

## **Old Habits or New Vision? Leading Change in a Traditional Organisation**

Many Christian organizations and churches in Europe have a long history and a great legacy. That is a reason to celebrate and give praise to the Lord. At the same time, our past can be a hindrance for renewal and growth. It is easy for the members and leaders of such churches and organizations to lean back and live on past greatness, not realizing that things have changed – both in the Christian community and in society at large. Or, when realizing that they are in decline, they may try to recreate the wonderful past. Instead of despairing, we as leaders are called to bring change and renewal to our communities! The leader has a crucial role, and needs to honor the past, analyze the current situation, create new visions (or return to the original vision), and help his people understand the need for change, renewal, and movement into the new great things that the Lord is creating. This workshop will explore how leaders can bring hope and effective strategy to organizations and churches that need renewal.

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### **I. Leading change**

It is a common misconception that we must try and duplicate exactly what our predecessors did to preserve the calling and the spirit in which it all started. We should understand that if our churches and organizations shall stay fresh, alive, and true to their calling, they need to change.

The needed change does not happen without leadership. Therefore, it is important that we as leaders have the ability to know when changes are needed and to make them happen.

I will share some of my own experiences from the last ten years as a leader in Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

### **II. Celebrate the past!**

It is always good to give thanks to God for what he has done through the people you are leading. They need you to acknowledge that before they are ready to enter a process of change.

Some (many) of them feel threatened by change, and they can easily come to believe that what they have been involved in over the years have been failures.

Therefore – it is both appropriate and wise to give time to praise God and be grateful to your flock before suggesting change.

### **III. Analyzing the situation**

- A. In all decision-making, a leader should always ask the crucial question about continuity or discontinuity: What should we continue doing and what should we quit doing?

### **IV. Motivation for change**

- A. Healthy leadership is about motivating members for change. Not manipulating. If you cannot argue in a convincing way so that your members understand the need for change, you should not fall into the temptation of using your power to manipulate them.

### **V. New possibilities**

- A. Many leaders have read books of leading through change. One of the important issues underlined in most of modern literature is about painting a realistic picture of the situation you're in for people to understand that change is needed. This is often quite easy. I would like to stress the next step: Leading people in a new direction after understanding the situation which need to change.

### **VI. Patience**

- A. Change will always meet resistance. Leaders need to be patient in order to make change.

### **VII. Create a culture of change**

- A. Continuity or discontinuity? That's the question we all should ask. Make sure you have dynamic coworkers who can help you create change. Mentoring is also a good way of creating culture.