

THE LEADER'S EDGE

*“Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.”
(Proverbs 9:9)*

Category:

Growing Churches
Revitalization

Rating:

Content: B+
Style: B

Memorable Quotes:

“Many pastors have gladly accepted their role of leading individuals to change. . . However, few pastors have taken seriously the role of leading an entire congregation to change from conducting ministry for personal consumption to conducting ministry for the purpose of transforming the community that surrounds it.”

“Leadership involves a person seeing a need and taking responsibility to see that need met. In this view, leadership is defined by the task of leading and not by the type of person who is taking on the responsibility. . . . Leadership refers to the employment of disciplines that people can develop regardless of their talent or mix of spiritual gifts.”

“If you can't stand the heat, don't redo the kitchen.”

“My heart is warmed when I hear a pastor say, ‘I am finally getting to do the ministry I thought I would do before I went to seminary.’ Once systemic change has

BOOK SUMMARY

Direct Hit: *Aiming Real Leaders at the Mission Field*, by Paul Borden, Abingdon Press, 2006.

Core Content

As a seasoned church consultant/denominational leader, Borden offers a practical approach to revitalizing declining churches in North America. His model combines the efforts of the local church pastor with an outside interventionist. Borden is a bottom-line kind of guys who can come across a bit ruthless at times. However, his ideas can have great value when wisely contextualized.

The author begins by identifying the key role of the local pastor in a turn around effort. He contents that most pastors are prone to lead individuals within the congregation, but fail to embrace their indispensable task of leading the congregation as a whole toward a better tomorrow. He argues that leadership is a behaviour which can be improved with practice. He goes on to spell out 7 key ingredients an effective leader must nurture:

1. Passion
2. Courage
3. Flexibility
4. Missional Mindedness
5. Wisdom
6. Positiveness
7. Accountability

Borden outlines a two-staged approach to church renewal. Stage one (1 to 5 years) entails the pastor preparing a congregation for systemic change. Stage two (accomplished within 1 year following the completion of stage one) involves the ministry of an outside interventionist faciiliataing a “cross-the-line” weekend, followed by on-going coaching. During phase one, the pastor’s primary tasks include:

- Cultivate a sense of healthy urgency, maximizing multiple opportunities to communicate, including strategic preaching;
- Enlist and develop 3 inter-connected teams of people: a prayer team who focuses missional intersession; a dream team who begins to discern a vision for the future and a implementation team comprised of new leaders who will be instrumental in putting the new vision into to practice;
- Sustain a spirit of God-engendered hope about the future;
- Brace himself for the price to be paid for authentic turn around;

<p><i>occurred and the new DNA is embedded in the congregation, the pastor's job is a whole new world of opportunity."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gather financial and people resources needed. <p>During this preparatory stage, the pastor needs to fulfill a double role as both chaplain and leader. The pastor performs the traditional, expected roles of the existing congregation while strategically creating space for a new missional future.</p> <p>During stage two, an outside interventionist guides the leadership of the congregation through an assessment of its community and church and then outlines a prescribe course of action for creating a new future. Pastor and lay leaders must commit to partner with the consultant for at least one year to make sure that significant changes are implemented. Borden believes if a new mission is to be sustained, structural changes must occur. There needs to be a shift from board-led to staff-led governace, freeing up the pastoral staff to truly lead. Power brokers must be confronted and new people placed in key positions of influence. This "high risk" intervention builds upon the essential elements of stage one, leveraging systemic change in a "quick strike" manner.</p> <p>The appendixes of this book include practical tools describing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Congregational Self-Study ➤ The Church Life Cycle ➤ Sample "Stump Speeches" to create urgency and vision ➤ Guidelines for Training Church Boards and Staff.
	<p>Discussion Starters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using the Church Life Cycle contained in this book, in what stage of life is your church? 2. How would you rate your congregation's urgency about change? 3. What components of Borden's two-staged approach to revitalization might be applicable to your congregation? 4. What leadership insights could you glean from this book? How will you apply them?