SEMINAR TWO: An Invitation to Dialogue
Focus: Conversations Change Lives

Welcome to the adventure! We're glad you accepted the invitation, as many have before us. At first the adventure is easy and exciting, but soon the road becomes more difficult, as Jesus said: *Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few* (Matthew 7:13-14).

The road toward change is hard, as Peter Senge writes:

Most change initiatives fail. Two independent studies in the early 1990s, one published by Arthur D. Little and one by McKinsey & Co., found that out of hundreds of corporate Total Quality Management (TQM) programs studied, about two thirds "grind to a halt because of their failure to produce hoped-for results." Reengineering has fared no better; a number of articles, including some by reengineering's founders, place the failure rate at somewhere around 70%. Harvard's John Kotter, in a study of one hundred top management-driven "corporate transformation" efforts, concluded that more than half did not survive the initial phases. He found a few that were "very successful," and a few that were "utter failures." The vast majority lay ". . . somewhere in between, with a distinct tilt toward the lower end of the scale." Clearly, businesses do not have a very good track record in sustaining significant change. There is little to suggest that schools, healthcare institutions, governmental, and nonprofit institutions fare any better.

Even without knowing the statistics, most of us know firsthand that change programs fail. We've seen enough "flavor of the month" programs "rolled out" from top management to last a lifetime. We know the cynicism they engender . . .

This failure to sustain significant change recurs again and again despite substantial resources committed to the change effort (many are bankrolled by top management), talented and committed people "driving the change" and high stakes . . .

To understand why sustaining significant change is so elusive, we need to think less like managers and more like biologists.[1]

Jesus was very successful at change:

Let us turn now to the story. A child is born in an obscure village. He is brought up in another obscure village. He works in a carpenter shop until he is thirty, and then for three brief years is an itinerant preacher, proclaiming a message and living a life. He never writes a book. He never holds an office. He never raises an army. He never has a family of his own. He never owns a home. He never goes to college. He never travels two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He gathers a little group of friends about him and teaches them his way of life. While still a young man the tide of popular feeling turns against him. The band of

---

[1]Peter M. Senge et al., *The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 5-6.

followers forsakes him. One denies him; another betrays him. He is turned over to his enemies. He goes through the mockery of a trial; he is nailed on a cross between two thieves, and when dead is laid in a borrowed grave by the kindness of a friend. Those are the facts of his human life. He rises from the dead. Today we look back across nineteen hundred years and ask, What kind of a trail has he left across the centuries? When we try to sum up his influence, all the armies that ever marched, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned are absolutely picayune in their influence on mankind compared with that of this one solitary life . . .

He has changed the moral climate of the world, and he is changing it now, and will continue to do so until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. I ask you to pause a moment and think of this thing which Christians believe. We are talking about great adventures. I remind you that there must be a great adventure in faith before there can be a great adventure in action. No man has ever done a great thing until he has first believed a great thing.[2]

Jesus was very successful at change. We are less successful. We can learn from Him.

We invite you to join us in a great adventure in faith. We do not deploy principles of organizational change to encourage churches to adopt certain methods of evangelism; lack of good methods is not the problem. The innovation that is needed in churches today is far more elementary yet entirely sufficient: *Jesus is Lord*. How can we overcome resistance to this innovation?

The Dialogue Seminar consists of five modules on organizational change with the same format as the previous seminar. The information in these modules is based on blending insights from Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*[3] with the sociological research into cultural change known as the *diffusion of innovations* as described by Everett Rogers and Geoffrey Moore.[4] The afternoon will be devoted to an explanation of your Diagnostic Tool results by staff and associates of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Office of Congregational Development.

Let's begin!

---

[2]James Allan Francis, *The Real Jesus and Other Sermons* (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1926), 123-124. Text used is quoted from San Joaquin Valley Information Service, *'One Solitary Life' Authorship,* under http://www.sjvls.org/bens/bf007sl.htm (accessed June 15, 2007).

[3]Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990).

[4]Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995). Geoffrey Moore, *Crossing the Chasm: Marketing and Selling High-Tech Products to Mainstream Customers,* Rev. ed. (New York: Collins, 2002). As a means of indicating the importance of Rogers' work in social science, Dr. Singhal stated: "The Diffusion of Innovations book, now in its fourth edition, is today the second most cited book in the social sciences. Perhaps someday soon it will be in first place." Arvind Singhal, *Introducing Professor Everett M. Rogers, 47th Annual Research Lecturer, University of New Mexico,* http://www.unm.edu/%7ecjdept/department/news1.html (accessed June 15, 2007).

MODULE 1: SYSTEMIC APPROACHES TO CHANGE
Section 1: The Balancing Loop in Peter Senge's *Limits to Growth* Archetype
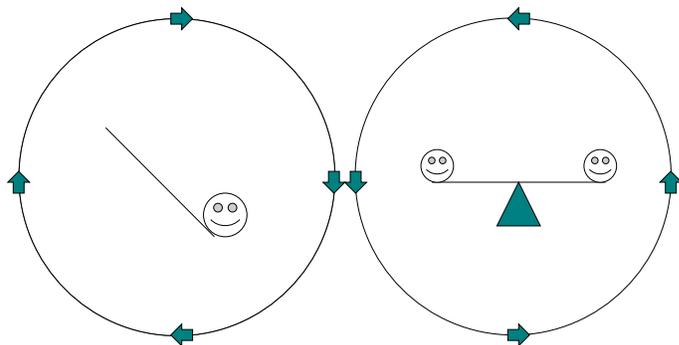
The image for a Reinforcing Loop is a snowball rolling downhill increasing in momentum and intensity. Happiness is an emerging trend.

The image for a Balancing Loop is a teeter-totter; happiness is keeping everything in balance.

Reinforcing Loop	**Balancing Loop**
Emerging Trend	Smooth Cycles
Brings Change	Preserves Stability
Exciting	Comforting
Conductors	*Resisters*[5]
Leadership	Management
Big Picture	Micro-managers
Vision	Details
Proactive	Reactive
Responds to Potential	Responds to Anxiety
Entrepreneurial	Institutional
Ready to gamble	Risk averse
Visionary Minority - 16%	*Pragmatic majority* - 84%
Church of Piety (sect)	Church of Power (church)[6]
Antithesis	Thesis and Synthesis
External focus	Inward focus
Mission	Maintenance
Evangelism	Resistance to Growth
Ignores Limits	***Prevents Competency Limits***
Out of control	**Under control**
Pushes the trend	***Thermostat correction***

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Gabriel Tarde, a French judge, observed in 1903 that the purpose of his research was "to learn why, given one hundred different innovations conceived at the same time - innovations in the

---

[5]John Ortberg, *God Is Closer Than You Think* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 139-141.

[6]Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 40-48, 15-20.

form of words, in mythological ideas, in industrial process, etc. - ten will spread abroad while ninety will be forgotten."[7] The observation that 90% of innovations will fail led to the research on social change known as the diffusion of innovations.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
1.01 What is the largest change that has been a part of your life?
1.02 Was it planned or was it a matter of adjustment?
1.03 Did the change transform your life or did life continue on as before?

B. Peter Senge's *Limits to Growth* archetype attempts to explain the progress and failure of change within human systems through the interaction to two systemic processes. The *reinforcing process* represents a trend which is intensifying in repeated cycles in order to provoke a change in the status quo. The *balancing process* keeps the system cycling in a safe, stable homeostasis, where everything functions smoothly and efficiently.**[8]**

The balancing process is very powerful and usually prevents the reinforcing process from successfully changing the system; it exists to prevent challenges to system stability because small changes in biological systems usually mean the death of the organism. When the trend toward change offers positive benefits and does not threaten or overwhelm the balancing process, the system often adapts by incorporating the trend.

C. Sometimes the reinforcing process overwhelms the balancing process and disaster results. There is no longer a functional balancing process to bring stability to the system. (Example: Palestine under Israel and Iraq after Saddam Hussein.)

D. An example: Filling the Bathtub.
> *Reinforcing process: water is filling the bathtub through a faucet.*
> *Balancing process: monitors the water flow, turns it off when tub is full.*

E. An example: Two Hundred Barrier in Church Growth.[9]
> *Reinforcing process: A small church which is comfortable below one hundred in attendance is growing. Factors are creating church growth. As the church grows, the decreasing ability to cope with the extra people causes discomfort and anxiety. This instability becomes acute as the average worship attendance reaches two hundred. Major changes will be required to maintain function if growth continues.*
> *Balancing process: The system monitors the growing distress and takes actions which*

---

[7]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 40.

