

# **Theological Answers**

## *The Case of Double Trouble*

**Church Administration**  
**Dr. Leroy A. Solomon**

**Communication and Conflict in the Church**  
**Dr. Neal W. May**

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**Christopher J. Kinner**

### **Outline**

- I. Introduction
  - A. Steps 1-3
  - B. Not Covered
- II. The Journal
- III. Preaching, Teaching, Feedback
  - A. Preaching
    - 1. Week 1
    - 2. Week 2
    - 3. Week 3
  - B. Teaching and Feedback
- IV. Assessment Worksheets
  - 1. Readiness for Change
  - 2. Resolving Conflict Strategically
  - 3. Change in Retrospect
- V. Personal Reflection
  - A. Why this Approach?
    - 1. Experience
    - 2. Write
    - 3. Remember
  - B. Things Learned

## **I. Introduction: The Case of Double Trouble**

As I spent time over the last few weeks pondering this assignment the complex spiritual issues that we have covered during both this and last quarter came to mind. Through the process of prayerful consideration and academic research, I have decided to complete this assignment utilizing a threefold process.

### **Step 1: The Journal**

I have re-written the case study into a journal entry and added subsequent journal entries to display the process of internal spiritual activity that a pastor in this situation should undergo. I believe pastors should journal and track their spiritual journey of prayer and reflection in order to better listen to the voice of God in their lives.

### **Step 2: Preaching, Teaching, Feedback**

There are three brief sermon descriptions provided. These sermons would be based on a solid exegesis of a scripture and each would come from much prayer and reflection. Each sermon outlines an aspect of vision for what I am guessing this pastor and church are being directed by God to be and do. Sunday school lesson titles have also been included; these would be limited to three lessons targeted for an adult Sunday school class, home fellowship groups or Wednesday night Bible studies. Each lesson will utilize the scripture references from each of the three sermons on the same topic. These will promote a deeper and more interactive look at the challenges that face us as we grow in both our personal lives and the church. This format will provide another avenue to be in dialogue with Church members (Murren, 183) and group leaders that are valuable resources in gathering feedback from God's people.

### **Step 3: Assessment Worksheets**

I have included three assessment worksheets for use in this process. The first worksheet uses information from Doug Murren's 'Steps in the Change Process' (Murren, 176) and Aubrey Malphur's 'Readiness for Change Inventory' (Malphurs, 189). This worksheet could be utilized to assist in determining the readiness of a church for change.

The second worksheet was compiled from Phillip M. Van Auken's, The Well Managed Ministry, and Dr. Neal May's lecture notes. This worksheet could be utilized either personally or with a leadership team to assist in preparing hearts for the conflict types that come with change. This preparation for conflict should be a key goal for any maturing leader or Church staff.

The third worksheet 'Change in Retrospect' fulfills one of my personal standards of ministry. This standard seeks feedback and review of completed projects in the pursuit of excellence in ministry. Excellence in our service to God requires us to learn from experiences such as this and to use this knowledge to aid in future ministry situations.

### **Not Covered**

What could not be covered in this project were just how many discussions and meetings with brothers and sisters in the church family that would need to happen as a part of this process. My personal goal in ministry will be to preach, teach and mentor in such a way that our leadership team would see the specifics of these needs even before God brings them to my attention (because I am being responsible in conveying the larger vision). Once challenges are brought to me, I could pray and support the change in quite a different way than this case study suggests. Leading from the front is important but getting too far out front leaves others behind! Undoubtedly there will be times in ministry when I do not see a need until it is 'late in the day.' It is my hope that I will follow God's call regardless of when, how and where the vision comes.

## **II. Step 1: The Journal**

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #001*

Over the past months I have been feeling frustrated with the growth of our Beulah. Out of my frustration I am starting this journal to begin recording my feelings and thoughts in an attempt to gain insight into what God has for me and His Church. Recently, in my frustration, I have been reminded of the value of journaling as I seek God's will and guidance in difficult situations.

In order to continue growth in the congregation, I need to lead the church in double sessions of worship on Sunday mornings. How do I lead them through this change?

Beulah Baptist is a sixty year old congregation here on the south edge of Cleveland. This church remained at 175 people for many years until the city began to expand. I became pastor three years ago and in that time we have grown from 175 to 300 people every Sunday morning. The problem is that the sanctuary seats about 300. I feel it is time to double our worship services.

