

The background is a dark blue gradient with faint, light blue concentric circles and degree markings (40, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260) on the left side. There are also some dashed lines and arrows pointing in various directions.

# MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP: (MISSIONAL *CULTURE*)

PASTOR RICH SHERIDAN, SYNOD EVANGELIST



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*The Practice of*  
**ADAPTIVE  
LEADERSHIP**

TOOLS  
AND TACTICS  
*for Changing  
Your Organization  
and the World*

RONALD HEIFETZ | ALEXANDER GRASHOW | MARTY LINSKY



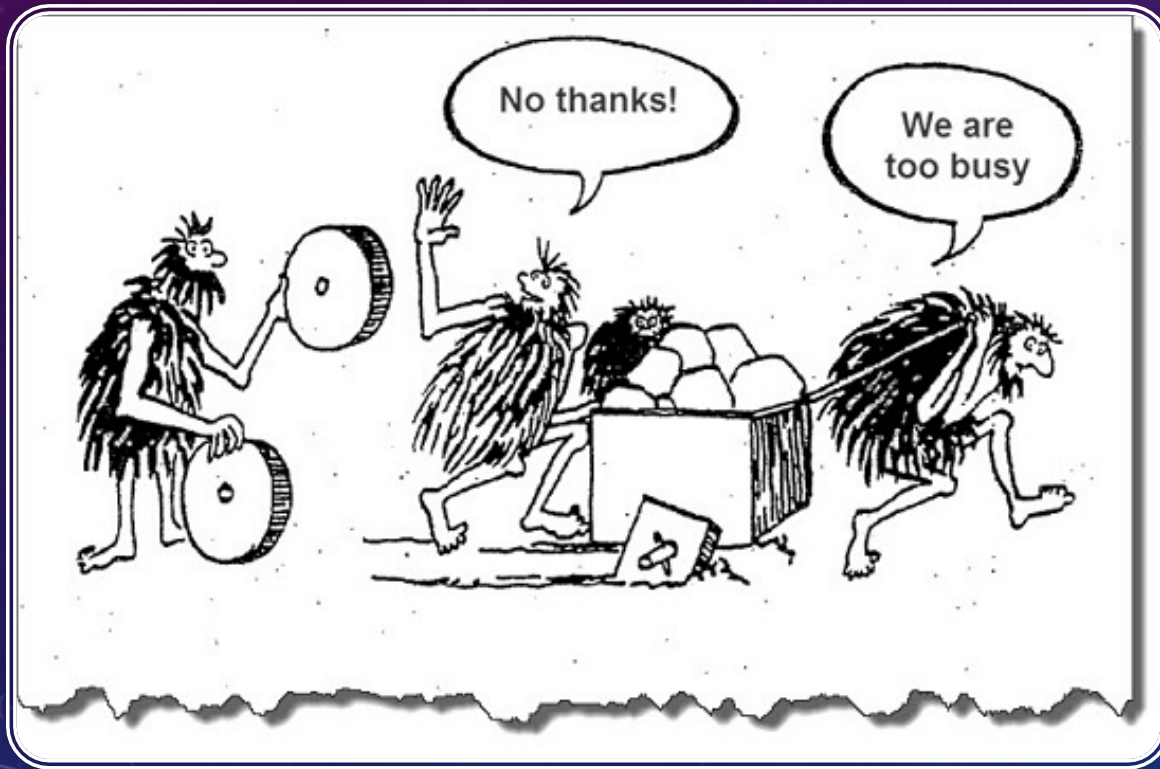


## MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

- Doing church differently
- *Sometimes*, what we've been doing "stops working" (or we finally realize it isn't anymore).
- Worries about sustainability (read: money), the future, "young people"
- Yearning for more (than the routine, than what we've been doing)