[8]Senge, *Fifth Discipline,* 79-88, 95-104, 124-126, 227-232, 379-380, 389-390. Senge uses Balancing and Reinforcing loops as fundamental elements to construct many systems archetypes.

[9]For two different views of the two hundred barrier, see Kevin Martin, *The Myth of the 200 Barrier: How to Lead through Transitional Growth* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2005) and Carl F. George and Warren Bird, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Capturing Overlooked Opportunities for Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993). Cf. Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 57-71.

result in the number of persons decreasing until the church is able to function smoothly again without the need to change anything and with everyone present being comfortable. The usual method is sufficient conflict to drive newer people away.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
Consider the two columns of characteristics at the beginning of this section.
1.04 Who would you say well represents the characteristics of the reinforcing loop? (A celebrity? Someone you know personally? Someone from the Bible?)
1.05 Who do you know who well represents the characteristics of the balancing loop? (A celebrity? Someone you know personally? Someone from the Bible?)
1.06 What organizations could represent reinforcing or balancing processes?

G. Important principles with Senge's *Limits to Growth* systems archetype:
1. Systems exist to prevent change; in nature, major changes usually end in death.
2. Nothing changes unless something happens in a reinforcing process. All church growth strategies take place as changes in the reinforcing process process.
3. Unavoidable consequences painfully shrink growth when a *Competency Limit* is reached and the balancing process is unable to cope or is destroyed.
4. A *thermostat correction* occurs when current reality strays beyond a perceived boundary, and the system responds to bring reality back within the boundaries of a comfort zone.
5. Anxiety provokes a thermostat correction in human systems to cause the balancing process to act. The goal of the balancing process in a correction is to preserve a healthy homeostasis before the pain of a *competency limit* is reached.
6. *Pushing the trend* of the reinforcing process to force change only increases anxiety and the intensity of the balancing process response to reverse change.
7. Multiple combinations of reinforcing process and balancing processes can exist simultaneously in a system.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
1.07 Where have you observed a reinforcing process at work in your life or community? Explain.
1.08 Where have you observed a balancing process at work in your life or community? Explain.
1.09 Can you think of an example of a competency limit?
1.10 Can you think of an example of a thermostat correction?
1.11 Can you think of an example of someone pushing the trend?

H. Balancing processes do bring change, but without upsetting the equilibrium of the system. Change can be rapid and painless, such as the widespread adoption of microwave ovens. More often, systemic change is slower. The wording of the Book of Discipline changes every four years, and the Balancing process in local churches implements the change in denominational DNA throughout the United Methodist Church. Seasons cycle each year. The human body ages slowly over decades. Vigorous, innovative spiritual movements become traditional bound, institutional denominations over two centuries.[10]

---

[10]Ernst Troeltsch's application of Hegelian dialectic (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) to church history is described in Elmer Towns, *Is The Day of the Denomination Dead?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1973), 60-78, under

I. Senge's Solution: A Prescription for Successful Change
Leadership takes place in the reinforcing process and brings a trend of change. Management occurs in the balancing process and brings stability. Change occurs when the Balancing process can maintain stability while incorporating the changing trend of the reinforcing process into standard operating procedure. The major action to ensure successful change is to strengthen the capacity of the balancing process to cope with challenges.[11] Successful change is therefore incremental, enhances quality of life and is a matter of quality management of details in the balancing process. Senge's Solution involves strengthening the adaptive competence of the system to cope, and then letting the system deal with any problems that arise. Management processes focused on improving quality are often sufficient to turn around a declining system.

J. In a *Limits to Growth* situation, Senge asserts, pushing the reinforcing loop to force change on the system fails; it is the quality of the balancing process to cope that is the limiting factor for change, whether the reinforcing process is positive or negative. While all change begins with leadership, it is management of the balancing process that is essential to effective change rather than leadership acting in the reinforcing process.

K. Laity lead in successful change as a reinforcing process while pastors soothe the balancing process, maintain homeostasis, and care for the traditional church. If pastors ignore the management of details and the smooth operation of the church to advocate change, disruption triggers a balancing response which prevents change.

L. Most accepted leadership prescriptions for change in churches guarantee failure by increasing anxiety in the name of urgency, pushing an agenda, and attempting to overwhelm the balancing process with an atmosphere of fear and crisis.[12] Accepted, standard procedures for change are contraindicated; they push the trend, increase stress in the system and trigger a thermostat response.

M. The Wisdom of Small Cuts. When positive changes are small, routine and predictable, the system finds it a simple matter to cope with change. When positive changes are large, infrequent and unexpected, the system reacts to the change as a threat and mobilizes resistance for protection. Change needs to come in the form of thousands of small cuts from the sharp teeth of a

---

http://www.elmertowns.com/books/online/denom_dead/Is_the_Day_of_the_Denomination_Dead%5BETowns%5D. PDF (accessed June 15, 2007).

[11]Senge*, Fifth Discipline*, 101-102. Covey refers to this as PC or Production Capacity; Covey's P/PC balance describes the Limits to Growth archetype phenomenon. Stephen Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring The Character Ethic* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 52-60, 171-172, 202-203, 288-289. Different terms are used in Peter L. Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 1996), 8-9.

[12]For example, see: Lyle Schaller, *The Change Agent* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 89-103. John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 35-49. Tom Peters, *The Circle of Innovation: You Can't Shrink Your Way to Greatness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1997).

saw rather than heavy blows from an axe which shake the whole tree.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
1.12 How many examples of problems can you list, identify reinforcing and balancing processes and create a Senge's Solution approach that could resolve the problem?

Section 2. Applying Senge's *Limits To Growth* In Churches
Acts 2:47 And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. Heylighen's Generalized Peter Principle: *in evolution, systems tend to develop up to the limit of their adaptive competence.*[13] Churches likewise naturally grow day by day to the limit of their adaptive competence. There is a systemic reason for the size of a church.

B. The largest church indicates the potential in the environment. Cell church techniques raise the adaptive competency level of the church so that the balancing process can continue to maintain a healthy homeostasis through times of growth. The reinforcing process then fills up the extra space with new converts.

C. Yoido church is not typical of the size church to be found in Seoul, as cell church expert Ralph Neighbour observes:

> Seoul's skyline after dark is filled with neon crosses, mounted on the tops of buildings where a church exists. There are literally hundreds of them! A Presbyterian pastor said to me, "Most of those crosses mark small churches with fewer than fifty members. They never seem to grow beyond that figure." Those who seek to discount the amazing growth of the cell group churches in Korea must understand not all their churches are growing at the same rate. The difference is quite clear: *when all the believers are equipped and involved in ministry, there is a radical difference between them and the traditional churches nearby.*[14]

As in the United States, the typical size of a church in Korea is fifty or less, in spite of the demonstrated reality that churches are able to grow much larger in that context.

D. If the normal size of a church in Korea is fifty members, then some aspect of the cell church must also overcome systemic limits to growth. Churches have a size thermostat which utilizes the Balancing Loop to keep them at a smaller, comfortable size when the potential for growth is

---

[13]Francis Heylighen, "The Generalized 'Peter Principle,'" *Principia Cybernetica Web,* ed. F. Heylighen, C. Joslyn, and V. Turchin, http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/PETERPR.html (accessed June 15, 2007).

[14]Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church,* 10th Anniversary ed. (Houston: Touch Publications, 1990), 41. Emphasis in italics in the original. When Neighbour speaks of *all the members equipped and involved in ministry*, he is primarily referring to the ministry of the laity using spiritual gifts in, within and through the structure provided by the cells of a cell church. In this way ministry is always done in the context of a community providing accountability, supervision and support, in partnership with others and within relationships extended to others. The prevents the burnout of leaders so common in Program Base Design churches.

much larger. The cell Discipleship System has increased the functional competency of the church to make and mature disciples in the reinforcing loop while remaining in a healthy homeostasis in the balancing loop. Cell churches overcome normal systemic limits to growth that keep most Korean churches small.

E. Cell churches grow at a rapid rate, but are themselves unable to sustain that rate or the whole world would have become converted by now. Cell principles do raise the upper limit of growth, but new systemic limits eventually slow growth.

F. Evangelism is a reinforcing process. There are four basic ways for the gospel to enter a culture; all reflect a form of cross-cultural incarnation and contextualization. Donald McGavran, a missionary executive in India, noticed that the gospel spread more effectively within a particular cultural group; this success in a rigidly prejudiced society led to the formulation of the famous but dated *Principle of Homogeneity*: "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers."[15] Traditional church growth theory understands that the gospel expands through the relational network which McGavran called "the bridges of God."[16] This classic missiological strategy focuses on establishing one or more converts within a targeted ethnic group and supporting their indigenous work of evangelizing their own ethnic group through existing relationships in their existing personal networks. Known as a *person of peace* approach, diffusion of the gospel begins through the conversion of a key person of influence and the gospel then spreads throughout that person's network of influence, particularly among family relatives.[17]

G. Other forms of homogeniety exist that bridge racial and ethnic barriers and thereby create relational networks. A high level of shared interest and common experiences create a relational homogeniety. Ralph W. Neighbour used a homogeneity of interests to develop the "share group" approach.[18] In Neighbour's strategy, cell groups develop out of relationships formed in the more socially oriented "share groups" which may be short or long term.

