

# *Finding God in All Things: Contemplation, Intercession, and Intervention*

*The theories, methods, skills, emotional intelligence and stance of effective parish development*

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## **CONTENTS**

### **Introduction**

Finding God in all things is our life and our work. Our “shaping” and “developing” of parish churches is rooted in the conviction that God is already present in the parish, we do not bring God to the parish.

### **Chapter 1: Contemplation – Intercession – Intervention**

It’s rather basic to the Christian life that our action flows from our prayer. Parish life rooted in the fullness of prayer is the base for communal and individual discernment. And for parish leaders, it is the soil for all the interventions made in the work of parish revitalization and development.

### **Chapter 2: The Process of Planned Change & Discernment**

The Process of Planned Change is a method of careful thought and responsibility action. It provides order to the organic processes of a community trying to arrange its common life and decide on and navigate its destination. It is our working “together with God in the creation of our own life, our own identity, our own destiny.” There are usually four stages: diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

We also take a look at related methods: Survey Feedback, the Change Formula, and Three Approaches to the Process of Planned Change.

### **Chapter 3: Change Forces and Strategies**

Change in the parish church is influenced by a variety of forces and strategies. While our focus in this book is on the process of planned change, all change is not “planned change.” These forces and strategies are the field within which parishes worship, form competent Christians, and have some influence upon neighborhoods and communities. Our efforts of planned change are a way of both seeing and responding to the opportunities and threats of these social forces. Those efforts are also engaged alongside other change strategies that impact the parish. We’ll look at Contextual Issues: Factors Shaping Parish Life, Organizations in a World of Choices, and Organizational Change Strategies.

### **Chapter 4: What We Seek in Making an Intervention**

When we intervene, we are seeking a significant improvement, specific and measurable in some manner. We are also interested in sustainability. Will what we establish last over time and under pressure? Is there adequate internal commitment in the parish? And is there a committed and

competent critical mass of people and is the parish culture such that there is wisdom in managing the polarities of change and stability? Sections on: Significant Improvement: purpose of the parish – the primary cycle – key factors. Being Strategic. Be Specific. Focusing on Strategic Issues: Covey model – demand system – two planning forces – ways to focus the parish – parish and diocesan partnerships – parish development agreements – identity and direction – strategic management. Sustainability over time and under pressure: long term and important – adequate resources – critical mass – internal commitment – parish culture.

### **Chapter 5: Understanding Parish Dynamics**

The parish can be understood using the same theories and models that apply to any organization. How is power and influence exercised? What is needed for change to happen? How is parish culture created and changed? How do we manage the polarity of change and stability? There are also dynamics unique to the parish. Its oscillation between renewal in baptismal identity and purpose and an apostolate in daily life. Sections include: A system – Shape of the Parish – Renewal-Apostolate Cycle – Organizational diagnosis – trust development – group dynamics.

### **Chapter 6: Implementation and Oversight**

Here we provide the considerations related to interventions and how to go about making faithful and effective interventions. Sections: Pastoral Oversight - Competence – Commitment – Process of Change – Appreciative Stance – Leadership Styles – Character.

### **Chapter 7: Interventions**

This chapter will provide two interventions that can be used by leaders with a basic amount of competence in organization development and change processes. The first is a process to help a parish get into a conversation about improving parish life and work. We'll also offer a developmental initiative designed to create significant improvement in a particular area of parish life.

### **Last thoughts**

We end with several observations. Comments on issues and dynamics that are always present.