# WE'RE BUSY, BUSY, BUSY, BUT...



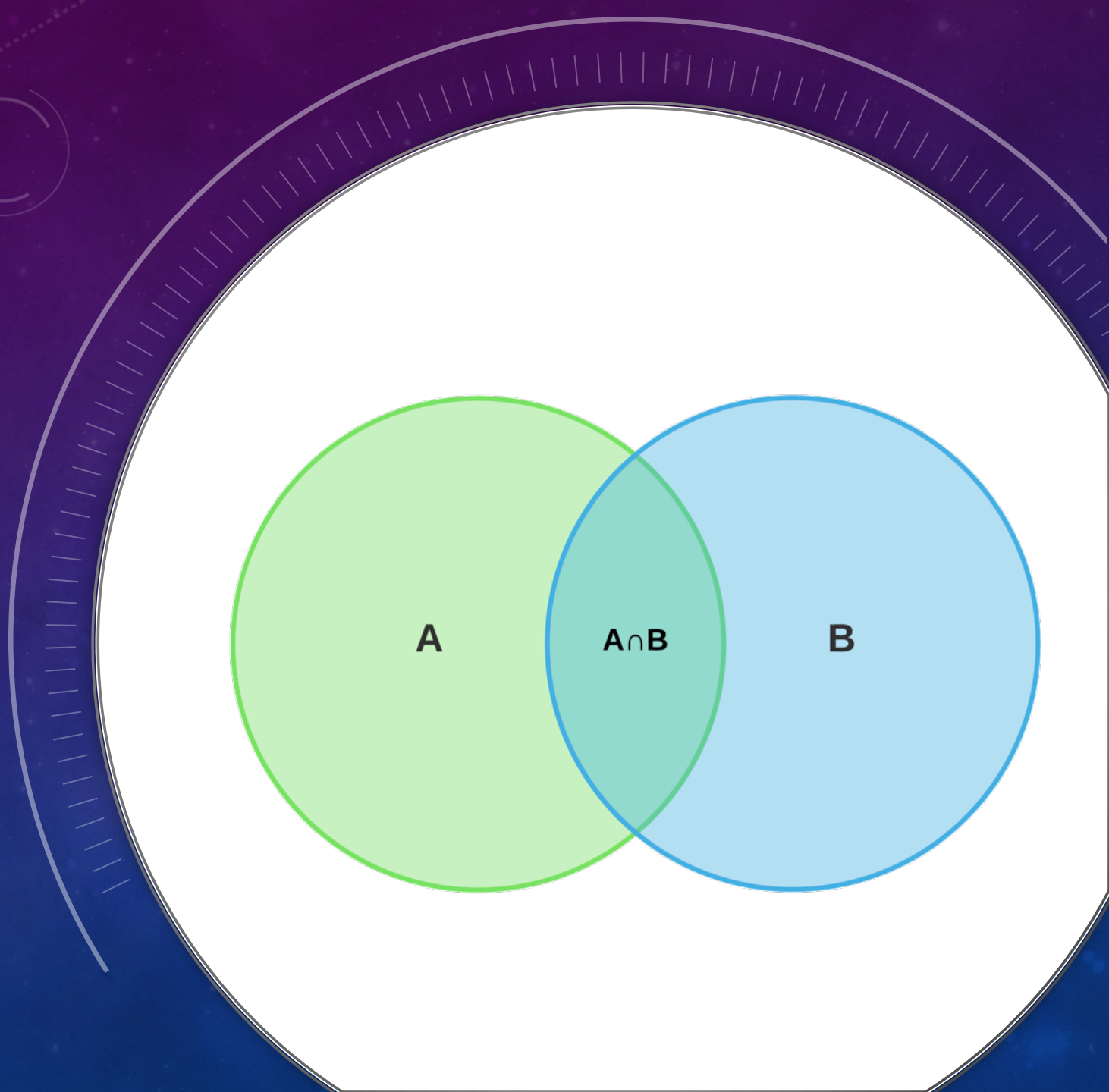
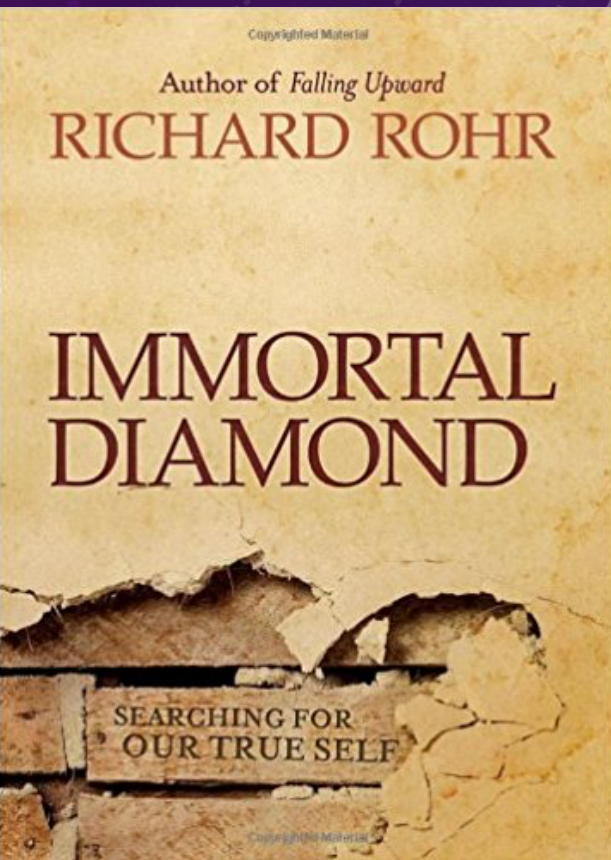
- We've little sense of an experienced, living connection with God!
- We're out of touch with the community surrounding us
- What is it all for? What is it all really about?
- Does it feel like a community? The Kingdom? (Who's invited?)
- Does it look like a city or lamp? Taste like salt? (Matt 5)
- Is there really passion/energy (or are we mere hamsters on a wheel)?



