

**Gaining Traction for a Radical Congregational Transformation**

*Or, Fixin’ to Get Ready to Commence to Begin to Start to Do Something – Maybe!*

*Part Two*

By

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What are some reasons congregations in late Retirement, Old Age, or near Death are unable to gain traction for a radical congregational transformation? Is it possible to discover the reasons people are not open to change? Can we address these one-by-one until there are not objections remaining?

It is a nice thought, but we must remember the woman and men who figuratively lay on their back underneath the front porch of the church and kick up another board every time the church believes they have them all nailed down. They resist not because they are mean, but because they fear the perceived and unknown consequences of radical congregational transformation.

With that image in mind, what are some of the most common reasons why declining and even dying congregations fail to consider engaging in radical transitions and changes to soar with faith into a transformational future God may be seeking to help the congregation attain? Consider these possibilities:

1. Their foresight is myopic. That can only see what is immediately in front of them. They have no vision for the long-term future of the congregation other than to hold on to the past that is known rather than the future that is unknown.
2. They see no other alternative but to keep on doing what they are doing. It is the only form of church they both know, enjoy, and find to be a place of comfortable.
3. They have learned how to be professional church members. They embrace the religious culture of their church rather than being embraced by the spiritual depth of our Triune God.
4. Their congregation is their community of support. These are their best friends. The things they do together in church community with one another are the spiritual comfort food for their lives.
5. They feel they are the keeper of the church for those who came before them. They cannot fail. They feel like they promised that this church would always be there.
6. This is their church—not God’s church. They want to be sure their church stays in existence in a recognizable form until after they personally die.
7. An unspoken fear is that they are afraid if they allow their congregation to transition and change so much that it is not recognizable to God as being the same church they committed to Him, that they may not go to heaven.
8. They are told they need modern or contemporary worship, and they are not sure that worship style is Christian. They feel they cannot allow that to happen to their church.
9. They waited too late and they no longer have the money or the leaders to engage in radical congregational transformation. It is better to just hold on until they die.
10. They did not seek to transform their congregation some years ago when they lost the ability to reaching younger adult households with children under 18 years old. But they still believe in miracles so any day now these households will realize what a good church this is and start attending. Until then they hold on and pray for the right pastor, or God’s Triple D – *the direct, dramatic, divine intervention of God*.

Which of these ten are true of your congregation? What are some others you can name? What are you willing to do to have a future where the congregation is captured by God’s empowering vision for a transformative future?