H. Malcolm Gladwell notes research that indicates that racial and ethnic barriers decrease when people are geographical neighbors.[19] This geographical bridge is the basis for evangelism at

---

[15]Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 198. At Yoido Church, cells are homogenous while the entire church is heterogenous. Paul Yongii Cho with R. Whitney Manzano, *More Than Numbers* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 46, 44.

[16]Donald A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, http://www.uscwm.org/mobilization_division/resources/perspectives_reader_pdf's/B18_McGavran_TheBridges.pdf (accessed May 15, 2007).

[17]Matthew 10:11-13, Luke 10:5-8. Cf. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 211-213. Cf. Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005)*, 181-184.

[18]Neighbour, *Where Do We Go,* 105, 220-223, 281-290, 293-300.

[19]Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference* (New York: Little,

Yoido Full Gospel Church and is a new paradigm for Willow Creek Community Church.[20] Each person has a limited number of relatives and persons who share their hobbies; eventually the pool of existing relationships dries up. In a mobile society, however, new people are always moving into the old neighborhood and members of cell groups are always moving into new neighborhoods. The geographical approach consolidates influence of leaders in existing neighborhoods and extends influence into new neighborhood *micro-mission fields*. Each mature Christian thereby becomes the *person of peace* in his or her own neighborhood, and that influence builds continually. The neighborhood approach simply and literally fulfills the commandment of Jesus that each Christian love his or her geographical neighbor (Matthew 22:19). Ministry is decentralized from the neighborhood surrounding the institutional church to the neighborhood of each disciple.

I. The *diffusion of innovations* is a fourth approach.[21] Diffusion is the sociological, scientific study of "the process by which an *innovation* is *communicated* through certain *channels* over *time* among the members of a *social system*."[22] Diffusion research originated with the study of the adoption of hybrid seed corn by Iowa farmers during the American Great Depression. As articulated by Everett Rogers, it is the most influential multidisciplinary understanding of cultural resistance to change and how new innovations spread throughout a culture. When the gospel of Jesus Christ is considered as a cultural innovation, the relevance of this research to church growth and evangelism is obvious. This project utilizes the diffusion of innovations to overcome resistance to disciple making and church growth in the ministry context.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:
1.1 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the ***Questions for a Better Understanding*** found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

1.2 Know Yourself Challenge: Two women, Isabel Myers and Kathleen Briggs, developed a system of perspective on recognizing and understanding people.[23] It uses four basic human preferences of one extreme or the other:

Brown & Co., 2002), 35.

[20]Willow Creek, under new teaching pastor Randy Frazee, is forming community in geographical neighborhoods. Susan DeLay, "Evangelism in 3-D," *WCA News,* Issue 4, 2006, under http://www.willowcreek.com/wcanews/story.asp?id=WN01I42006 (accessed June 15, 2007). Cf. Randy Frazee and Ken Dean, *Connecting Church*, DVD, available from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, United Media Resource Center (Item #1003018), www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc (accessed June 18, 2007). Cf. Randy Frazee, *Making Room for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

[21]The basic resource is Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1995). A good introduction to the theory is Marianne S. Hornor, *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*, under http://www.disciplewalk.com/Resources_by_Others.html (accessed June 15, 2007).

[22]Rogers, *Diffusion Of Innovations*, 10, 5. Emphasis in original.

[23]Center for Applications of Psychological Type, *The Story of Isabel Briggs Myers*, http://www.capt.org/mbti-assessment/isabel-myers.htm (accessed June 15, 2007).

Extravert (E) or Introvert (I)   *Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)*
Sensing (S) or Intuitive (N)   *Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)*

There are sixteen different combinations of these four preferences. They are expressed in four letter combinations, such as *ESTJ* or *INFP*. Paul Keirsey simplified the sixteen combinations into four primary types: *SJ, SP, NT* and *NF*.

Myers and Briggs developed a test available through psychologists which determines a person's type. Simplified versions are available online[24] or in books.[25]

What is your four letter type?   _____ _____ _____ _____

Which is your two letter type?   *NT   NF   SP   SJ*

Successful organizational change often requires understanding other people with differing viewpoints, understanding our own preferences and how others perceive us.   Understanding others is key to communicating the need for innovation in a way that reduces anxiety and furthers adoption.

1.3 Sanctified Batting Order Review: As you review the Sanctified Batting Order history of your church, consider the following questions.

1. Consider the action of the Limits to Growth archetype in the fluctuations in your church's growth. When do you see a reinforcing process at work? Explain. When do you see a balancing process at work? Explain.

2. Has the size of your church fluctuated over the years? How so? As you review the Sanctified Batting Order history of your church, how anxious was the church during times of fluctuating growth? What contributed to increasing anxiety? What contributed to decreasing anxiety?

3. How anxious is the church today? When did the last period of high anxiety begin and end?

4. What is the largest change or challenge that has been a part of your church's history? Was it planned or was it a matter of adjustment to unforseen circumstances? Did the change attempt lead into a new and better life, or did it result in a return to life as it was before?

1.4 New Testament Challenge Update: In addition to commands of Jesus, begin to notice conflict and anxiety in the New Testament, and how Jesus and the Apostles dealt with it.

The book of Acts indicates that Jesus was a significant reinforcing trend for change in the Jewish culture over the three years of his ministry. The early church of Acts and the ministry of Paul were significant reinforcing trends for change for the Gentile/Roman culture to Constantine.

---

[24]David Keirsey, *Keirsey Temperament Sorter® - II Personality Instrument*, under www.keirsey.com (accessed June 15, 2007). Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, *What's Your Personality Type?* www.personalitytype.com/quiz.asp (accessed June 15, 2007).

[25]Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk: The Sixteen Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love, and Work* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989). Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, *Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type* (New York: Little Brown & Company, 2001).

Therefore, the New Testament and early church history should provide multiple examples of change theory concepts from Senge, Rogers and Moore.

Look for examples of conflict in the Book of Acts and elsewhere in scripture; analyze them for reinforcing trends and balancing processes at work.[26] All violence will involve them.

1.5 Thermostat Growth Levels: The goal of this exercise is to notice and identify anxiety increasing as a trend of change develops. This is a brainstorming exercise to imagine what happens at successive increases in local church growth. The first goal is to be able to identify the consequences of each change (reinforcing trend) and identify the changes in infrastructure necessary to cope with challenges (adaptation in the balancing process).

If the balancing process cannot cope with the change, the system will take steps restore stability by decreasing the number of persons in attendance. Have someone take notes - perhaps on a laptop computer - of the changes to write up later.

The second goal of the exercise is to identify at what point the growth itself begins to seem unreal and/or uncomfortable. That's your own point of anxiety beyond which you would be pushing the trend.

Repeat the steps until those in the brainstorming group all feel the anxiety of change and twice beyond the step where this high anxiety point is reached.

Discuss the point at which each person began to feel anxious and reach consensus about which stage the system reached a point of high anxiety, and what led to that conclusion.

_____ *Our current church attendance.*
Step #_____
      Increase the current church attendance by 50%. = _____
      What will the church be like at this size?
      What will be different? What will remain the same?
      What problems could arise? What could resolve them?

1.6 Looking for Current Anxiety: Review all the local church is doing; is anything not running smoothly? Where does anxiety build? What are the reinforcing process and balancing processes at work? Review the people of the church; who are the anxious people? What are they anxious about? Who are the reinforcing people? Who are the balancing people?

---

[26]Some possible examples: Mark 11:18, Acts 6:7/Acts 8:1, Acts 9:20-25.

MODULE TWO: THE DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS ADOPTER FRAMEWORK
Section One: Overview

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. The diffusion of innovations is a scientific approach to understanding resistance to change in cross-cultural settings ranging from the introduction of solar cookers for deforested regions in Africa[27] to the marketing of high technology. Change is slow even when the proposed change is highly positive and can easily fail to succeed.

