

PROMOTING GROWTH AND HEALING IN CONGREGATIONS

1. Having a plan
2. Expressing problems in terms of relationships
3. Knowing what triggers anxiety
4. Handling anxiety on the level of consciousness
5. Being willing to invest what is going to be

“Organizations grow under pressure, when a change or a crisis reveals new strength from all quarters.” Max Dupree

6. Identifying strengths and resources
7. Creating options
8. Remaining on the side of challenge
9. Following the plan
10. Asking questions

From *How Your Church Family Works* by Peter L. Steinke (The Alban Institute, 1993)

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE BRIDGEBUILDER PROCESS

- A process of growth
- A multi-step process of several months
- A way to conceptualize emotional systems
- An objective view of the congregation’s emotional system
- Empowering the congregation to manage their situation
- Lessening of anxiety to promote greater clarity
- A focus on assets, not liabilities
- Redefining situations as an opportunity
- Finding a vision for the future
- Renewal of purpose and mission
- Creating a healthy future
- Increasing the leadership capacities within the congregation

BRIDGEBUILDER



*A structured process
for helping congregations in
times of transition
and tension*

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forward.” Soren Kierkegaard

THE PURPOSE OF BRIDGEBUILDER

The Latin phrase *pons facio* mean “bridgebuilder.” A pontifex, signifying a priest, is one who draws sides together and connects people to one another.

The Bridgebuilder process is a way to move beyond anxiety to clarity, to focus on resources rather than deficits, and to create a clear future instead of remaining mired in confusion.

The primary Bridgebuilders are the people of the congregation who are most in the position to effect decisions, changes, and direction. A French proverb says, “Change is a door that can be opened only from the inside.” Bridgebuilder is a way to help this happen. It is about empowering people to create a new future.

“...in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church...”
Colossians 1.17–18

BRIDGEBUILDER PROCESS DESIGN

ENTRY

1. Initial contact
2. Exploratory meeting
 - a. Determining readiness
 - b. Clarifying expectations
 - c. Outlining process, assigning tasks
 - d. Forming a contract

EDUCATION

1. Workshop (Teaching)
 - a. Conceptualizing emotional processes
 - b. Case studies illuminating theory
2. Workshop (Dialoguing)
 - a. Small group discussion with set of questions
 - b. Open forum

INTERVIEWS

1. Preparation: interview schedule
2. Interviews
 - a. 10 leaders, 10 members
 - b. Staff members
3. Data collection
 - a. History
 - b. Change, loss stressor instrument



ACTION REPORT

1. Feedback meeting (report distributed, discussed)
2. Use of Report for Action Planning Process

ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

1. Meet with strategic planning group
 - a. Planning process:
 - Mission
 - Goals
 - Tasks
 - b. Plan follow-up meetings
2. Presentation to congregation through focus groups
3. Receive focus group feedback; finalized plan; communicate to congregation

AFTERCARE

1. Consultation
2. Check-up sessions
3. Rituals
4. Evaluations completed