“CHURCHIANITY”

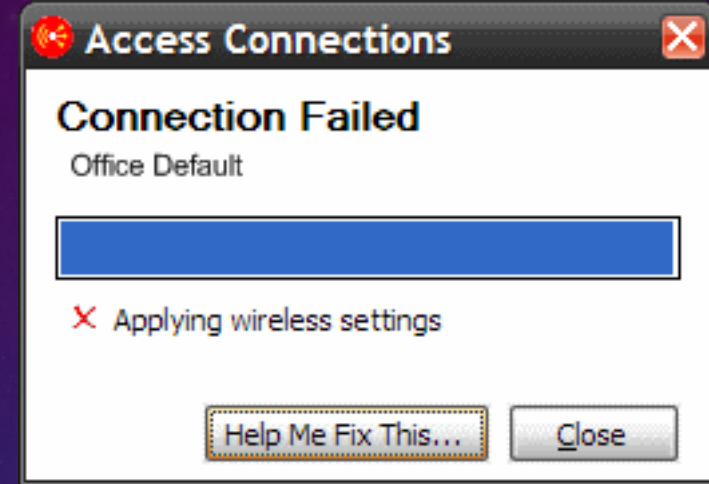
VS.

“FOLLOWING JESUS”



# AND ASPECTS OF WHAT WE'RE DOING...

- Are failing to connect with younger generations
- Are failing to connect with needs in the world around us (i.e., *living* the gospel)
- Are more focused on keeping “insider” stakeholders happy than appealing to “those not yet there”
- Are more about maintaining established structures and traditions than taking time and making space for the truly new (i.e., new life, living Spirit, GOD!)
- Are overly complicated and incorrectly sized







## A FEW IMPORTANT CAVEATS:

- My talk today (or TM 2.0, or anything else) is not a cookie-cutter model with steps 1,2,3...
- This is not even necessarily a formula for sure and certain (worldly) “success” (JC was crucified, after all!)
- And in fact, there is none to be had!



# SO WHAT THE HECK IS IT THEN?

- A sincere effort to make the time and space for God to enter in...
- A sincere effort to open ourselves up -- to listen for God and to follow (i.e., discipleship)
- A sincere effort to break open the routine and to be about *something*
- A sincere willingness to die to ourselves and live to God (and to others)
- A sincere willingness to let go of what we know (get outside our “comfort zones”) and embrace the unknown (try something new)



# SO, WHAT'S REQUIRED?

- An experimental mentality
- Preparing for fallout
- Making time and space for listening, creativity, prayer, God (and responding?)
- Mourning the losses; sincerely opening up about the fear of change
- Being courageously who we/you are (not trying to copy someone else's "success")