B. Social systems and customer markets can be segmented by clear signature differences in those who adopt early and late in the process. Diffusion of innovations research identifies five adopter categories in a standard bell curve distribution from those who are first to adopt to those who adopt later. These five adopter categories are Innovators (2.5%), Early Adopters (13.5%), Middle Adopters (34%), Late Adopters (34%) and Laggards (16%).[28] Geoffrey Moore's adaption of Diffusion theory to high tech marketing uses different terms for the same five categories: *technology enthusiasts, visionaries, pragmatists, conservatives* and *skeptics.*[29] Rogers also refers to Middle Adopters as the Early Majority and Late Adopters as the Late Majority. One could speak of Innovators and Early Adopters together as the ***visionary minority***, and of the other categories together as the ***pragmatic majority***.

C. Parable: The Stainless Steel Church
        The Chairman of the Administrative Board called the meeting to order. *"We have a problem,"* he announced gravely, *"with mice. They are gnawing holes in the wood and getting into the church."*
        The innovator had an unusual idea. *"If we tore down the old church and built a new one out of stainless steel, the mice couldn't gnaw their way in."*
        The early adopter saw the advantages. *"We would certainly be in the forefront of all the churches in our conference in using this new material to build a church. Just think: it would never rust, never need painting, and last forever."*
        The middle adopter was practical. *"Wouldn't it be very hard to work with steel as a building material? You'd have to weld everything. And it wouldn't be cheap."*
        The late adopter was nostalgic. *"I would miss the old church of wood. It seems so comfortable and warm to me. Wouldn't steel be expensive to heat in winter?"*
        The laggard harrumphed. *"My sister has too many cats on her farm. I'll bring one over tomorrow and it won't cost us a nickel."*
        "Well, I see we've solved that problem," the chair noted. *"Now, on to the next problem."*

---

        [27]Patrice M. Rodgers, *Solar Box Cookers in Zimbabwe: The Introduction of a Radical Innovation in Cooking*, (master's thesis, University of California-Davis, 1994), http://solarcooking.org/zimb-the.htm (accessed June 15, 2007). Cf. Ramon Coyle, *Solar Cooker Dissemination and Cultural Variables,* http://solarcooking.org/advocacy/dissemination_and_culture.htm (accessed June 15, 2007).

        [28]Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 22.

        [29]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 30-38, 46-49, 54-59.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.01 Who do you know in your church who would fill each role in the parable above?
2.02 Which adopter category, in your opinion, includes the chairman? Why would this be predictable?

D. Adopter categories provide a clear framework for innovation adoption to diffuse throughout a cultural entity, be that a primitive tribe, a large international corporation, a denomination or a local church. Change must begin with Innovators and spread across the categories in order to the Laggards.[30]

E. Only Innovators and Early Adopters are interested in change. Only the visionary minority perceive a need for change, and to them it is a need so clear that they are frequently unable to explain either the need or the innovation to the others in a way that others can understand.

F. The visionary minority represent a reinforcing process for change comprising 16% of the whole. Middle Adopters, Late Adopters and the Laggards represent a pragmatic majority that functions as the Balancing process and 84% of the whole. If the visionary minority brings the proposed change to the whole for a vote, it will immediately be defeated 84% to 16%. When the whole group encounters the change, whether by presentation in worship or an attempt to achieve consensus, failure is guaranteed. Pushing the trend only solidifies opposition in the balancing process. The commonly accepted practice of seeking consensus guarantees failure. Successful changes begin quietly in a corner and multiply organically as leaven (Matthew 13:33). All that is needed for transformation to thrive is permission for diversity to exist.

G. Critical mass: An "S-shaped diffusion curve 'takes off' at about 10-25% adoption, when interpersonal networks become activated so that a critical mass of adopters begins using an innovation."[31] Once critical mass is achieved, large scale, rapid adoption of the innovation is inevitable. Once the change moves into the Middle Adopters, it becomes unstoppable. All one requires for systemic change is freedom for the visionary minority to differentiate, operate, and build a practicing minority to critical mass (Acts 5:34-39).

H. The change process is fragile and can be halted at the transfer point between one category to another. So few change strategies enter the Middle Adopters that Moore refers to the gap between Early Adopters and the Middle Adopters as "the chasm." Few innovations in church life cross into the pragmatic majority beyond the chasm.

Section Two: Innovators or Technology Enthusiasts
Pastor: There's a light bulb burnt out in the sanctuary. Can you help?
Innovator: If you'll just be patient, my nuclear fusion bulb will be at the prototype stage real soon now. Never needs changing and uses no electricity.

---

[30]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 14.

[31]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 12.

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?

A. Innovators make up 2.5% of any cultural group, and they are the place to begin. Innovators are addicted to seeking new information in a world of endless possibilities, like to play with new ideas as toys, and are linked cross culturally in their search for new information. They are restless, fickle, easily bored, insatiably curious and often have poor social skills. While viewed sometimes with suspicion, Innovators remain relationally linked to their home cultural environments; they are cross-cultural bridges, continually bringing outside information into closed environments.

B. For Rogers, Innovators are venturesome to the point of obsession with new ideas and a desire for "the rash, the daring, and the risky."[32] They link with other Innovators and a variety of heterophilous sources of information. They are very aware of new information from the world outside their local group. Innovators read books, magazines and newspapers, surf the Internet and love to explore new ideas. Innovators, therefore, frequently see the connections between ideas and can creatively pull concepts from multiple sources to create something new. Innovators bring new ideas into a system from outside the system's boundaries, functioning as gate keepers that control the flow of new ideas into a system.[33]

C. Innovators are able to understand and apply complex technical knowledge, improvise with that knowledge, cope with a high degree of uncertainty and often have resources which offset the risk and inevitable losses that come from experimentation. They are continually debugging, improving and reworking their projects; a project is never done while a new feature or improvement can be added. Innovators love to improvise solutions to problems.

D. Innovators will be perceived as living both inside and outside their cultures of origin, functionally linking two or more worlds and advocating diversity and pluralism.[34] Due to their variation from communal norms, Rogers states that the "most innovative member of a system is very often perceived as a deviant from the social system, and is accorded a somewhat dubious status of low credibility by the average members of the system."[35] Their opinions often seem unusual and may be shocking to the mainstream. Linked with the world outside the system, Innovators are perceived as peculiar and outsiders.

E. Innovators hate boredom and predictability. Innovators would prefer a church focused on ideas. Innovators would prefer to play with ideas rather than deal with reality.

F. Innovators are so drawn to the new that they have difficulty in following through and finishing projects. They are easily bored and easily distracted by a new interest or project. Because of their

---

[32]Ibid., 263, 264.

[33]Ibid., 264.

[34]Ethnic Innovators seem like fully assimilated expatriates but remain a bridge into their original culture. All change strategies must first attract and involve the Innovators of a target market.

[35]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 26.

focus on ideas, creativity and abstract thinking, Innovators are likely to be a Myers Briggs NT type and very likely an ENTP.

G. As comparatively few people have an interest in new ideas, Innovators are always searching for someone with whom they can communicate about their enthusiasms. As this communication requires a technical, specialized vocabulary, someone both interested and able to talk about an innovator enthusiasm is a rare find. Consequently, the interests of most Innovators are widely known due to their looking for someone to talk with about that interest. Innovators often are challenged by poor social skills.[36]

H. BRIDGING TO THIS CATEGORY: Provide opportunities to explore new ideas from the outside world and the innovator will pursue them and bring them into the local system. It is only necessary to arouse the innovator's natural curiosity and they will pursue new ideas. They are capable of "connecting the dots" between widely disconnected concepts and perceiving new meanings and opportunities.

I. BRIDGING TO THE NEXT CATEGORY:
        The first crack where adoption can fail to progress is between Innovators and Early Adopters; the key to overcoming this crack "is to show that the new technology enables some strategic leap forward, something never before possible, which has an intrinsic value and appeal to the nontechnologist. This benefit is typically symbolized by a single, compelling application . . ."[37]
        Innovators must discipline themselves to remain with an idea long enough to envision such a practical application. Rather than constantly improve upon the abstract idea itself, Innovators must apply their talents for innovation to shape the new information toward a practical implementation with significant real world potential. Then they must intentionally market the application to Early Adopters in such as way that these visionaries can see the potential.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.03. Who do you know in this adopter category, inside and outside the church?
2.04. For Innovators inside your church, what are their passionate interests? Where do they look for new ideas?
2.05. What would a church made up entirely of Innovators be like?
2.06. What sort of church activity would be very appealing for Innovators?
2.07. How would people in this category prefer to follow Jesus?
2.08. How would an Innovator convince another Innovator to chair a committee?

Section Three: Early Adopters or Visionaries
Pastor: There's a light bulb burnt out in the sanctuary. Can you help?

---

[36]For an example of an innovator's struggle with social skills, see Dick Lyles, *Winning Ways: Four Secrets for Getting Results by Working Well With People* (New York: Berkley Trade, 2001).

