

Readiness for Change Inventory

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Directions: Each item below is a key element that will help you to evaluate your church's readiness for change. Strive for objectivity-involve others (including outsiders) in the evaluation process. Circle the number that most accurately rates your church.

1. **Leadership.** The pastor and the church board (official leadership) are favorable toward and directly responsible for change. Also, any influential persons (unofficial leadership: the church patriarch, a wealthy member, etc.) are for change, score 5. If moderately so, score 3. Only the secondary level of leadership (other staff, Sunday school teachers, etc.) is for change while unofficial leadership opposes it. Here it is less likely to occur, score 1.

5 3 1

2. **Vision.** The pastor and the board have a single, clear vision of a significant future that looks different from the present. The pastor is able to mobilize most relevant parties (other staff, boards, and the congregation) for action, score 5. The pastor but not the board envisions a different direction for the church, score 3. The pastor and board have not thought about a vision, and/or they do not believe that it is important, score 1.

5 3 1

3. **Values.** The church's philosophy of ministry (its core values) includes a preference for innovation and creativity. Though proven forms, methods, and techniques are not discarded at a whim, the church is more concerned with the effectiveness of its ministries than adherence to traditions, score 5. If moderately so, score 3. The church's ministry forms and techniques have changed little over the years while its ministry effectiveness has diminished, score 1.

5 3 1

4. **Motivation.** The pastor and the board have a strong sense of urgency for change that is shared by the congregation. The congregational culture emphasizes the need for constant improvement, score 3. The pastor and/or the board (most of whom have been in their positions for many years) along with the congregation are bound by long standing traditions that are change-resistant and discourage risk-taking, score 1. If somewhere between, score 2.

3 2 1

5. **Organizational Context.** How does the change effort affect the other programs in the church (Christian education, worship, missions, etc.)? If the individuals in charge are all working together for improvement and innovation, score 3. If some are, score 2. If many are opposed to change and/or are in conflict with one another over change, score 1.

3 2 1

6. **Processes/Functions.** Major changes in a church almost always require redesigning processes and functions in all the ministries of the church such as Christian education, church worship, etc. If most in charge of these areas are open to change, score 3. If only some, score 2. If they are turf protectors or put their areas of ministry ahead of the church as a whole, score 1.

3 2 1

7. **Ministry Awareness.** Does the leadership of your church keep up with what is taking place in the innovative evangelical churches in the community and across America in terms of ministry and outreach effectiveness? Does it objectively compare what it is doing to that of churches that are very similar to it? If the answer is yes, score 3. If the answer is sometimes, score 2. If no, score 1.

3 2 1

8. **Community Focus.** Does the church know and understand the people in the community-their needs, hopes, aspirations? Does it stay in direct contact with them? Does it regularly seek to reach them? If the answer is yes, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. If the church is not in touch with its community and focuses primarily on itself, score 1.

3 2 1

9. **Evaluation.** Does the church regularly evaluate its ministries? Does it evaluate its ministries in light of its vision and goals? Are these ministries regularly adjusted in response to the evaluations? If all of this takes place, score 3. If some takes place, score 2. If none, score 1.

3 2 1

10. **Rewards.** Change is easier if the leaders and those involved in ministry are rewarded in some way for taking risks and looking for new solutions to their ministry problems. Also, rewarding ministry teams is more effective than rewarding solo performances. If this characterizes your church, score 3. If some times, score 2. If your church rewards the status quo and only a maintenance mentality, score 1.

3 2 1

11. **Organizational Structure.** The best situation is a flexible church where change is well received and takes place periodically, not every day. If this is true of your church, score 3. Some churches are very rigid in their structure and either have changed very little in the last five years or have experienced several futile attempts at change to no avail, score 1. If between, score 2.

3 2 1

12. **Communication.** Does your church have a variety of means for two-way communication? Do most understand and use it, and does it reach all levels of the congregation? If this is true, score 3. If only moderately true, score 2. If communication is poor, primarily one-way and top-down, score 1.

3 2 1

13. **Organizational Hierarchy.** Is your church decentralized (has few if any levels of leadership between the congregation and the pastor or the board)? If so, score 3. If there are people on staff levels or boards/committees who come between the congregation and the pastor or the board, then more potential exists for them to block essential change, score 1. If between, score 2.

3 2 1

14. **Prior Change.** Churches will most readily adapt to change if they have successfully implemented major changes in the recent past, score 3. If some change, score 2. If no one can remember the last time the church changed or if such efforts failed or left people angry and resentful, score 1.

3 2 1

15. **Morale.** Do the church staff and volunteers enjoy the church and take responsibility for their ministries? Do they trust the pastor and/or the board? If so, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. Do few people volunteer and are there signs of low team spirit? Is there mistrust between leaders and followers and between the various ministries? If so, score 1.

3 2 1

16. **Innovation.** The church tries new things. People feel free to implement new ideas on a consistent basis. People have the freedom to make choices and solve problems regarding their ministries. If this describes your church, score 3. If this is somewhat true, score 2. If ministries are ensnared in bureaucratic red tape and permission from "on high" must be obtained before anything happens, score 1.

3 2 1

17. **Decision-Making.** Does the church leadership listen carefully to a wide variety of suggestions from all the congregation? After it has gathered the appropriate information, does it make decisions quickly? If so, score 3. If moderately so, score 2. Does the leadership listen only to a select few and take forever to make a decision? Is there lots of conflict during the process, and after a decision is made, is there confusion and turmoil? Then, score 1.

3 2 1

Total Score: _____

IF YOUR SCORE IS

47-57: The chances are good that you may implement change, especially if your scores are high on items 1-3.

28-46: Change may take place but with varying success. Chances increase the higher the score on items 1-3. Note areas with low scores and focus on improvement before attempting change on a large scale.

17-27: Change will not likely take place. Note areas with low scores and attempt to improve them... if possible. Consider starting a new church and implement your ideas in a more "change-friendly" context.

FOR FURTHER HELP

If you desire further help in understanding and implementing change in your ministry, read *Pouring New Wine Into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church Without Destroying It* by Aubrey Malphurs. You may order from Baker Book House by calling 1-800-877-2665.