- *How is my role in this consultancy shifting? What is it now? Where is it going?*
- *Who is making it happen internally? Who needs help and encouragement?*
- *What support do they need?*
- *How can I help people to adjust?*
- *Am I prepared to go the extra mile here?*

Useful Tools

Useful coaching questions – page 100
Five leadership dysfunctions – page 103
Useful mentoring questions – page 104
Peer to peer review – page 103
Useful monitoring questions – page 107
After action review – page 108
Most significant change – page 108

6. The Facilitator – Self as instrument of change

Sharpening my self for OD – Doreen's story

A group of trainee OD practitioners were discussing a practice facilitation exercise we had conducted back in our own organisations. As we talked we each became painfully aware of how much we had inadvertently influenced the processes. We realised that as facilitators 'who' and 'what' we bring into the situation plays a big role. We can easily taint a process. But we are also our own best tool. Therefore to be effective in OD, I need to go beyond acquiring skills and knowledge, and begin to work with, and on, who I am.

I remember one 'critical' incident during my very first accompanied intervention. We were meant to reflect at the end of each day and at the end of the intervention on what had gone well and what had gone not so well. I had loads to say about what had not gone well. But I really struggled to see what had gone well. Mosi, my accompanying facilitator challenged me on this. This set me thinking not only about that incident, but many more. I realised that I had a dominant posture in the way I regarded situations and in the way I saw myself. I noticed that I find it easier to critique than appreciate. Even when I do not express the criticism verbally, it is always at the back of my mind. I had sub-consciously taken this default mode into facilitation situations. When I thought about how this could affect my effectiveness as a facilitator, I saw that I was highly prone to emphasise what was going wrong. I did not really support my client to identify celebrate what was good. I was saddened when I thought about the many times where I have missed the opportunity to build on existing strengths, and instead rubbed in the weakness. What the consequences might this have had? This was very humbling for me … But it also forced me to do something about it – to explicitly take a more appreciative approach and to have more self-control over my critical mind.

'You are going to be a real blessing to us'. This statement from the international Christian NGO I was about to work with was both encouraging and also profoundly challenging. I realised that whatever the terms of reference said, my role was 'to be a blessing' in the situation. These words changed the whole way I looked at the assignment. It reminded me that the main tool that you bring into any OD process is you.

We love tools in OD. People are always asking for frameworks, exercises and processes to use. Up to a point this is great. We need to have these, but we can easily become too focused on the particular tools and lose sight of what really matters.

OD is fundamentally about people changing. Tools and exercises are useful, but ultimately the most important tool will be the facilitator themself. People and organisations change through relationship. The relationship with the facilitator is critical. So much of change depends on the quality of the facilitator. How much an organisation changes will be influenced by you, your actions and even your character. It is about who you are, the wisdom you have and the skills you bring. A facilitator has to listen, analyse, challenge, confront, inspire, energise, and instil hope. It is not about the tools you know, but the way you use them. As Walter Wright says: 'Who we are shapes everything we do and everyone we touch (2004:4)'. This is the same for internal change agents, leaders and external consultants. To be 'fit for purpose' in catalysing change in organisations we need to:

Who we are shapes everything we do and everyone we touch

1. Know the power we bring
2. Know ourselves
3. Learn continually
4. Connect to our calling
5. Be courageous
6. Cultivate character
7. Humbly surrender

Know the power you bring

As change agents we all bring power into a situation. Yet we often view power as a dirty word. We like to think it does not pollute us. But simply keeping it in the dark and pretending it is not there changes nothing (except our ability to manage it). Our power might come from our perceived expertise; our influence over resources or our relationships…We need to be acutely aware of the power we bring into any situation so that we can avoid using it to manipulate a situation. If we allow ourselves to become too powerful in a change situation, this can easily undermine peoples' sense of ownership and remove any chance of the change being

sustained after we leave. To use our power in a positive way, we need to be more conscious of it. In any situation in which we are a change agent we should ask ourselves:

- What is my agenda here? What are my self-interests?
- What power(s) do I bring? What are the risks this brings?

In whatever change agent role we find ourselves, whether as a leader, a member of staff, an external consultant or an employee of a donor agency, it is important to understand the opportunities and limitations that your particular role affords[16]. We also need to collaborate intentionally with other types of change agent. After all, no single change agent role can achieve much alone. Change comes from a combination of insiders and outsiders playing their respective roles well. The table below highlights some common strengths and weaknesses of the different roles:

Change Agent	Strengths	Weaknesses
Leader	Has the mandate Has the opportunity Knows the organisation Has power to make it happen Can create drive, determination and strong focus on the change project Can set an example	Lack time Lack change management expertise May tend to 'conserve' and keep happy rather than risk May be part of the problem. Has blind spots May not be credible or believed Can hinder participation Not given real story by staff
Internal Team	Good ownership Knowledge of organization More progressive Potential influence with peers Provide for sustainability and follow through	Can make design too long-winded due to multiple inputs Too subjective and involved. No fresh eyes. Unable or unwilling to challenge stuck relationships