[37]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 16-18.

Early Adopter: Has anyone analyzed whether it's in our best interests to spend the extra money on those long lasting bulbs?

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. Early Adopters are more local and in touch with the local network. They ask questions. They exercise a high degree of opinion leadership in the social system. While aware of innovations, they remain homophilous and are perceived by the majority as role models and "the individual to check with."[38] The innovation bridges from the outsider Innovators to the early majority through the persistent, enthusiastic support of Early Adopters.

B. Early Adopters have a bias for action and corresponding tendency to be very busy. Early Adopters want to translate ideas into applications. Early Adopters are like engineers; they like to implement technology. They love to fine tune the machinery and make things work more efficiently. Early Adopters will naturally adapt and reinvent innovations for local usage.

E. Early Adopters are interested in ideas for the sake of their potential benefits. Early Adopters desire freedom to innovate and experiment for the best possible results. Early Adopters are entrepreneurs in search of successful differentiation. They want to express themselves. Early Adopters dislike checks, controls and prerequisites.

F. BRIDGING TO THE NEXT CATEGORY:
      Visionaries must discipline themselves and follow a challenging strategy in order for the innovation to cross the chasm into the early majority and begin the "S-curve" of rapid adoption. Visionaries have high energy and frequently do not understand why others don't immediately see the benefits that they do; they sometimes become impatient, employ a hard sell and push the trend. This raises the level of anxiety in the system and guarantees a Balancing response that prevents change.
      Visionaries can overwhelm a system with new ideas, each one guaranteed to usher in the promised land without cost other than commitment. When visionaries gain leadership power, they can adopt a "pacesetting" style of leadership which constantly pushes the system prematurely into new innovations with very negative results.[39]
      The Visionary minority must resist the frequently recommended strategy of bringing urgency to the system; increasing urgency increases system anxiety and provokes a thermostat correction which effectively prevents any possible change. Visionaries usually present ideas with anxiety, urgency, and pressure to adopt, or perceive urgent problems which require the innovation as the solution; when anxiety goes up, people stop listening and identify the visionaries as a source of anxiety. Innovators and visionaries project their own emotions on others and are surprised to find that others do not see what is so obvious to them. Visionaries must discipline themselves to communicate appropriately and follow a clear strategy in order for an innovation to cross the chasm into the early majority.

---

[38]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 264.

[39]Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee, and Richard E. Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53-55, 71-75, 80-83.

G. CROSSING THE CHASM

The pragmatists that make up the Early Majority prefer innovations which are continuous improvements on existing comfortable norms and which do not require changes in behavior.[40] Innovators and Early Adopters are excited about innovations that are discontinuous and represent great changes to norms because discontinuity represents a competitive advantage to them. Geoffrey Moore details the plans necessary for an innovation to "cross the chasm" and enter the pragmatic Early Majority. The innovation itself must be simplified to increase safety and reduce anxiety and uncertainty in adoption.[41]

Pragmatists have a different culture and visionaries must learn to value and communicate within that culture. Crossing the chasm requires behaviors which seem unnatural to visionaries, and few are willing to adapt to what is necessary for further adoption. It is necessary for visionaries to control their enthusiasm, shift from confrontational presentation to relational conversation, and carefully recruit pragmatists to adopt in a specific "beachhead" niche market if the innovation is to cross the chasm. The vision itself must be simplified and visionaries are frequently are unwilling to compromise their vision in order that the vision might succeed in the real world.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.09. Who do you know in this category, inside and outside the church?
2.10. For Early Adopters inside the church, what are their passionate interests?
2.11. What would a church made up entirely of Early Adopters be like?
2.12. What sort of church activity would be very appealing for Early Adopters?
2.13. How would people in this category prefer to follow Jesus?
2.14. How would an Early Adopter convince another Early Adopter to chair a committee?
2.15. How would an Innovator convince an Early Adopter to chair a committee?

Section Four: Middle Adopters (Early Majority) or Pragmatists
Pastor: There's a light bulb burnt out in the sanctuary. Can you help?
Middle Adopter: Sure. (Gets ladder, puts new bulb in.)

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. Middle Adopters as pragmatists provide interconnectedness in the system's interpersonal networks. The innovation spreads from the Innovators at 2.5% to the Early Adopters at 13.5% and then into the Early Majority at 34%. Rogers notes that Middle Adopters interact frequently with their peers but seldom hold positions of opinion leadership in a system.[42] They follow the opinion leaders willingly but slowly and deliberate all aspects of the innovation before adopting.

---

[40]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 10.

[41]Visionaries often resist any adaptation and simplification of their ideas, methods and particularly theology. If theology is not allowed to adapt, then adoption often fails to diffuse.

[42]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 265. Contrary to Rogers, Moore perceives Middle Adopters as the primary decision makers in adoption. Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 19, 41-45, 55-59.

Rogers notes an apt proverb for the Early Majority: "Be not the first by which the new is tried, Nor the last to lay the old aside."[43]

B. Middle Adopters are generally non-anxious. They are not narcissistic or egotistical, so they generally have healthy relationships with people. Middle Adopters are good team players and kind team leaders. Middle Adopters are comfortable in all types of churches. Middle Adopters avoid anxiety and can be codependent overfunctioners; they can be manipulated by the anxiety of others. Anxiety provokes a thermostat correction in systems which prevents change.

C. Middle Adopters have a practical focus. Middle Adopters want to keep things running smoothly, as one positive experience follows another.[44] Middle Adopters desire the simplest effective solution to a problem. Middle Adopters have potential to be "level five leaders."[45] Middle Adopters are willing to wash feet, carry a cross without grandiosity, and to do what is necessary for a system to flourish. Middle Adopters will find a way to get things done.

D. Rogers simplified his research task by using an innovation, hybrid seed corn, which was a certain success, provided obvious and indisputable economic benefits, could not be customized by the user and had no potential negative consequences; this effectively isolated the variable of the rate of adoption of innovation as there were no other concerns.[46] There is a widespread myth that, once an innovation was recommended by visionaries in a system, adoption became inevitable.[47] Later research showed a need for increasing sophistication when the proposed adoption is less obviously positive. Visionaries in the real world frequently experience total failure in their attempts to change systems when it comes to encouraging adoption by pragmatics.

E. Moore perceives a much higher importance to the decisions made by Middle Adopters or pragmatists who are frequently the decision makers in high tech markets where adoption of an innovation involves assuming great expense and risks. Moore's chasm strategy is therefore more helpful in the real world and in church innovations. Middle Adopters are the pivotal group for achieving critical mass and rapid, S-curve adoption. They link the visionary minority with the pragmatic majority and resistance to change is overcome as they adopt the innovation.

F. BRIDGING TO THE NEXT CATEGORY:

---

[43]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 265.

[44]This is described as the "flywheel" rather than the "doom loop" in Jim Collins, *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make The Leap . . . And Others Don't* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 164-187. The prior steps in the Good to Great change model prepare the innovation to cross the chasm and achieve critical mass; change thereafter is by flywheel incrementalism.

[45] Jim Collins, *Good To Great*, 17-40.

[46]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 31-35, 53-55.

[47]Jon Berry and Ed Keller, *The Influentials: One American in Ten Tells the Other Nine How to Vote, Where to Eat, and What to Buy* (New York: Free Press, 2002). For information on the role of opinion leaders and change agents in adoption, see Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 281-370.

Information spreads on the other side of the chasm by conversations between *homophilous* individuals that share kinship and enjoy talking with each other. Media presentations favored by visionaries, such as advertising or sermons, are ineffective at reaching people beyond the most innovative 16% of a people group. Late Adopters are cautious and will only adopt through recommendations from people they trust; once there is the momentum of a band wagon, however, Late Adopters will want to get on board.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.16. Who do you know in this category, inside and outside the church?
2.17. For Middle Adopters inside the church, what are their passionate interests?
2.18. What would a church made up entirely of Middle Adopters be like?
2.19. What sort of church activity would be very appealing for Middle Adopters?
2.20. How would people in this category prefer to follow Jesus?
2.21. How would a Middle Adopter convince another Middle Adopter to chair a committee?
2.22. How would an Early Adopter convince a Middle Adopter to chair a committee?

Section Five: Late Adopters (Late Majority) or Conservatives
Pastor: There's a light bulb burnt out in the sanctuary. Can you help?
Late Adopter: Are you sure we need a new bulb? There's nothing wrong with the old bulb. Give it a chance. My mother gave that bulb to the church as a memorial to my grandfather; see the plaque next to the fixture? Have you tried praying for healing for the bulb? Where is your faith?

