

Track 3: Dynamic Leadership—From Risk to Renewal

I. Problem Statement

Fast Company recently reported that *“a survey of evangelical pastors by seven seminaries found that while they said their education had prepped them well in church history and theology, they felt undertrained in administration, management, and strategic planning.”*

II. Outcome Statement

Leaders need to think critically and strategically about how to identify people and organizations at risk and take the steps necessary to bring renewal to the wider culture, to the organizations they lead, and to their own personal life and leadership.

III. Track Objectives

- *Culture at Risk*: To gain insights of how to better engage culture as a leader and individual.
- *Organization at Risk*: To gain insight on successfully navigating organizational changes through asking strategic questions and by interacting with other leaders.
- *Leader at Risk*: To learn how to recognize a leader who is at risk to themselves, their organization, and their family through hearing a research-based presentation on the common patterns found in leaders who experience a significant fall.



IV. Summary of Findings

Culture at Risk, session led by Erwin McManus

The 1st space (church) needs to invite all to belong and be defined by love, not by the disagreements that so often occupy conversations amongst Christians. There needs to be creativity and invention in this space. Jesus did not die for sacred spaces and great buildings and it is a sin to put these traditions before future generations of people. In the 2nd space (the workplace) pastors must be wary of believing they can train people to be effective lights in the business world when they have never worked in it themselves. It may be a case of the wrong people training the right people, so new solutions and innovative ideas need to be implemented. The 3rd space (the venues of the world) is only achieved by invitation and only when one navigates the 1st space with authentic relevance and the 2nd space with excellence. The Church must seek to be the servants of the 3rd space.

Organization at Risk, session led by Dee Ann Boyd

Five major risks to organizations were presented, followed by every participant in the track being asked to identify the most pressing risk to their organizations. The results are indicated below:

RISK IDENTIFIED	TRACK PARTICIPANTS
(1) The mission is not clear	26%
(2) The customer is not defined	9%
(3) Key seats are filled with the wrong people	19%
(4) Performance is not measured	31%
(5) Leaders settle for “knowing” over learning	15%

In working groups, the participants performed an exercise by Marshall Goldsmith which identifies specific benefits to the organization if the risk were to be identified and addressed with success. Multiple benefits were named, including:

- an emergence of energy to our staff;
- more involvement from other stakeholders;
- better marketing and training materials;
- synergy;
- better focus throughout the organization;
- more capacity;
- less posturing/fakeness/boasting;
- increase in resources for running the organization;
- measurement metrics;
- emergence of leaders;
- more focused/consistent use of resources;
- better relationships with my team members.

Leader at Risk, session led by Marc Rutter

Healthy leadership creates healthy organizations. The weight of leadership exposes one’s character and can reveal “cracks” or “red flags” that reflect where the Gospel must go deeper. To address these issues one must look below the surface. A case study of leaders who have experienced a significant fall reveals 6 profiles:

- The Narcissistic Star who rises,
- The Narcissistic Star who does not rise,
- No Boundaries,
- The Floater,
- Irresponsible,
- Authority Problems.



As leaders it is important to identify your own tendencies as well as looking for patterns in those one leads. In a healthy exchange of “speaking the truth in love” there is a Triad:

- Speak the truth
- Hear the truth
- Growth.

There is a risk that in bringing the truth there may be another Triad:

- Perpetrator (the one bringing truth),
- Victim (the leader at risk), and
- Rescuer (one the Victim calls on to “end-around” the situation).

Red Flags to look for include:

- power imbalances in marriage or significant relationships,
- a sense of specialness or entitlement,
- high performers whose character issues are overlooked,
- lack of connectedness,
- no inner life,
- life of speaker not congruent with the message,
- inordinate desire for power or leadership,
- manipulating others by demanding of them what they wouldn’t do themselves,
- no track record of forgiveness and resolved conflict,
- believing in their position because of talent not God,
- territorial control issues,
- theological imbalances,
- personal neglect because “putting others first,”
- over-engagement/codependency.

In order to address these issues, one must be engaged in honest community and understanding that the power for growth comes from the Gospel.

Conclusions

Risk is both a reality and opportunity for change. It seems far easier to avoid looking at the areas of risk and simply maintaining the status quo in culture, organizations, or personal lives. But rather than turning a blind eye, identifying risks and beginning to walk towards them can lead to dynamic change, increased health, and new opportunities. Facing difficult truths takes courage and perseverance due to the potential positive outcomes in the lives of individuals, organizations, and the wider culture. Identifying and facing areas of risk far outweighs the costs.