[16] Adapted from Balugun and Hope Hailey 2008: 57

Change Agent	Strengths	Weaknesses
	Can involve individual with change expertise	Not part of job description Opportunity cost of staff time Can lead to compromises rather than strong decisions May lack power to implement
External Consultant	Experience More objective. Not part of the situation. Disposable – can be used as scapegoat for bad news Can facilitate, open up conversations (ask the 'unaskable' – name elephants) Can communicate to all levels Is a dedicated resource Able to listen to heart issues in confidence	Costs a lot Cannot lead change as not part of leadership No accountability May not know organisation well May have no ownership and need to deliver Can open up can of worms and then disappear
Donor	Can withhold funding and create crisis Has resources to support change Often not aware of own motives and interests Keeps focus on the ultimate impact and results Brings external perspective Hub for learning Goodwill	Power over resources makes manipulation inevitable and encourages cosmetic change'Too loud' to be listened to May lack expertise They may be part of the problem, but do not see this. Too distant to understand Inflexible systems Needs short-term, visible and numerical results

To play your change agent role well, you need to start from a healthy recognition of the limitations of your role. External consultants in particular sometimes get an overblown sense of their importance (perhaps because they are being paid to bring change). Yet an external consultant cannot fix another organisation or system. They can only disturb it. What the organisation does, having been disturbed, is outside the consultant's control. It is people inside who make it happen.

A word about the donor role

Donors play a vital role in the development sector. But it is a difficult and often unpopular role. In consequence, donors would also at times like to also operate as external consultants to local partners. It is not easy to mix roles. Into any change situation, staff of donor agencies often bring strong personal interests (opinions about how things should be functioning differently); strong organisational agendas (to fit with their own strategies); as well as strong power over resources. This can be an over-powering combination.

If donors have a significant influence over funding, they bring a donor-interest into the heart of the change process. This undermines their ability to facilitate change from the client's perspective. Having power over resources means that people will usually respond to you in a different way than if you did not. It is like always having a megaphone. Much as donors might like to whisper or quietly discuss the need for change, they can only shout. This volume and the threat it entails easily promotes a dependent or defensive reaction. It is difficult for any significant donor to facilitate without inadvertently manipulating.

Much as donors might like to whisper or quietly discuss the need for change, they can only shout.

There are some international agencies, however, who seem to manage to play both roles with some degree of success. But these are the exceptions rather than the rule. Their ability to do this is helped by working in the context of trusting long-term partnerships, not short-term projects; where the partner is not overly dependent on them as the primary donor; where there is some separation between the funding role and the advisory role; and when they employ really quality advisers – people highly self-aware, empowering, able and humble.

Donors play an essential role in change processes. But rarely as facilitators. Donors can do a lot to catalyse change processes through their funding influence. They can ask questions that force organisations to consider different ways of doing things. In extreme circumstances they can even trigger crises by withholding funding. If some sort of external consultancy support is needed, donors, through their wide network of operations, can often help signpost churches and Christian organisations to quality external facilitators. Furthermore donor support is often essential to pay for any external consultancy. Donors can also support OD processes by opening up their own performance up for consideration. Their own ways of working may also be causing some of the problems and change may be needed amongst donors if the local organisation is to change. Sometimes donors can play a vital role in just providing moral support – just sitting and listening. As one African church leader said: 'It gives courage and hope to know that others are with you'.

Know yourself

An effective change agent is highly self-aware. We are all different. We each have different preferences, personalities and experiences and biases. We cannot help bring these into any change process. Without realising it, facilitators' personal views influence a change process that purports to be objective and logical. We can never be completely neutral. We interpret all the data we gather through our own experience. I learnt this the hard way in my early days as a consultant:

"This is appalling work! Did you really spend eight days working on this? What personal agenda do you have? Why on earth were you commenting on strategic issues? We are not accepting this. Please rewrite it!" This was how the international Director of a large Christian relief responded to one of my early OD reports. It proved a formative learning experience for me in many ways. I realised that I had allowed the strong personal opinion that I brought into the consultancy influence the way I did the data gathering and presented my findings.

It is often more difficult to work well as facilitator with organisations you know well. Our pre-understanding of a situation means we can bring a strong opinion about the issues and solutions even before we start. We prejudge and are therefore prejudiced. Our own motives influence the work. However open we claim to be, we may hear loudly anything that confirms

our opinion and filter out the anything that contradicts what we think. This undermines our ability to really listen and therefore facilitate well.

We also need to be aware of our own strengths and weaknesses. To the extent that we understand our weaknesses, we can mitigate and manage them (and in the best cases turn them into opportunities for learning). Some of us prefer playing a more 'expert' role giving recommendations to clients; others, by personality type, prefer to let clients themselves decide. Some of us are more comfortable managing conflict than others. Some are able to tolerate ambiguity; others need to know the answer. We bring different strengths to different stages of the OD process. I know I prefer going down the curve than coming up the other side. I have to work hard with myself not to skip over the nuts and bolts of the planning stage, and to keep my interest and engagement during implementation.

Clearly my nationality, my gender, my age also affect how I am perceived and the power I bring. Being a white British male in some circumstances is an asset, at other times a real liability. One time I was asked to facilitate a highly volatile process in Kenya which surprised me as I did not know the context well. I was told afterwards that I had been chosen by the leader because as a foreigner I was not open to bribery and intimidation. The Vice-Chair of the Board only accepted me because if things went wrong he needed someone he could deport as a scapegoat. So nothing whatsoever to do with my skills or experience!

We also need to be aware about how we are using our spirituality. The Bible tells us to 'test the spirits' with good reason. As soon as we start to bring the spiritual dimension into any change process there is the risk we may confuse our personal opinion with spiritual discernment. We need maturity to use spiritual gifts. It can be extremely valuable to have someone else who can help us see our blind spots, who can help us become more mature and keep our feet on the ground. Working in pairs or in a team of facilitators can also help us bring balance and diversity to our professional practice. Pairs can bring complementary skills, insights and attitudes. One person's strength can make up for another's weakness.