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. Late Adopters as conservatives comprise another 34% of the total. They come to adoption through economic necessity, increasing network peer pressure, and not until most others in their system have adopted. They are cautious and careful.

B. Rogers notes that the "weight of system norms must definitely favor an innovation before the Late Majority are convinced. The pressure of peers is necessary to motivate adoption."[48] They tend to lack resources and are therefore risk avoiding, and so rarely adopt until uncertainty is gone; the innovation must be entirely safe, guaranteed and a "sure thing."[49]

C. Late Adopters are traditionalists who are keepers of the rules. Late Adopters, therefore, would most likely reflect the Myers-Briggs "J" preference.

D. Moore posits another crack that lies between the Middle Adopters and Late Adopters; the key here is enabling Late Adopters to use the product without needing to master the technology.[50] Late Adopters prefer the simplest, easiest way to fulfill their needs that does not require them to

---

[48]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 265.

[49]I question Roger's fiscal negativity on Late Adopters. Naturally conservative, they are likely to conserve financial resources in an age of rampant consumerism.

[50]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 18.

think to use the innovation. They will not read the directions.

E. The innovation must be adapted for the needs of each category. When the S-curve sweeps up Late Adopters, the innovation has reached 84% of the population. In church history, this reflects the era of Christendom. Late Adopters prefer the simplest, easiest way to fulfill God's requirements and get to heaven. Late Adopters do not want to sacrifice, extend themselves in mission or work beyond what is necessary for salvation. The resulting theology can be characterized as one of *cheap grace* and minimal requirements, and eventually becomes the homeostasis controlling the institutional church.[51] The great spiritual concern of many Late Adopters is that worship end in time for them to beat the Baptists to the restaurant for lunch.

F. Late Adopters in mainline denominations, therefore, are more likely to be those within a church who attend only worship. If only 17% of church attenders attend Sunday School, bible study or any learning event other than worship,[52] it's likely that few Late Adopters are beyond a newborn spiritual maturity level.

G. In an era when everyone was Christian, spiritual disciplines could focus on the spiritual needs of the individual. Contrary to the Great Commission, individuals were not expected to make disciples or teach them; this was the role of the clergy and not the laity.
H. Late adopter influence on church theology and praxis uses the balancing process to preserve the world view and practices of traditional Christendom.

I. Late Adopters are very anxious about breaking the rules of the tribe and the traditions of the elders. Therefore, they are also prone to prejudice and criticism of others who do not show respect to rules and traditions. They are therefore likely, with the Laggards, to divide into schismatic groups that disapprove of others (1 Corinthians 1:10-12, 3:1-4.)

J. Late Adopters are more respectful of others than Laggards and more tolerant of opposing views. They are often very sincere in their desire to maintain the value of the traditions of the elders. It's likely that the Pharisees were Late Adopters and Laggards, although not all Late Adopters are Pharisees.

K. Karen Armstrong: *Many of the people who attend religious services in our society are not interested in theology, want nothing too exotic and dislike the idea of change. They find the established rituals provide them with a link with tradition and give them a sense of security. They do not expect brilliant ideas from the sermon and are disturbed by changes in the liturgy. In rather the same way, many of the pagans of the late antiquity loved to worship the ancestral gods, as generations had done before them. The old rituals gave them a sense of identity,*

---

[51]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 41-101.

[52]George Barna, quoted in Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 26.

celebrated local traditions and seemed an assurance that things would continue as they were.[53]

L. A Late Adopter viewpoint: *When people are deprived of a rich and subtle language about God, it deprives them of their legitimate theological and spiritual inheritance. So, for example, if you've never been given the language in worship which enables you to talk about salvation as an emphatically Trinitarian project, a project of God the Father, in and through the life, death, and resurrection of the Son, and recognized and responded to in the power of the Holy Spirit, then you are likely to see it only in narrowly personalistic terms: "through a personal relationship with Jesus I am personally transferred from being 'lost' to being 'saved.'" And this becomes the sole object of the process of redemption, to get ME from one box into the other. Now that may be some form of Christian theology, but it certainly isn't Methodist theology. Methodist theology begins and ends with the loving purposes of God to restore the world to eternal friendship with God, and everything — including Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, including my own relationship with God in Christ — is a part of that overarching purpose. In other words, my salvation is not the end of the story, it is for some larger redemptive activity of God directed at every single human being and every single human system: political, social, religious.*[54]

L. BRIDGING TO THE NEXT CATEGORY:
Laggards cannot be persuaded; build no bridges. They will adopt or not in their own time.

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.23. Who do you know in this category, inside and outside the church?
2.24. For Late Adopters inside the church, what are their passionate interests?
2.25. What would a church made up entirely of Late Adopters be like?
2.26. What sort of church activity would be very appealing for Late Adopters?
2.27. How would people in this category prefer to follow Jesus?
2.28. How would a Late Adopter convince another Late Adopter to chair a committee?
2.29. How would a Middle Adopter convince a Late Adopter to chair a committee?

Section Six: Laggards or Skeptics
Pastor: There's a light bulb burnt out in the sanctuary. Can you help?
Laggard: After a while, the truly faithful really begin to sense God at work in the dark. Perhaps God prefers the dark. When God wants a new bulb, He will change it Himself. Stop interfering with the will of the Lord with your devilish desire to change everything!

OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. Rogers considers Laggards, the last 16% to adopt, to be traditional and possess almost no opinion leadership. Their awareness is so localized as to almost be an isolate in the system and

---

[53]Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Knopf, 1993), quoted in Herbert Benson with Marg Stark, *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 179.

[54]Susan J. White, *What Ever Happened to the Father? The Jesus Heresy in Modern Worship,* http://www.gbod.org/worship/white.pdf (accessed June 15, 2007).

they tend to communicate only with other Laggards. Their point of reference is their own past experience, which they repeat without contemplation. This caution prevents problems that drain resources from being addressed, so Laggards rarely have resources to take chances; their caution is a matter of survival.[55]

B. It is important not to demonize Laggards; they will always be with us. Laggards function not only as defenders but as visionaries of the status quo. Laggards can serve to stabilize a system and have the ministry of preserving homeostasis. Once an innovation is adopted, Laggards preserve it in the system as "the way we have always done it here." Laggards can provide a necessary balance, slowing changes that might have negative consequences or lead to chaos. Unforseen problems can arise which make the innovation far worse than the original problem; now the innovation is the primary problem of the culture.[56]

C. Laggards prefer the old ways and resent the encroachment of undesired change. The world changes anyway. One of the few environments where Laggards can prevent change and keep things as they once were is in the local church, especially in a small town. Therefore, contrary to Rogers, Laggards seek positions of power in churches in order to preserve the past.

D. As change cannot be prevented, Laggards are under continual pressure from current reality. Laggards experience others as pushing the trend. They are therefore frequently chronically anxious.[57]

E. When pushed, Laggards become anxious; when cornered, they can become violent. Laggards would "rather fight than switch." Laggards often feel disrespected and are concerned with their honor and insults to their self esteem.[58] They often feel as if they have no option but to engage in defensive behavior that can easily escalate.

---

[55]I question Rogers' general negativity on Laggards. Naturally conservative, Laggards are likely to conserve financial resources in an age of rampant consumerism. Laggards naturally consider most innovations pointless and prefer to live as they always have lived. This is a matter of healthy differentiation at best. Rogers has a bias due to his research choice of unquestionably beneficial innovations. This leads to negative view of Late Adopters and Laggards as people with "no money, no power, no influence." But Innovators are not always powerful, wealthy, or wise and innovations such as tattoos and body piercing are not universally accepted. Criminals, drug users, terrorists, and revolutionaries bring changes that no laggard prefers.

[56]Missionary gifts of steel axes to the Yir Yiront tribe destroyed the cultural balancing process and led to a breakdown in social relationships, disrespect for elders and men "prostituting their daughters and wives in exchange for the use of someone else's steel ax." Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 421-422.

[57]Peter Steinke, *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1996), 54-67. Cf. Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation To Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Publications, Inc., 1985), 35-39, 53-54, 212-214, 231-234.

[58]M. Scott Peck, "Self Love versus Self-Esteem," in *Further Along the Road Less Traveled: The Unending Journey Toward Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 87-99.

F. Laggards are the covert source of most church conflict.[59] As chronically anxious people, Laggards attempt to define others by their own values and control the behavior and emotions of others; this is the opposite of healthy self differentiation. After the attempt to directly control others fails, Laggards can go covert to create conflict through blaming and triangling. Laggards can deliberately increase anxiety in order to trigger a thermostat correction in the Balancing process. As a change becomes normative, at some point Laggards become Innovators actively striving to repeal the current homeostasis.[60]

G. Laggards will tend to exhibit narcissism and believe the purpose of the church is to take care of their needs and the needs of their families. Laggards will focus on themselves rather than the need of the whole. Laggards will see little benefit in progressing through the stages of maturity toward missional self sacrifice or making disciples. Laggards will put the pastor on a pedestal and demand that the pastor serve their needs.

