

Book Review

Student: Jun Zhao Email: zhaoj1@nyack.edu

Program: Masters of Divinity

Alliance Theological Seminary

Date :2/28/2022

## Book Review

### **Summarize the main ideas the author is communicating**

The world is constant changing and upgrading. Changes couldn't be avoided. The author points out that it's not the changes that we are in, it's the transition. Changes are contextual, but transitions are psychological.

Bridges sets a great model for transitions, which are ending, the neutral zone, the new beginning. With changes we normally focus on the outcome that the change produces, but with transition, we need to start with the ending which we have to make to the old situation. Letting go the old ways and the old identity people hold. This is the first phase of transition, ending. The most and biggest reason for organizations during changes, is that no one has thought about endings or planned to manage their impact on people.

The second phase of transition, the neutral zone, is a zone or a period of time where our sense of identity struggling in between old and new. Inwardly this phase of psychological transition lasts much longer. We might feel discouraged, anxious, or try to escape. But the neutral zone is both a dangerous place, but also a place of opportunities, and it's the core of the transition process.

Most people can work out this neutral zone if they are protected well, encouraged well, and have the structures and opportunities they need to go through it.

The third phase of transition is new beginning when we come out of the neutral zone. To start the new beginning, people need four headings: Purpose, Picture, Plan, and Part. We should explain well the purpose behind the outcome we seek, and people need to understand the reason of it and then change their minds to go for it. We should draw a picture of the outcome, people need to experience it in their mind before they are up to it. We should make a step-by-step plan, so people could have a clear idea of it. We would invite people to become part of the plan, so they could fully participate in it.

These three phases are not lineal, they interwoven with each other.

**What is one concept that stood out to you in this book?**

Liked the concept of organizational renewal. As the author states: “Renewal comes about not by changing specific practices or culture values but by taking the organization back to the start of it’s life cycle. Renewal---or the recovery of the youthful vigor that the organization had earlier in its life cycle-is in fact wired into the organizational life cycle.” There are seven stages in the organization’s life cycle, dreaming the dream, launching the venture, getting organized, succeeding, making it, becoming an institution, the path of renewal, beginning a new. The stage of dreaming the dream, is the time when the organization is just an idea, and more planning and conceptualizing needed. This time could also be considered as embedding seeds in the ground, some come out like a tree, some just never come out. The second stage is launching the venture. This is the childhood of the organization. During this stage, we start to water, fertilize the little plant, more basic work, time and attention needed, and we would face and solve many unexpected issues. Then the third stage is getting organized. At this stage, the organization comes out of the chaotic stage 2, certain order or system in doing thing have been set up. Roles in the organization become more specific and defined. More people are hired and organization gets bigger. The first three phases are very important, their energy is what renewal finds ways to recapture.

**What implications does this concept have for leading in a church context?**

Jesus points out what is lacking in the church of Ephesus, Revelation 2:4, “But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.”

The concept of organization renewal and the issue in the church of Ephesus are relevant. In order for an organization to grow, it needs renewal. The most important part of renewal is not to forget

how its youthful vigor has done in the earlier life of the organization, and this vigor needs to get recovered, so there might be possibility for the organization to gain renewal. This vigor played a very important role in the first three stages in the organization's life cycle.

Oppositely, the church of Ephesus gets rebuke from Jesus, and the reason is that they lost their youth vigor or their first love. And they couldn't grow or get renewal.

It's a warning for the church today, especially those big churches or churches with long history.

They might grow in size or numbers, but internally they don't have renewal. Most likely the biggest reason is that they're driven by the business and need from people, and lost the love they had in the beginning. Pastors or leaders are busying at sermons, trainings, programs, congregation become more and more consumerized, and churches are run like organizations. For churches to gain renewal, we couldn't be content with where we are.

We have to go back to where we started, that's where Jesus met us and we received the first love, and only by recovering of the first love, we could go a long way and welcome renewal.

### **What needs to change in your life as a result?**

There are many areas need to change in my life. The most difficult one is how to change myself from the current role to a fulltime minister. I own a small business, couple of years ago when I got the calling from God, I didn't hesitate and said Yes. Now there is one year left for me to graduate from ATS, I'm starting thinking of when I should let go my role in the business and go into ministry. But the closer it becomes, the anxious I am, and realize that I underestimated the weight of my business in my heart. This business is like a baby to me, I raised it up all by myself in 19 years. To let it go is too easy a sentence for me. If using Bridges' model, I have been struggling in the Ending stage. How to grief well, let go the most important part of me, and celebrate it, is a question for me without answer yet. But I believe the God who calls me out of where I was, would help me go through the process of fulfilling His plan for me.



**References:**