Learn constantly

To be a good change agent we need to develop organisational understanding and facilitation skills. Being familiar with organisation theory – how

organisations behave and change, is obviously a good starting point. We need to know about OD, leadership and tools for data gathering. But the ability to read an organisation, to discern what is really going on below the water-line is something that only develops over time and with systematic practice. The more experience we have of organisations, the more raw material we have to work with. We can hone this knowledge into understanding by regular reflection, consciously trying to learn from positive and negative experiences. Strong analytical skills well used, in time produce wisdom.

We need good listening skills to collect good data. We need the ability to observe and listen to the problems of the client. Unless we are able to withhold our judgement and listen actively, we will leap to unsubstantiated conclusions. We need to have an empathy and sensitivity to see the world from the client's eyes. But also maintain a broader perspective of what is happening in the environment.

A good facilitator is socially and politically aware. In the development sector, they are often working cross-culturally. They need to have good inter-personal skills to build up trusting relationships. That trust has to be earned. They also need to be sensitive to internal power dynamics and relationships. They also need to be aware of their own power in a process. They may need to have the political skills to create the acceptance and commitment to move the change forward.

Change agents obviously need to be adept at facilitating group processes and exercises. They need to be comfortable in working with emotion and be able to manage conflict situations. They need to be able to accurately assess how much they can open up 'cans of worms' within a particular process, so as not to leave the organisation with worms crawling about everywhere when they go.

The main asset is that a good facilitator wants to learn and improve. They are curious and continuous learners, looking to develop new skills and styles. They are fascinated by learning from experience. As Peter Block says:

> Our ability to facilitate the learning of others is absolutely dependent on our willingness to make our own actions a legitimate source of inquiry. Our need for privacy and our fear of the personal are the primary reasons why organisational change is more rhetoric than reality. Real change comes from our willingness to own our own vulnerability, confess our failures and acknowledge that many of our stories do not have a happy ending (Block 1995 in Harrison R A Consultant's Journey)

To improve our future practice we must reflect on our past work. Yet so often OD facilitators get caught up with the next assignment or internal change agents move onto other things. The learnings from the OD experience remain vague, undigested and personal. The key to improving our facilitation is to regularly stop and think about our current OD experiences. People have found it helpful to start a journal or a folder where for every OD intervention or facilitation experience they jot down:

> What happened?
> How do I feel about this?
> What do I think about this?
> What have I learned from this?
> What actions will I take as a result of my lessons learned?

Unless people make the time to do this, the learning often evaporates away. Personally I have found the discipline of trying to communicate this learning to an outside audience extremely helpful (though this may not be for everyone). I have used writing as a means of learning, not just the output of my learning. I find that the task of committing ideas to paper in a way that other practitioners can understand, forces me to order my thoughts and clarify what I really think. I often write up reflective case studies of interventions that have gone particularly well and even better if they have gone badly.

Connect to your calling

People often ask whether you can be called to OD work. I certainly think so. Calling is about finding the unique purposes that God has for you and following them. Feeling called to OD means no piece of work can be 'just a job'. Every job has higher purpose and meaning. But being called

is very different from being comfortable. When I was invited to assist the Zimbabwe Council of Churches last year I remember thinking two things: 'Yes! This was what I was created for' and simultaneously 'Help! I have not the first idea what to do'. Being called to something means operating outside of your comfort zone – because you know that in your own strength you cannot succeed. You have to rely on God for things to happen.

Who is the potter? Karl-Erik on Calling

The concept of calling is central to how I understand my role in an organisation. It influences how I engage in the organisational change process. Calling is inextricably linked to my relationship with God. If I see my life and my role as 'You are the potter and I am the clay' then I am prepared to be shaped by God for every new situation, see myself as a tool in God's hands. But not as a life-less tool – as a tool full of life, ideas and will. To have a calling is to consciously put one's life (with all its strengths and weaknesses) into God's hand and trust him to model it, as if it were clay – even when it hurts! A calling is not something passive, there is always a commission attached to it. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (John 20:21)

Life is not a solo-performance neither by God nor by me. It is always a 'duet' – we do it together. Therefore the focus is not on *what I do* but *how* I understand and relate to what I am doing. It means that I can have a clear calling but it can have different expressions or manifest itself in various ways throughout life.

Prayer becomes more of a way to keep in touch and to deepen the relationship with God and to make sure I do not run on my own, that I am aware of my assignment for this time and place. Needless to say that if my prayer is full of instructions to God about what to do and not to do, I have put myself in the place of the 'potter' and God is treated as the 'clay'!

Be courageous

Being a good change agent takes courage. Sometimes as facilitators we have to be more confrontational and honest than is our natural preference. William Ogara tells the story of a time when he was giving feedback to a group of Bishops. He was trying to put things in very sensitive terms so that they would be able to hear what he was saying without reacting defensively. So he spoke about the need for them to be 'more open to their

own learning'. After a while, his co-facilitator interrupted, she said: 'What Dr Ogara means is that you Bishops are arrogant.' They suddenly got it. They needed frankness and honest confrontation.

In my most recent OD assignment, I knew that simply by pointing out that there were two sides to the story risked a defensive response from the Director. When I sent the very carefully constructed and gentle report to the Board. They were delighted with the insight and perspective. But I was not prepared for the vitriolic response from the director. In two of the angriest emails I have ever received, she questioned my whole competence, professionalism and integrity. Yet it was still the right thing to do, provided our communication is full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Sometimes a change agent is there to speak the truth, even if it is bad news. This takes courage.