H. Laggard Testimony: Laggard comments can become quite nasty.
I took a break from writing for a couple of months to further research the "seeker-sensitive," "church-growth" movement; that tumorous plague that has become to the Christian community what AIDS is to the homosexual community. Those who have been infected always deny it publicly believing in their hearts they are righteous and extraordinary rather than depraved, dying and delusional . . .
You'll know that your church is becoming "seeker-sensitive" when the worship service begins to resemble an Amway convention run by pod people in polo shirts whose savior looks more like Bill Clinton with sunglasses and a saxophone than the Son of God hanging from a lonely cross for the sins of the world.[61]

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.30. Who do you know in this category, inside and outside the church?
2.31. For Laggards inside the church, what are their passionate interests?
2.32. What would a church made up entirely of Laggards be like?
2.33. What sort of church activity would be very appealing for Laggards?
2.34. How would people in this category prefer to follow Jesus?
2.35. How would a Laggard convince another Laggard to chair a committee?

---

[59]Henry Cloud, *Enemies and Idiots: How to Deal with Toxic People* (CCN Broadcast Date: September 13, 2005; available from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference, United Media Resource Center (Item #105008), www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc. Cf. Proverbs 22:10. Cf. M. Scott Peck, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983). Cf. Bill Easum and Bil Cornelius, *Go Big: Lead Your Church to Explosive Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 117-124.

[60]For example, at what point do Laggards seeking to restore the pre-Vatican II Tridentine Latin mass to common use in the Catholic church cease to be Laggards and become Innovators? Cf. Tim Townsend, "Old Latin Mass Makes a Comeback," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (06/14/2007), under http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/religion/story/A6A2D911CEA68E85862572FA000FFC09?Open Document (accessed August 19, 2007).

[61]Paul Proctor, *Willow Creek: Hegelian Dialectic & the New World Order,* http://etherzone.com/2001/proc121101.shtml (accessed June 15, 2007).

2.36. How would a Late Adopter convince a Laggard to chair a committee?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:
2.1 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the ***Questions for a Better Understanding*** found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

MODULE THREE: THE DIFFUSION CHANGE PROCESS

Section One: Basic Concepts
OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. The Diffusion of Innovations is concerned with how to bring about change in a social structure and how to speed up the rate of adoption of that change.[62] Diffusion is defined as "the *process* by which an *innovation* is *communicated* through certain channels over time among the members of a *social system*."[63]

A process indicates steps. An innovation begins as information communicated to others which influences a decision and finally changes behavior. A social system indicates a communications network linking people; the primary indicator of this network is how people talk to each other. Homophilous people enjoy talking with each other.

B. The innovation that is needed in churches today is elementary yet entirely sufficient: *Jesus is Lord*. The scientific principles of the Diffusion of Innovations properly applied in churched culture can help us understand how to overcome resistance to this innovation and gain an 84%+ conversion rate after critical mass is achieved. *Jesus is Lord* is a discontinuous innovation; the institutionalized homeostasis of cheap grace is not biblical discipleship.

C. Critical mass: An "S-shaped diffusion curve 'takes off' at about 10-25% adoption, when interpersonal networks become activated so that a critical mass of adopters begins using an innovation."[64] Critical mass is the goal of conversation. Once critical mass is achieved, large scale, rapid adoption of the innovation is inevitable. Adoption moves rapidly through the Middle Adopters and Late Adopters. The resulting S-curve adoption is the signature sign that adoption has truly taken place.

S-curve adoption likely occurs in Acts 2:41, 4:4, 6:7, 11:21 and 16:5. The S-curve chain reaction along human networks is described in church growth as a "people movement" where people "become Christians as a wave of decisions for Christ sweeps through the group mind."[65]

D. Organic growth is incremental and gradual, but increments multiply in size with each generation. Organic change starts small and innocuous, so that resistance to change doesn't seem necessary. The change accelerates in the background, doubling at each stage, to the point where it is unstoppable. Whether the change is like leaven or like lilies in pond, the organic approach works. Senge refers to the S-shaped diffusion curve as "sigmoidal growth" which is "everywhere

---

[62]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 1

[63]Ibid., 10, 5. Emphasis mine.

[64]Ibid., 12.

[65]Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe In Church Growth* (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Seminary Press, 2000), 117-119. For the same sociological event in epidemics and cultural fads, see Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make A Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2002).

in nature."[66]

E. Two Ponds Concept. If the adoption of an innovation is like the spreading of lily pads, then there are two ponds. One is smaller pond of the visionary minority; Moore calls this the early market with 16% of the total size.[67] The second pond is the remainder of the church, the pragmatic majority, which Moore calls the Mainstream market.[68] An organic change builds momentum in the early market, adapting to local needs and focusing on crossing over the chasm into the Mainstream market at a point of greatest convenience. Once established in a small niche in the mainstream market, the innovation expands organically to fill the second pond.[69]

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.37.What does it mean to you for Jesus Christ to be Lord of a person's life? Of your life? How does this affect thinking, emotions, and behavior? What does the Lord want from you?
2.38. Where is it easy for Jesus to be Lord of your life? Where is it harder? Impossible?
2.39 What percent of your church would you say honestly follows Jesus as Lord?
2.40 How does your congregation talk about Jesus as Lord? How often? What is said?
2.41 What would be different if over 80% of your congregation were 100% committed to follow Jesus as Lord?

Section Two: Effective Communication
OBSERVATIONS, QUOTES AND ASSUMPTIONS: Agree or disagree?
A. The diffusion of an innovation is a process of managing communication. Mass media channels help create an awareness of an innovation and tend to inform Innovators and Early Adopters. Adoption beyond visionary minority, however, is relational, interpersonal and requires conversation: . . . *interpersonal channels are more effective in persuading an individual to accept new ideas, especially if the interpersonal channel links two or more individuals who are similar in socioeconomic status, education, or other important ways. Interpersonal channels involve a face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals*
. . . most people depend mainly upon a subjective evaluation of an innovation that is conveyed to them from other individuals like themselves who have previously adopted the innovation. The dependence on the experience of near peers suggests that the heart of the diffusion process consists of the modeling and imitation by potential adopters of their network partners who have adopted previously. So diffusion is a very social process.[70]

B. The innovation decision process is essentially an information-seeking and information-

---

[66]Senge, *Dance of Change*, 7. Cf. Senge*, Fifth Discipline*, 83.

[67]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 27, 38-41, 104-105. Paul Wiefels, *The Chasm Companion: A Fieldbook to Crossing the Chasm and Inside the Tornado* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 17-33.

[68]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, 41-55. Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 41-91.

[69]Moore, *Crossing the Chasm*, xi, 5. Wiefels, *Chasm Companion*, 34-75.

[70]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 18.

processing activity in which the individual is motivated to reduce uncertainty about the advantages and disadvantages of the innovation. The main questions asked are about what the innovation is and how and why it works. The information required for adoption, however, is about the consequences of adoption and the relative advantages or disadvantages in the potential adopter's situation.[71]

C. Five Steps in Adoption: Diffusion research identifies five main steps in the innovation decision process which occur in a time ordered sequence: *knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation* and *confirmation*. For the potential adopter, the purpose of the process is to decrease uncertainty and anxiety about the innovation. *Knowledge* begins the process with an awareness of the existence of the innovation and some understanding of how it works; mass media channels can share knowledge on what an innovation is and how it works. *Persuasion* is the formation of an attitude, favorable or unfavorable, toward the innovation; persuasion deals with the use, advantages and disadvantages of the innovation in the user's personal situation. Useful information from this stage forward is more likely to be conveyed through subjective opinions of interpersonal networks of homophilous near-peers. High empathy, however, creates a homophilous kinship that overcomes other differences.[72] *Decision* involves the choice to adopt or reject the innovation. At *implementation* the adopter puts the innovation to use; *re-invention* is an important part of this stage of adoption.[73] *Confirmation* occurs after implementation when the user "seeks reinforcement of an innovation decision that has already been made."[74] With added experience, users can reject using the innovation directly by abandonment (discontinuance) or indirectly by moving to another practice.