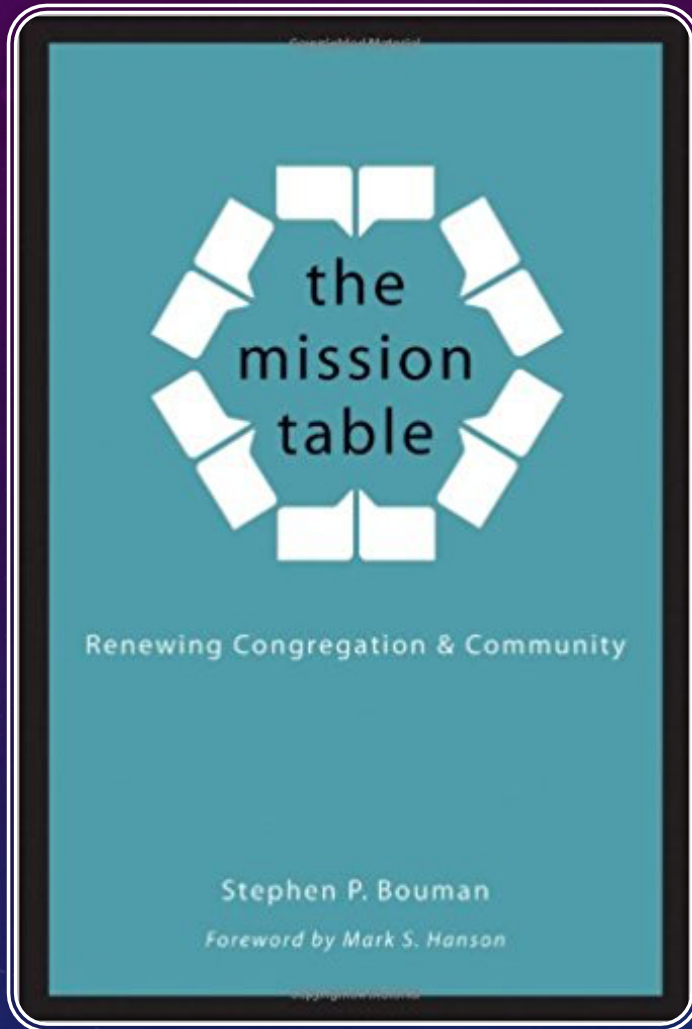
# ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES, ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

- This is what it means to take up “adaptive challenges,” or to engage “adaptive leadership”...
- If it’s not tough, we’re probably not really doing it.



# SO, WE BEGIN WITH...

- Stopping, simplifying (making the time, the space)
- Listening and looking to God
- Less is more
- God will show us the way (do we really believe this!?)
- More being, less doing
  - Our problem has hardly been not coming up with enough stuff to do!
- The personal-corporate connection
  - Council members as models of faithful living, or simply facilitating the faith-life connection in general



# TRANSFORMATIONAL MINISTRY FRAMEWORK: REROOTING IN RELATIONSHIP...

- ...with God
- ...with one another
- ...with the community



# HOW DO WE TRULY LISTEN? (APART FROM ANY “DOING!”)

- What is God saying to us?
  - “How are we living out the gospel?” vs. “How might we?” (i.e., daring to dream!)
- What are our gifts and needs as a church? What has God given us in terms of gifts?
  - How do we intentionally listen to quieter, less “heard” voices in our midst?
- What are the gifts and needs present in the community?
  - With whom could we connect?



# DEFINING THE ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE: SEVERAL ARCHETYPES...

- Gap between espoused values and behavior
- Competing commitments
- Speaking the unspeakable
- Work avoidance
- (comfort vs. doing the hard work)





# WHAT ARE OUR VALUES?



- Are we living the explicit, expressed ones or other ones
- Which conflict?
- Which are most important?
- What is the level of emotional investment?
  - Is it present among leadership?
  - If not, do the vision or the leaders need to change?
  - Is it being conveyed? How?
  - If not, do leaders need challenging and equipping?

# CHANGE MEANS LOSS. LOSS MEANS GRIEF. WHAT WILL POTENTIALLY BE LOST?

- Identity
- Competence
- Comfort
- Security
- Reputation
- Time
- Money
- Power
- Control
- Status
- Resources
- Independence
- Righteousness
- Job
- Life

ARE OUR MISSION, PURPOSE, AND RESOLVE POWERFUL  
ENOUGH TO CONQUER SADNESS AND FEAR?



WE ARE SO RISK-AVERSE  
(AND MAYBE JUST A LITTLE  
OBSESSED WITH “GOOD ORDER”)!

- Yet Jesus says, “Do not fear” (Matt 6, Matt 8, Jn 14)
- God’s living Spirit challenges our attitudes toward
  - Risk and experimentation
  - Resistance and conflict
  - Vulnerability, suffering, and sacrifice
  - Incompetence and failure





# QUALITIES OF AN ADAPTIVE ORGANIZATION

1. Elephants in the room are named.
2. Responsibility for the organization's future is shared.
3. Independent judgment is expected.
4. Leadership capacity is developed.
5. Reflections and continuous learning are institutionalized.