Courage is also about facing fears. Doreen Kwarimpa-Atim highlights in her story how we have to acknowledge and pray through our own fears:

Facing my own fears – Doreen's story

As I read 'Facing fears and taking responsibility', I reflected on my role as a facilitator. I realised that as I take on an assignment, I need to walk my own spiritual journey by confessing my own fears about the assignment. I need to ask God to strengthen and encourage me. I should pray for a readiness and humility to leave the outcome of the facilitation process to God. How often do I catch myself worrying about the work or what 'my clients' will think, rather than what God wants me to do? This blocks my thinking. I recalled how the Lord Jesus himself confessed his 'fear' in the garden of Gethsemane and let go to the will of the Father. I trust that is how he got the strength to fulfil his father's will. If Jesus did that, then all the more reason why we too should face and confess our fears to God before embarking on any work. When I do this, I acknowledge the assignment is not about me as a facilitator, but about the one who has chosen me to lead the process (God). The outcome is therefore in the Lord's hands. I think if a facilitator recognises the place and value of facing their own fears, they will be better able to lead an organisation through a similar process. Certainly they will do it with more first-hand experience and with more integrity.

A colleague, James, told me of the time he was facilitating a workshop with an organisation in South Africa. It had been a really positive and

energetic event. It had resulted in some significant decisions for change. But a few moments before the final break the Director stood up and said: 'Actually it is not for you to decide. We will continue to work as we have done before'. There was stunned silence in the room. The tea-break was a depressed affair. James felt so nauseous he went to the toilet. When they came back, James had no idea what to say or what to do in the final session. He decided to tell them the truth. He simply said: 'I feel sick. After all the progress we have made together this week, what the Director just said made me feel like throwing up'. One-by-one people began to open up, saying 'Yes this is how he often makes me feel'… 'This is how it always is'. Finally they had got to the root of the issue. Once it was acknowledged an out in the open, they could begin to deal with it. It needed the courage of the facilitator to be brutally honest.

Cultivate character

Character is what really matters in a change agent. The commercial sector already realises this. William O'Brian the CEO of Hannover Insurance Company said: 'The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener'. This means that as 'intervener' we have to pay attention to our interior condition, our characters, if we are to be effective. As Max De Pree says: 'What we do in life will always be a consequence of who we are' (Wright 2004: xi).

'The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener'.

I find this profoundly challenging. It forces me to realise that I cannot divorce my professional life from my spiritual life. I bring my character (which D.L. Moody says is 'what you are in the dark') into the client. I know that as an OD consultant I often have the privilege of being invited into the guts of an organisation. We get special access. We get to ask questions no-one else can. We are given time that no-one else is. I get asked to facilitate processes that deal with the very identity of the client. Yet with such privilege comes responsibility. Decisions that are made affect people's jobs, their lives and their own sense of identity. We have to tread softly on peoples' lives. We are responsible for bringing the best of ourselves to our work.

This means making sure that our actions are consistent with what we believe – this is what integrity is all about. A few years ago I tried to make

my implicit beliefs about change more explicit. I analysed all my experience with organisational and leadership development. I went through the Bible trying to interpret what it said to me. I thought about changes in my own life. I wrote down how I believed change occurred in organisations and what role God played in that. I then created some standards for my consultancy to assist me to know whether my practice was reflecting what I believed – that I was doing the 'best' that I could. The text box below outlines the headings[17].

Consultancy Quality Standards

In every consultancy I do, I commit myself to:

- Ensure the client takes responsibility for change.
- Understand the situation from the client's perspective
- Take a people-centred approach
- Address relationships (including leadership) within the organisation.
- Create safe, 'sacred' spaces in change processes
- Integrate a spiritual dimension by
  - prayer, listening to God;
  - ensuring opportunities for God's Holy Spirit to work;
  - following a Biblical process of change, including repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation;
  - using the Bible with discernment and
  - focusing on life-giving spiritual elements such as vision, values, hope
- Attend to the implementation of change,
- Live out spiritual virtues as of humility, compassion, patience, determination; generosity; self-control; honesty

I now use these standards in all my OD work. When planning a consultancy, I use them to make sure what I am suggesting is consistent with what I believe. When tendering for work I usually send these to potential Christian clients, so that they know the approach I aspire to take. Sometime in the middle of most of my assignments I go back and check, 'how am I doing?' And at the end I also stop and reflect on what went well and what could have been improved.

Cultivating character is also about wrestling with our imperfections. We have to be aware of our shadow sides and grapple with our own temptations. Sometimes I am disturbed to realise how much my work is influenced

[17] The full list can be downloaded from: http://developingchurches.ning.com/notes/Letter_23

by 'deadly' sins of pride, greed, impatience, a lack of determination, or by self-interest? None of us are immune from sin. The only antidote is to actively cultivate spiritual virtues. In my OD work this means I have to cultivate the spiritual virtues of:

- *Humility* to look to God's power, to value others' contributions, to genuinely listen, to be honest with myself, to own my weaknesses and to continuously learn
- *Compassion* for the client, not ignorant of their weaknesses, but being merciful. It means overcoming my adverse reactions to their bad behaviour to earnestly desire the best for them – injecting hope that they can change
- *Patience* to put up with a different pace and standards of a client
- *Determination* to produce work of the highest standards and to follow-through rigorously
- *Generosity* in setting fee rates and time commitments within family boundaries. It is also about being generous in my relationships and my approach.
- *Self-control* to be a careful steward of my time and client resources
- *Honesty* to make sure feedback, reports and writings are full of grace and truth.

