

A little short of change?

THE BODY BUILDER

camsey
by Major Terry Camsey –

Some while ago at a denomination meeting in England, a proposal was put on the table about women preachers. In despair, one of the participants asked, “Why can’t the status quo be the way forward?” In other words, “Can’t we move forward without changing a thing?”

That may be how some corps folks are feeling as they work through the demanding re-visioning and strategizing exercise...they are resistant to any re-visioning, or revisioning (if you see what I mean) efforts. And that is entirely understandable. Once we have worked out our comfortable directions and worn them into furrows, it’s difficult to climb out of them and—when they are deep enough—even to see over the top!

I guess that there is nothing wrong with the status quo if you are, through it, seeing the results that please God. If, however, it has become the stagnant quo, survival—never mind thrival (my spell check tells me I have coined new word!)—is in danger. And don’t you just hate it when—in situations where decline is rampant—when you hear people saying things like “Thank God I’ll be out of here when it finally falls apart!”

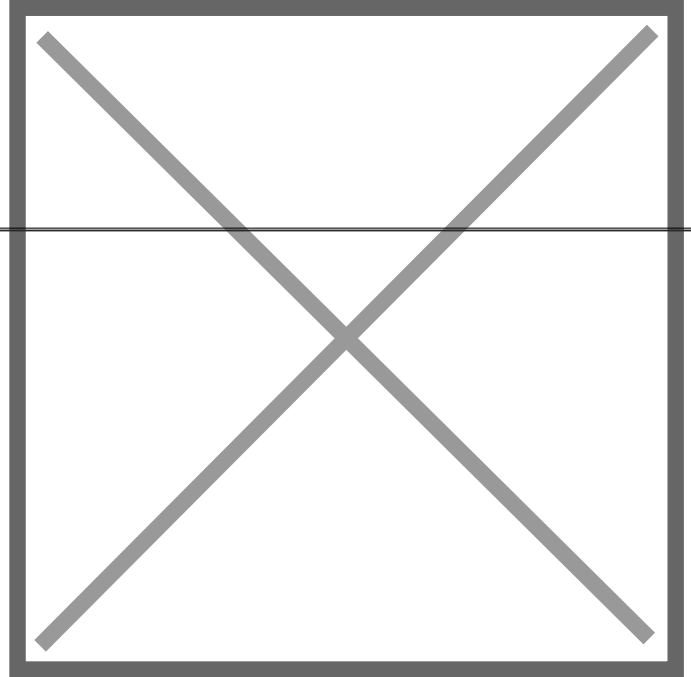
It is so easy to defer action likely to disturb.

I’ll confess to one worry I have had during the whole of the envisioning process. It evolves out of the question used, by some, during that stage “What do we want to see happen?”

I think that the question itself is wrong. It might better be phrased as, “What does God want to see happen?” or even, “What do we need to see happen?” (the latter especially in a situation where there is a history of decline. What we want may not be what is needed to promote health and growth).

Here’s a good question to ask of everything the corps does...” For whose benefit do we do this?”

For whose benefit do we continue to run the programs? For whose benefit do we hold them on the days and times that we hold them? What if, for example, we are striving to reach the unchurched in our community...we have completed a survey in which they tell us that the day and time that is most convenient for them to attend a



church service is Friday at 5.00 pm...and our response is, “We hold our services at 11:00 am on Sundays” (our habit and comfort zone)” with an attitude of “take it or leave it!”

Try it. Ask yourself (of everything that your corps does in an effort to fulfill The Great Commission) “For whose benefit are we doing this?...in this way?...at this time?”

It is a sobering question and one that gets right to the nub of our motivations, challenging the stagnant quo...the way we do and want to continue to do things.

You might want to follow up with a question, “For whose benefit should we be doing this?”

Booth was not at all “fuzzy” on this issue. His focus was determinedly on “others”...designing and adapting his strategy frequently to more effectively reach them for Christ.

If we want to retain our tradition, should not that same focus be ours?

A little short of change? Maybe you’ll find that is the root of any difficulties you have in attracting, winning, retaining and making disciples of the lost. After all...

For whose benefit should we do what we do?