# ABOUT NUMBER 1 (THOSE DARN ELEPHANTS)...

1. The public, explicit conversation; the ostensible reason for coming together
2. The informal chat, hallway conversation, or premeeting (beforehand; doesn't include all participants)
3. Set of internal conversations unfolding w/in participants' heads (reflections, observations, interpretations, elephants)
4. Follow-up conversations via email or by the coffee (what really happened, unspoken agendas, tension otherwise undiscussed)

→ THE TRICK IS TO BREAK BENEATH THE SURFACE SO THAT MORE OF 2-4 SURFACE DURING THE ACTUAL MEETING!





## HOW MIGHT WE...

- Model the behavior we seek in others?
- Cultivate a sense of *shared* leadership, shared responsibility?
  - “Adaptive leadership generates capacity, not dependency” (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky 2009).
- Encourage creativity and independent judgment?
- Develop leadership (supervise, mentor, encourage)?
- Challenge people to critically reflect
- Honor risk-taking and experimentation (*and* learn from it!)



# HOW MIGHT WE...

- Orient ourselves toward action (and give up analysis paralysis or infamous Lutheran “death by committee”)
- Broaden our own and others tolerance for discomfort, conflict, ambiguity, tension?
- Change dysfunctional people-pleasing patterns and unhealthy attitudes about ambition and power?
- Stay both in the present and forward-looking (refusing to allow traditionalistic loyalties or nostalgia to hold us captive)?
- Lean into incompetence (How else do we learn, grow, or change?)
- Courageously face tough decisions and an unknown future?

# A HEALTHY BALANCE BETWEEN REALISM AND OPTIMISM IS CRITICAL

- We keep optimism alive by...
  1. Taking time to renew your faith that things do not need to be as they are
    - Remind yourself different and better are possible!
  2. Maintain self-discipline to reflect, in cases of success & failure
    - Expect to make mistakes and keep learning by doing!
  3. Keep awake to opportunities to contribute, add value to others' lives
    - Keep finding ways to give, love, and serve!

## WHAT IS THIS GLASS?



- ☐ HALF EMPTY
- ☐ HALF FULL
- ☐ 50% FILLED WITH WATER
- ☐ WHO CARES? I'M GOING TO DRINK IT ALL

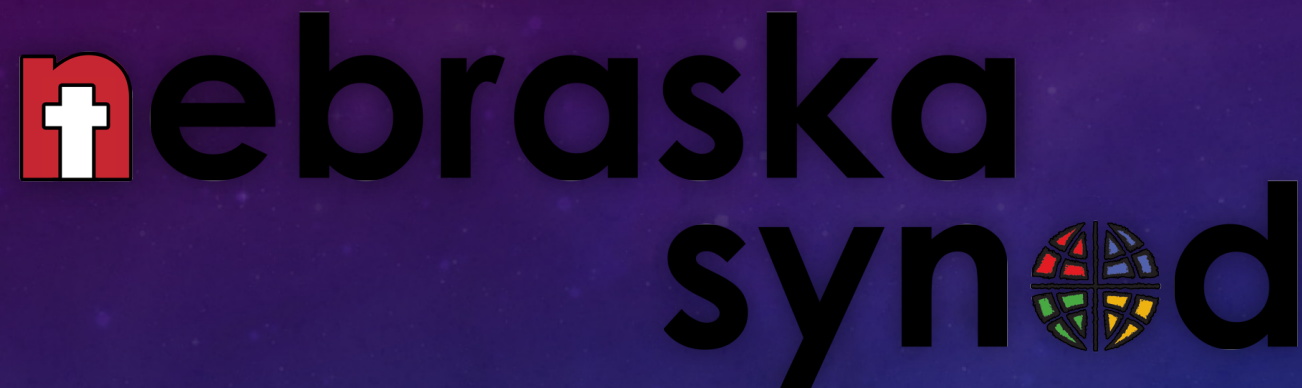


# ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT...

- Living with purpose and possibility to make a difference in the world
- Risking & leading for the sake of...causes, products, innovations, injustices, organizations, countries, communities...
- *AND...*
- The life-saving Gospel we all have been so blessed to receive and of which God had made us stewards!

DO WE REALLY BELIEVE THIS? DON'T WE WANT WHAT WE HAVE FOR OTHERS AND FOR THE WORLD AROUND US?





EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

THANK YOU AND  
GODSPEED!!

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