It is incredibly important for us as consultants to work hard on our own character; to keep ourselves spiritually fit. Being an OD facilitator is not an easy profession. It can easily damage your soul and spirit. In many cases OD facilitators, inside and outside the organisation, are in danger of frustration and possibly burn-out. In facilitating change they have to live with ambiguity and lack of control. It is the client's process, not the change agent's. Other people are responsible for your results. This is uncomfortable when they do not deliver on their commitments. If it goes wrong it can be depressing. Integrating the spiritual is important for facilitators to be able to renew their strength and hope and therefore their ability to catalyse change.

Humbly surrender

We want to make a difference in the world. This is what gives us meaning. When things go well we can easily exaggerate our role in the process. Many of us have to sell our services as consultants. We have to tell people about the value we can bring. It is a small step into pride. We can easily

fall into the trap of seeing ourselves as saviours. But we are not superhuman. We are not heroes, but servants. At best we are 'stewards of grace'[18]. God only gives grace to the humble[19].

The poet, T.S. Eliot wrote 'The only wisdom we can hope to achieve is the wisdom of humility' (Little Gidding). We would do well to remember that change is God's process not ours. In our own strength we cannot change people. Only God can change human hearts. We have to let go of our expertise. Sometimes we have to feel completely out of our depth before we really give up and trust God. Again Eliot puts it well: 'For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.'

In every intervention I need to be ready to let go of what I know, want and desire as well as what I am confident about, so that God can work. I often put Harrison Owen's quote on the workshop wall: 'The facilitator must keep letting go. There is only one way to mess up – to think you are in charge of what happens, or worse yet, to act that way. Truthfully the facilitator has little if anything of a substantive nature to contribute'

'The facilitator must keep letting go. There is only one way to mess up – to think you are in charge of what happens, or worse yet, to act that way. Truthfully the facilitator has little if anything of a substantive nature to contribute'

Integrating the spiritual is not about a tool or a method to use or an authority to possess. Spirit is something you yield to, you surrender to. We can only be truly humble when we recognise who we are before God and surrender to his leading, rather than depending on our God-given abilities.

In the end, bringing faith into OD is about where you put your trust. Is it in your own strength or in God? I frequently have to remind myself of the verses:

'The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord' Proverbs 21:31

'Unless the Lord builds the house the builders labour in vain' Psalm 127:1

[18] 1 Peter 4:10

[19] James 4 :6

'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord' Zechariah 4:6

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your path'. Proverbs 3:5

I have found Archbishop Romero's prayer a powerful reminder my limitations as well as the potential of my contribution. Romero reminds us 'we are ministers, not Messiahs'.

A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN

A prayer / poem by Archbishop Oscar Romero

(murdered, 24 March 1980)

It helps, now and then, to step back
and take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about:
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.

Facilitator Questions

- *What are my own interests here? What is my agenda?*
- *What power do I bring into this situation? How will I prevent this from distorting things?*
- *What is my theory/theology of change?*
- *What quality standards do I set myself?*
- *What strengths and weaknesses do I have as a facilitator? Which roles do I naturally prefer/avoid?*
- *Where do I need to improve? What do I need to learn?*
- *How will my past experience help/hinder me in this assignment?*
- *How will my faith background help/hinder me here?*
- *How is my own relationship with God? How might this affect the assignment?*
- *What do I fear in this assignment?*
- *Other than the client, to whom am I accountable? Who will point out where I am going wrong?*

- *What am I learning?*
- *How am I sharing my learning with others?*

Useful Tools

Journaling questions – page 119
Consultancy quality standards – page 123

Conclusions

This book has emphasised the need to take a thoroughly professional approach to organisational change. If we dare to intervene in an organisation's life we ought to develop the understanding and skills to be able to facilitate change processes effectively. This includes, but is not just about, knowledge and learning tools and techniques. It is also about working on our own self as a facilitator. Our particular strengths and weaknesses and indeed our whole character will have an influence on whether we help catalyse change.

To work effectively with churches and Christian organisations we must understand and adapt change processes to their particular characteristics. Their diverse theologies, power structures and contexts influence their behaviour in diverse ways. We need to be able to engage with that faith to facilitate change (whether we share that faith or not).

The spiritual affects change in such organisations and indeed in all organisations, whether we acknowledge it or not. It is therefore better to engage with the spiritual dimension intentionally and carefully. If we simply ignore the spiritual, the dangers of it being used in a manipulative and unhealthy way increases.

The book encourages us to integrate our faith in our OD work – to be true to our beliefs and therefore facilitate with integrity. We should take care to avoid the risks that integrating our faith undoubtedly brings, but we also need the courage to step out in faith. We need to be both thoroughly professional and also thoroughly spiritual. As St Augustine said many centuries ago: "Pray as if everything depended on God. Work as if everything depended on you".

Inspiring change by integrating faith is not about bringing in a new method or set of techniques. It includes, but goes beyond, human effort. It is about inviting God's presence and power to breathe life and transform organisational situations and relationships. It is about raising expectations that God's Holy Spirit will come and inspire change. It is about surrendering ourselves and our OD work to God. It is ultimately about creating opportunities for God's presence to bring change. Integrating faith in OD is all about creating 'space for grace'.