D. Six Factors Which Encourage Adoption:[75] Characteristics of an innovation are evaluated in five basic ways which help determine the rate of adoption. Adoption speeds up with a higher perception of *relative advantage* to benefit an individual's economic welfare, social prestige, convenience and satisfaction. *Compatibility* is the perception of the innovation as consistent with the existing values, past experiences and present needs of potential adopters; incompatible innovations often require a prior adoption of a new value system, and values change slowly. *Complexity* is the perception that the innovation is difficult to understand and use; adoption is slowed when innovations require new skills and understandings. *Trialability* refers to relative ease in experimenting with the innovation with less risk than full adoption. *Observability* is the

---

[71]Ibid., 14. Rogers prefers to use logical terms like "reducing uncertainty" rather than emotional terms like "reducing anxiety." Reducing anxiety plays a significant role in the family systems approach to change.

[72]Ibid., 19. McGavran's ethnic principle of homogeneity is better explained by Rogers' communication principle of homophily. It's not homogeniety that is important for change but the conversations that homogeneity and homophily allow between individuals who find communication rewarding. For information on the decision process in adoption, see Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 161-203.

[73]Ibid., 20-21. For information on the role of homophily in adoption, see Ibid., 286-290.

[74]Ibid., 20-21.

[75]Ibid., 14-16. For information on the six qualities which influence the rate of adoption, see Ibid., 204-251.

degree that results of innovation adoption are visible to others; this visibility stimulates peer discussions and more rapid adoption. These five qualities are the most important variables in increasing the speed and success of an innovation's adoption. Managing the values of these five qualities increases the rate of adoption and the success of the adoption.

  Re-invention has also been shown to increase adoption when the innovation itself is able to be customized experimentally by an adopter able to experiment and modify the innovation to suit local needs; this freedom and flexibility creates experiences which expand each of the five qualities.[76] Human beings love to experiment, and flexibility for experimentation increases adoption because unforseen benefits arise from these adaptations. Innovators are very creative at reinvention, and Early Adopters excel at perfecting and fine tuning reinvention for the highest possible efficiency.

E. If conversations change lives, then a working definition of a person's *micro-mission field* would be all those with whom that person had conversation on a regular basis.

F. A social system has a structure which gives regularity and stability to human behavior; structure allows predictability in expectations and is based on information (norms) about which there is little anxiety or uncertainty.[77] Norms are established behavior patterns for the members of a social system that define a range of tolerable behavior and serve as a guide or standard for member behavior in a social system. Rogers "norms" are Senge's "mental models."[78] Compatibility within existing norms highly increases the rate and likelihood of adoption.[79]

G. Acceptance of an innovation is a process of communication that is "a two way process of convergence rather than as a one way, linear act in which one individual seeks to transfer a message to another in order to achieve certain effects."[80] Dialogue is the primary activity of an effective Discipleship System; when the disciples are sent out to preach, they go in pairs; one proclaims while the other is in dialogue.[81]

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
2.37 For the innovation, "Jesus is Lord," how could you help people through the five steps of adoption: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation?

---

  [76]Ibid., 17.

  [77]Ibid., 24.

  [78]Senge, *Fifth Discipline,* 174-204.

  [79]Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 26.

  [80]Ibid., 6. Dialogue is essential for team learning and in processes of planned change. Senge, *Fifth Discipline*, 233-272.

  [81]It's obvious that while Jesus was teaching, healing, praying or doing other things, the disciples were engaged in conversations and doing ministry with persons in the crowd (Mark 2:15-16, John 6:8-9, John 12:20-22, Matthew 17:16, John 4:2). The disciples were practicing apprentices and interns, not passive listeners. Jesus would draw a crowd and stir things up while the disciples would engage people in dialogue as a means of evangelism.

2.38 For the innovation, "Jesus is Lord," how could you encourage adoption by increasing the relative advantage, compatibility, trialability, observability and reinvention while decreasing complexity?

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:
3.1 JOURNAL: Record your reflections and document your answers to the *Questions for a Better Understanding* found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

3.2 NETWORK OF INFLUENCERS EXERCISE: Look for the communication structure or network within your church. Before and after church, who talks to whom? Who talks to everyone? Around whom do little groups form? Who seeks out others who might not be included?

3.3 PIE PRINT FAMILY SCORE: If evangelism is a matter of conversations, then the potential for ongoing conversation can help you identify persons who are ripe for evangelism.
    1. Review the list of persons you speak with during the week that you wrote as a part of the WHO DO YOU KNOW? Homework Assignment 2.09 from Seminar One on Diagnosis.
    2. Add to this list the names of your neighbors. If you do not know their names choose a way to describe them. (For example, "young couple with a new baby.")
    3. Review your list and identify families you know who do not attend a church. (Those who belong but do not attend are no different from non-believers for the purpose of this exercise. A person who does not attend church does not have a living faith or a commitment to a local church.) Regular attendance for this exercise is once a month or more.
    4. Use the PIE PRINT tool below to review each name and assign points for each characteristic found within a member of that family.

PIE PRINT Tool: This tool measures a person's openness to conversation in eight characteristics. Each characteristic is one letter of the words PIE PRINT. Each adult contributes up to eleven points toward their family score.

Two points for each:
Prayer: when you pray, this person continually comes to mind.
Interested: this person is interested in you, your hobbies, or your life.
Extrovert: this person is very outgoing and loves to talk with others.

One point for each:
Problem: this person is suffering or has a problem; non-chronic problems are best.
Routine: you encounter this person routinely, once a week or more often.
Innovator or Early Adopter: this person is creative and interested in new ideas.
    Perhaps their house is full of gadgets, art, books or they write poetry.
Neighbor: this person lives within two blocks of you.
Time on their hands: this person has free time to converse with you.

    5. Combine both the list from the WHO DO YOU KNOW exercise and your neighbors into a new list; list families in order of the total family PIE PRINT score.

6. From this list, choose up to twelve families for prayer that they might find a life giving faith in Jesus Christ and a healthy church to attend. You are not praying for them to join your church; you are praying that God's will be done in their life (1 Timothy 2:4). ***Do not invite them to attend worship at this time; prayer is more important.***

3.4 Prayer Walking: If you simply walk through your neighborhood, how many conversations can you start? Then pray for people you meet and their needs as you learn them. Keep an ongoing diary of your conversations with your neighbors; track answers to prayer.

MODULE FOUR: DIALOGUE SEMINAR VIDEO MODULE
Lunch: *The Rabbi's Gift* (Item #218043)[82]
            For The Love of Pete (Item #203136)

HOMEWORK Discussion Questions:
5.01 Why does The Rabbi's Gift work as a system for change?
5.02 How do conversations make a difference in the lives of Pete and Judy?

MODULE FIVE: YOUR DIAGNOSTIC TOOL RESULTS
        Office of Congregational Development staff and consultants will introduce you to your Diagnostic Tool Results and materials to help you apply them with your Discovery group to your local church setting.
        You will be directed in how to break up into groups to meet with a consultant or trained volunteer who will guide you through this part of the process.
        Record your reflections and document your answers to the ***Questions for a Better Understanding*** found on the last page of the Seminar material with regard to this module.

---

[82]All video resources for Seminar Video Modules are available from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference United Media Center; call 217-529-2040 or visit online at www.intraweb.igrc.org/umrc (accessed June 15, 2007). Use the number in parentheses to order.

Self Study Journaling Questions
This material is presented to enhance your personal understanding and spiritual growth. Each module ends with an assignment to journal using the following questions as a means to refine a better understanding of the material.

QUESTIONS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING[83]

Explanation and *Interpretation* lead to *Perspective* and *Empathy*, which in turn lead to *Application* and *Self Knowledge*.

EXPLORE and EQUIP: Explanation and Interpretation
How could you best explain these ideas in your local church?
How would you explain the current reality? What is happening in the church now?
How could you explain using parables, stories, art, poetry or other creative means?
How could you best help someone else to understand and utilize these ideas?

REVISE and RETHINK: Gain Perspective and Empathy
Widen your perspective; how would you describe the bigger picture?
What are the components and how are they linked into a system?
Who are the people in the whole picture, inside and outside your church?
What are the perceptions and feelings of each of them? How does that make you feel?

As you reflect on the learning experience of the seminar, revisit the *HOMEWORK Discussion Questions* in each section. Consider your answers and record them in an ongoing Discovery Journal; using the question numbers will help you keep track of your answers without having to rewrite the questions. Your answers will be important later as you formulate your own strategies for making disciples.

EXHIBIT and EVALUATE: Application and Self Knowledge
With a better understanding, how could you improve the system?
What would be the steps of your plan?
How would the results of your application benefit all concerned?
What is your place and role in the system now?
What are your perceptions and feelings now?
What have you learned about yourself through this inquiry?

---

[83]These questions are based on ideas from Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1998).