

Organic Responses to the Covid-19 Quarantine

This continues to be a difficult chapter for all of our churches. We have worked harder than before to meet the “needs” of our church and community. But this challenge has also raised some deeper questions for us, as leaders.

Don't let the lessons and revelations of this time get lost, either in busyness or through our very human desire to “return to normal”. This time has served to expose both our strengths and our weaknesses. Mountain climbers and bicycle racers know what it is to evaluate everything they're carrying...as to weight and utility. They look for the best tools that are available at the time...and don't hold on to old technology or techniques.

What follows is a broad outline and process of the questions that we need to be working through BEFORE we get to the end of this chapter in the life of our church. While we are experiencing the actual processes, we need to look for insights, hard truths and spiritual affirmations about who we are, what we're doing, and what we need to do to fulfill our call to minister in the Swamp, now and into the future.

As mentioned above, this is a broad outline. It is a template that may need to be customized and personalized for each church. When you customize it, just ***don't exclude the hard questions***. In organic leadership there are often difficult times of pruning. And these “in-between” times can be boundaries between what was and what needs to be.

There is a new chapter ahead. And this crisis is providing a pressure test to reveal some very important things to us. As we've talked about in the past: we still need a rear-view mirror...but it doesn't compare to the importance of the windshield.

The following process should reveal where there are weeds, where there's a need for water and fertilizer, and maybe even the plants and branches that need pruning.

Like all processes, this is not a static, mechanical, tool. But this is an organic tool that requires you to be a leader. How you go through this process is vitally important...to your leadership and to the maturing of your leaders and church. This is also a process that should take place at numerous levels including Elders/Board, staff and tribal leaders. It will take work, but this is vitally important.

Please notice, I haven't sent you a “tickler”. This is a full outline of a full process. Free! I also have this in a workbook format and would be happy to send that along if you request it. It is formatted and edited to use with your leadership.

If you would like more information, or guidance through this process, remember, we are always partners in this mission. ***No one was meant to do this alone.***



David Bartels, DMin

Questions to be asking before we come out of quarantine

- A. Policies
 - a. What were some limitations that we found with our present policies?
 - b. What policies did we wish we had in place before this hit?
 - c. What policies do we need to add/create from this point moving ahead?
 - d. Why do we need to change or create new policies?
 - e. What do we need to:
 - i. Stop
 - ii. Start
 - iii. Improve/change
 - f. Did our policies help or hinder our mission? In what way(s)?
 - g. Share how our **mission** *stood out* during this time...and how it gave guidance, fuel and direction to the church and our people as they sought to BE the church.
- B. Programs
 - a. Programming
 - i. Which of our programming was vital during this time?
Give specific examples
 - ii. Which of our programming was not vital?
What makes you say that?
 - iii. Which of our programming actually got in the way of what we need(ed) to do?
In what ways did it hinder...and who/what did it affect?
 - b. Looking ahead (now that we know...)
 - i. What programs/ministries do we wish we had in place?
 - 1. Why?
 - 2. How will they focus (or change, appropriately) our mission?
 - ii. What hints have we gotten to show us what we will need moving ahead?
 - iii. What areas/avenues of opportunity have we seen (or, are we seeing)?
- C. People
 - a. Our staff
 - i. Who appeared to be out front leading during this void?
 - 1. In what ways?
 - 2. How was that perceived/received?
 - ii. Who seemed to be slowed by this void?
 - 1. What may have been the cause of this?
 - iii. Where was more freedom/authority needed during this time?
 - 1. Think of timely decisions that needed to be made and might have been delayed...or opportunities missed
 - iv. Where did you see communication...:
 - 1. Break down?
 - 2. Slow the needed flow?
 - 3. Move in the wrong direction?
 - 4. See if you can identify some ideas for solutions
 - v. What tools were needed/missing?
 - b. Our church
 - i. Which “tribal leaders” appeared and stepped up?
 - ii. How could the church have been challenged to serve, either inside or outside the walls of the church?
 - iii. Who didn’t wait for someone else to initiate before they jumped in?
 - iv. How were tribal leaders encouraged and empowered?
 - c. Our community
 - i. What needs did we see that we hadn’t anticipated?
 - ii. Where could the mission of the church be applied?

- iii. Was the church seen, by community leaders, to be vital to the welfare of the community?
 - iv. Were our leaders consulted or approached/included by community (non-church) leadership?
 - 1. What did they want/need?
 - 2. What does that tell us?
 - v. What lasting ministry could we have as we're building off of what has just happened?
- D. Vision
- a. What insights are we discovering about our vision for our ministry inside and outside our walls?
 - b. Did our actions reflect an activated projection of our mission and vision?
 - i. ...Or did the "game plan" and our training simply revert to "what we've always done"?
 - c. Did action discussions appear to flow naturally and dynamically out of our mission?
- E. Process
- a. Were our processes mechanical or organic?
 - b. Did our initiated actions have any effect on the way our programs went on functioning?
 - c. Did our process reveal centralized control and leadership or shared and empowered leadership?
 - d. Do we have a sense that all of our leaders understand the goals and boundaries of how to lead in times like these?
 - e. How did we see silos either being retained or destroyed?
 - i. Was there "cross-pollination" between our teams?
 - ii. Why was there a need, or move, to collaborate?
 - iii. What were the positives?
 - iv. What were the negatives?
- F. Conclusions
- a. Leaders
 - i. What types of leaders do we have?
 - ii. What types of leaders do we need?
 - iii. What do our leaders need?
 - iv. How will we :
 - 1. find them?
 - 2. equip them?
 - 3. release them?
 - 4. support them?
 - b. Programs
 - i. What do we need to change as we move forward, with our new understanding?
 - c. Essentials
 - i. What did we discover to be essential to our mission?
 - ii. What did we discover to be limiting to our mission?
 - d. Mission
 - i. Is our mission clear? Realistic? Practical?
 - ii. Are our resources and energies focused?...and focused in the right direction, as we move ahead?
 - e. Investment
 - i. Where do we need to invest our time, gifts and resources as we move ahead?
 - 1. People
 - 2. Resources
 - 3. Missions

- ii. Do we have the right people on the bus?...sitting in the right seats? And do they have the freedom/authority/means to see/find and tell us where the bus should be going?
- f. Action list to begin now
 - i. Begin making your action list(s) and be sure to delineate:
 1. What the action is
 2. Why the action is important
 3. How the action serves our mission (that may be under re-construction)
 4. Is this action actual or aspirational?
 5. What is the timeline for starting?
 6. Who will take leadership/responsibility?
 - ii. Determine how you will build this...who will be included in the process (remembering the organic nature of leadership...it's not as much about the end product as it is about the journey)
 1. So, ask: who needs to be included as a seasoned leader and who needs to be added as a growing leader?

...no one was meant to do this alone!