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Appendix 1 Towards a biblical theology to change

Taken from Creating Space for Grace (2004)
http://missioncouncil.se.loopiadns.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/04_02_space_for_grace.pdf

We know that the essence of any organisation is its people. So when we are involved in organisational change, we are really interested in people and how they change. This is a subject on which the Bible has much to say. The Bible overflows with stories of human change. When we compare the change experiences of the people of Israel described in the Old Testament with the parables and examples of human change in the New Testament we find a remarkable consistency and congruence. These biblical principles and practices are also mirrored by the experiences of major changes throughout church history, whether reformations or revivals. These principles are also reflected in many experiences of mission work and even in our personal spiritual journeys.

It is important to emphasise that people's theologies vary and that this affects their interpretation of the Bible. Liberation theologians for example may emphasise more the social dimension of change, while evangelical theologians may appear to concentrate more on the individual dimension of change. My own beliefs concur with the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council in 1928, which pointed out that the Bible 'does not recognise the antithesis, frequently emphasised, between individual and social regeneration' (Kirk 2003:7). Andrew Kirk in the SMC booklet, What is Mission? makes it clear that: 'God's salvation can never be understood in wholly individual terms. It is about reconciliation between human beings in the formation of a new community' (2003:9). Individual and social change are inextricably linked and go hand-in-hand. The principles and practice of human change are therefore similar, whether we are talking about individuals, congregations, communities, organisations or even societies.

My own interpretation of the Bible, informed by my protestant background, highlights a number of key principles and processes of change. As I reflect on these and apply my faith to my OD work, my practice is changing radically. I am finding, like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa led him to realise:

'As I grow older I am pleasantly surprised at how relevant theology has become to the whole of life' (1999:73)

Biblical principles of change

God's sovereignty and initiative in change

The Bible reveals that change is first and foremost God's process. God is the author of change. According to SMC's theological perspective on organisations: 'It is God, not human beings, who has taken the initiative to show his love to his creation' (2002:10-11). Kirk points out that on an individual level:

> **'Christians believe that salvation comes from God and not from our own efforts. We are but agents of God's activity'** (Kirk 2003:17)

Consequently as Myers states: 'A Christian process of change must begin with an affirmation that at the most fundamental level transformation takes place because God wants it and enables it' (Myers 1999:121).

The sovereignty of God in change is beautifully illustrated by the story of Joshua meeting the angel just before he was to attack Jericho. The Bible says: 'Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come"'[20]. God is at the centre of biblical change processes, not humans. We are trying to get onto his side, not endeavouring to persuade God onto our side. As the Psalmist writes: 'Unless the Lord builds the house [or organisation], its builders labour in vain'[21].

Biblical change begins with God's vision – a revelation from God. The Exodus vision of escape to a land flowing with milk and honey came from God to Moses in a burning bush[22]. Paul too, appearing before Agrippa, identified the source of his vision, saying: 'I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven'[23]. Even Jesus said: 'The Son can… do only what he sees the Father doing'[24].

The Exodus story also illustrates that God can guide and lead the change process[25] and also empower people to change[26]. It describes how God

[20] Joshua 5:13-14
[21] Psalm 127:1
[22] Exodus 3:7-8
[23] Acts 26:19
[24] John 5:19-20
[25] Exodus 13:18&21
[26] Exodus 3:19-20

intervened in a supernatural way to change a situation illustrated in the parting of the Red Sea[27] and by the provision of manna[28]. When we contemplate organisational change we must remember that it occurs '"not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord'[29]. The need for God to empower change processes was also emphasised by Jesus when he said to his disciples: 'Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high'[30]. The power to change comes from 'on high'. As Paul's letter to the Philippians says: 'For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose'[31].

God's power is needed in change because there are things outside human control – a spiritual dimension to change. We cannot change everything in our human strength, because 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms'[32]. While we may not yet fully understand what this means in every situation, it is clear from the Bible that there are evil spiritual forces that may need to be overcome if we, and our organisations, are to change.

Change takes place at God's timing and his speed. Ecclesiastes 3 illustrates the inevitability of change – a time for everything, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot. But this timing is in God's hands. Many Old Testament characters like Noah, Abraham, Moses and Joseph had to wait an agonising length of time for God's promises of change to be fulfilled. But when change does come, it is often sudden and unexpected.

Human responsibility as co-creators of change

Although God is the author of change, a divine paradox is that he has also chosen humans to be co-creators with him of the change. While we must recognise that although we are utterly dependent on God in any change process, he has also given us important responsibilities. He has made human beings his agents of change. He has also given us free will to choose how to respond to this. The parable of the talents[33] emphasises

[27] Exodus 14:21
[28] Exodus 16:4
[29] Zechariah 4:6
[30] Luke 24:49
[31] Philippians 2:13
[32] Ephesians 6:12
[33] Matthew 25

that we have each been given gifts and responsibilities, which we must use productively to bring about change.

The Bible illustrates over and again how God chooses to work though individuals to catalyse change. All major changes in the Old Testament and New Testament began with God entrusting the work to an individual, whether it was Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Esther, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Hezekiah, Peter, John, Philip, Stephen, Paul or Silas. These individuals were characterised by their humility and servant leadership that enabled them to be used by God. It is also clear that they were people of courage and human wisdom[34]. They were people who deliberately and constantly listened to God and who sought his presence to transform situations – as exemplified by Moses' prayer: 'If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here'[35].

The Bible also shows how God also responds to fervent prayer. When Nehemiah first heard about the destruction of Jerusalem he said: 'I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven'[36]. When Elijah prayed earnestly, it did not rain for three and a half years[37]. The followers of Jesus joined together constantly in prayer before the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost[38] – as the letter of James observes: 'The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.'[39]

Yet as humans we find this paradox of being both dependent and responsible difficult to manage. Sometimes we tend to simply abdicate all responsibility upwards hoping that God will do everything for us and not taking any actions ourselves. We may feel, as Moses did initially, that we are not up to the responsibilities which God has entrusted to us. Yet at other times we tend to forget our dependence and take responsibility away from God as Moses also did when he tried to solve Israel's problems in his own strength and frustration when he murdered the Egyptian slave master[40]. This human tendency to try to do things ourselves, forgetting God's central role, is highlighted by Paul when he challenges the Galatian church:

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[34] Daniel 1:17, 5:12 or Acts 6:3
[35] Exodus 33:15
[36] Nehemiah 1:4
[37] 1 Kings 17 and James 5:17
[38] Acts 1:14
[39] James 5:16
[40] Exodus 2:12

'Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?' [41]

Paul's example, when he said: 'To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me'[42] gives us an insight into how this is done. The need to live out this paradox of responsibility and dependence is so important that he emphases: 'I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me'[43]. We must get the horses ready for battle, but know that victory belongs to the Lord[44].

Biblical elements in a change process

As well as emphasising human dependence on God and human responsibility for being co-creators of change, the Bible also highlights a number of key elements in a change process. While some of these elements may appear more familiar to a process of individual change, they are just as relevant to a process of societal, church or organisational change. They include

- a vision for change, frequently amidst severe challenge
- accepting responsibility for failures
- turning around by repenting and confessing
- grace is at the turning point
- forgiveness and reconciliation
- taking action to change

A vision for change, frequently amidst severe challenge

Change starts with a vision of a better future. Sometimes change comes from responding to outside changes in the environment that give rise to new opportunities that need to be taken or potential threats than need to be avoided. Other times change comes as a response to recognition of internal inadequacies or failures in the past. What is common to both is a vision of a better future. God gave people like David and Jesus' disciples a sense of calling and purpose; a real hope that things would change – and they should be a part of that change.

Many times this vision comes in the midst of severe challenges. God prepares individuals and communities to be his catalysts for change, enabling

[41] Galatians 3:3
[42] Colossians 1:29
[43] 1 Corinthians 15:10
[44] Proverbs 21:31

them to see beyond the problems and to the divine potential to change the situation. Major societal change in the Bible frequently occurred at a time of considerable difficulties. Whether looking at the Exodus from Egypt; the depravity of Ahaz that preceded Hezekiah; the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah; or the influence of Daniel in exile; we see that they occurred in times of crisis and moral darkness[45]. On an individual level the picture is the same: Jesus met the Samaritan woman when she was living an immoral life; Legion when he was possessed by evil spirits; and Zacchaeus when he was corrupt and hated by everyone. Jesus' parable of the prodigal son shows a picture of the son facing starvation and longing to eat the food he was giving to the pigs. This biblical pattern is repeated by the history of major church transformations that have tended to come at a time of deep division and crisis, rather than when things are going well.

The reason that severe problems are a frequent starting point for change is because:

> **'Ever since the Fall, God has continually worked to cause his people to realise their utter dependence on him. He does this by bringing us to the point of human extremity, where we have no place to turn, but him'** (Myers 1999:141)

As Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: 'We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.' Human pride often holds back change. It is often only when we accept our own inability to solve the situation that our pride is broken and we look to God for change. But if we are keenly aware of our limitations and trust in God, we can change without having to be taken to such extremes.

Accepting responsibility for failures – conviction

In situations of severe challenge biblical examples of change occurred when people not only recognised that the problems existed, but also accepted that they were in some way responsible, not just individually, but also corporately. As long as people externalise blame on others then nothing changes. David was convicted by the visit of the prophet Nathan and

[45] Exodus 12; 2 Kings 17:40-41, 2 Chronicles 28:1-4 and 22-25; Nehemiah 1; Daniel 5

wrote: 'My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear'[46]. Nehemiah cried out: 'I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you'[47]. When the cock crowed and Peter realised he had disowned Jesus three times, he 'went outside and wept bitterly'[48].

Accepting responsibility for a situation is directly linked to our consciences. When people realise that a gap exists between who they are and who they want to be, they will do much to maintain the integrity of their personality. As Robbins puts it:

> **'The greatest leverage you can create for yourself is the pain that comes from inside knowing that you have failed to live up to your own standards'** (1999:127)

Consequently conviction of error involves recognising truth, however unpalatable. John White points out: 'No-one ever really changes for the better without somehow facing the truth' (1991:56). It may be painful to face the truth about ourselves or to tell the truth to other people.

Turning around – repenting and confessing

When change is a response to past failure, there is a need for a conscious turning around and letting go of past behaviour, sometimes called repentance. Repentance is an unfashionable word today, not only in the secular society, but even in many churches. It is unpopular because it so uncomfortable, perhaps because it is the nub of the change process. Repentance literally means 'turning around'. Andrew Kirk says that repentance is 'more than just emotions of sorrow, regret or remorse, but an act of the will, a deliberate turning away from a past life in order to embrace a new one' (2003:19). Repentance is not just an individual process, but also a social one that may need to be undertaken as a group in order to prompt organisational change. As the Bible says: 'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land'[49]. Before the rebuilding of the walls of

[46] Psalm 38:4
[47] Nehemiah 1:6
[48] Luke 22:62
[49] 2 Chronicles 7:14

Jerusalem, the Israelites 'stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers'[50].

Grace is at the turning point of change

There is a difficult choice at the turning point. Both Peter and Judas betrayed Jesus, but chose very different responses. Judas condemned himself and took his own life, while Peter repented and was forgiven, reinstated and transformed into the rock on which the church was built[51]. The choice is heavily influenced by our understanding of whether we are loved and accepted by God and by other people. As John White points out:

> **'The relief of knowing that we might be loved and accepted is what brings true change'** (1991:115)

Romans 2:4 emphasises: 'God's kindness leads you toward repentance.' In the midst of the Prodigal Son's troubles, he 'came to his senses'[52] as his awareness of his father's love (albeit misty) was enough to convince him he would be treated better than he was at present.

The concept of grace is right at the core of the biblical process of change. Grace, *charis* in Greek, has two related and complementary meanings in the New Testament: unmerited favour through Jesus or divine assistance through the Holy Spirit. Grace is not simply a positive attitude, but it is an attitude that involves positive action. As God said to Paul: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'[53]. As John 3:16 states, 'For God so loved the world *that* he gave his one and only Son…' Grace is active and dynamic. Grace is what empowers people to change. As we have already seen, Paul wrote: 'I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me'[54]. Grace is something that labours. It strengthens our wills and releases us from the paralysis of guilt. Grace can be defined as the divine power that causes me to be what God wants me to be and to do what God wants me to do.

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[50] Nehemiah 9:2
[51] Matthew 16:18
[52] Luke 15:17
[53] 2 Corinthians 12:9
[54] 1 Corinthians 15:10

Grace is what Christianity is all about and is what makes Christianity distinct from other religions. According to Acts 14:3, 20:24 and 20:32, the teaching of Christianity can be summed up as 'the gospel of grace'. Desmond Tutu wrote: 'I preached my only sermon – that God loves us freely as an act of grace' (1999:146).

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Another essential element in the biblical process of change is receiving and offering forgiveness. Indeed forgiveness is central to the whole biblical narrative. The goal of Peter's ministry to the Gentiles was 'to open their eyes … so that they may receive forgiveness'[55]. Even today forgiveness, both individually and corporately, is critical for change. As Desmond Tutu entitled his book on social reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, 'there is no future without forgiveness' (1999).

Yet forgiveness is not the same as removing the consequences of our actions. Even if we are forgiven, there is still often a price to pay. Neither is forgiveness the same as forgetting, but it is remembering in a different way, in a 'non-toxic' way (Schreiter 2003:21) that frees the wrongdoer from guilt and the wronged from bitterness and hatred. But forgiveness militates against human nature – grace appears as a 'scandal' (Yancey 1997:139). It cannot be bought or earned as Jesus demonstrated in his parable of the unforgiving servant[56]. It is not a passive event, but a process that liberates and empowers change.

Taking action to change

If there is no subsequent action taken, then there has been no genuine repentance and no real change. The Bible clearly mandates the importance of making restitution where this is possible. Numbers 5:7 says: 'He must make full restitution for his wrong.' In the New Testament, Zacchaeus offered to pay up to four times whatever he had stolen from people, as well as giving half his possessions to the poor[57]. Taking action to change may also involve making peace with other people. In Matthew 5:23-25, Jesus commands us to reconcile ourselves with our brothers and sisters before offering a gift at the altar. It also involves putting into practice Jesus' words to the adulterous woman: 'Go now and leave your life of sin'[58].

[55] Acts 26:18
[56] Matthew 18
[57] Luke 19:8
[58] John 8:11

Change is a costly process as it involves giving up ingrained habits and ways of thinking that have become very comfortable, if not indeed 'second-nature'. The Exodus story relates how often the people of Israel complained in the wilderness and wanted to remove Moses as leader[59]. All but two or three gave up. Change is often be opposed as the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls by Nehemiah also illustrates[60]. Change also is an ongoing and incomplete process – a journey rather than a destination. While the turning point may be instantaneous, the process of transformation takes a lifetime and may never be fully realised. The Kingdom of God is not yet here – creation is still groaning in expectation[61]. Paul himself admits himself: 'For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do'[62]. He uses the continuous active verb when he says, literally: 'Continue to let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind'[63].

Conclusion

There are a number of key lessons that can be drawn from this biblical interpretation of change. God is the author of change. He is not our agent, but we are his. There is therefore no simple theological formula that enables us to bring about change. There are principles to follow, but God is not like a vending machine, whereby we press certain buttons and change instantly happens.

God initiates the vision for change; he leads and he empowers change. As change agents we need his power, otherwise it is like pushing a car with the handbrake on, rather than turning the ignition. Grace is at the heart of change. Grace is a distinctively Christian concept that empowers the change process, whether we are talking about individuals, congregations, communities or societies. God's grace is common grace. It is not confined to the church and there is no Christian monopoly on God's power in change processes. As individuals we have also been given responsibility to make change happen. Throughout the Bible God uses individuals to bring about change. But while the turning point is instantaneous, the process of transformation takes a lifetime. Change is not a one-off event, but a long-term and costly process.

[59] Numbers 14:4
[60] Nehemiah 6
[61] Romans 8:22
[62] Romans 7:15
[63] Romans 12:2

This biblical pattern of change is in fact a universal process of human change. Many secular organisational theories of change reinforce this biblical interpretation, even if they use different language. Ultimately our theology determines our understanding of human change and therefore our practice of organisational change. When we consciously apply this biblical understanding to our OD work, we will find this can radically change our practice.