The problem is that there are those that feel the church will be "split apart" if we change the service times. We are also having people that are complaining about the worship services: choruses, overhead projector and synthesizer. Some have even talked about two different types of worship services. Some feel this is a compromise and others see it as proving the point that we are only "creating two different churches."

Another issue involved in the double services is Sunday School. The Sunday School has remained rather stable during this time of growth (about 150-200). There are some new people that go to Sunday School, but most of them do not. There is plenty of room for growth in Sunday school and, therefore, having a second worship service at 8:00 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. may be too early to be effective.

As pastor, I feel this is a very essential problem and that much of the future of the church and my ministry here hinges on the outcome.

## **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #012*

Over the past two weeks, God has been showing me some areas that I need to pray earnestly about and seek His wisdom on, as well as input from His people. I have been pulling some books from my shelves and examining the scriptures also as I have been praying about this situation daily. In the next few days I will also contact several fellow pastors and mentors in ministry whose opinions I trust to begin to gather their counsel on these matters.

## **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #014*

After consulting God through prayer and seeking counsel from Christian brothers, I believe that as pastor I have made some mistakes.

- 1) I should have recognized the need for multiple services well before we reached our maximum seating capacity and begun finding ways to cast this vision more creatively.
- 2) This fear of splitting in two is certainly not godly (as fear is not from God). What is at the root of this fear? How can I get to the heart of this matter?
- 3) If members are complaining about worship styles, are we truly maturing in our faith to focus on what God has for His entire community on a Sunday morning?
- 4) Is the stability of the Sunday school a sign of strength or weakness? There is room for growth perhaps, but is this program vital and alive? Why are new members not getting involved in the Sunday school program? Are the established members failing to welcome them? Are these classes not meeting their needs? Rather than continuing my “make sense” approach, I believe God is calling me to pray deeply regarding this program and meet with our Sunday School superintendent several times over the next few weeks to see how he is doing and listen to him. Hearing his concerns and seeking God will better assist me in seeing where God is leading in this situation.

5) While the Sunday school program seems stable at present, it is a good time to begin researching and praying for this program. The future will hold changes for the educational ministries of the church as God grows us and hopefully these changes will be made utilizing “we” statements in this journal.

6) Rather than be perceived as pushing my agenda of adding a second worship service on Sunday mornings, how can I get God’s people to come to me open to do anything that it takes to bring others to Christ? Adding a second service will be a very serious matter to some, like uprooting a child from his/her home and sending them to a new school. I need to pray that God will help me to see this as the serious and painful change that it will be to some and that only through His power can this be done.

Regardless of the outcome of this process, I know that God has the future of this church and my life in His hands. Help me not to fear anything, Father, because we always walk together. Help me to walk with you. Show me **your** way for **your** Church. In the words of your prophet Isaiah (14:24), "so it will be as I have purposed, so it will stand." Says the Lord.

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #023*

I have been greatly frustrated over the past two weeks. Stress is continuing to build and I am feeling more overwhelmed. Although times are tough and I feel the need to do something now, I am only praying daily over the second service and our other needs. A good friend of mine, Pastor Botts at Trinity Baptist, suggested I read the book Leadershift by Doug Murren. I picked up the book this morning and have begun to read it. He tells of pastors that have come to him afraid of being fired (Murren, 56) and his recommendation that maybe they were changing too many things too fast. I have felt their fear and perhaps this is why Beulah has been dangling between paradigms. I need to refocus (Murren, 50) and be a leader who takes risks but one who also realizes the serious nature of paradigm collisions. Doug Murren lists these costs as (Murren, 54):

- Relational breakdowns
- Wasting emotional and spiritual resources

- Inefficient use of monetary resources
- High levels of frustration and turnover among the leadership
- High levels of misunderstanding in the community at large about what our church stands for

With this list in mind and my previous laundry list of concerns for the church (entries 1 and 14), it may be best right now to focus on only working through the most pressing need before us. I am going to commit to prayer the need to focus on one important need.

Our church mission statement, "fanning the flame of Christ in our hearts and igniting the fire of Christ in our community" was here well before I came. How is this statement being utilized today? Can this statement help us to keep our focus?

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #035*

As I spent my Morning Prayer time again seeking God to make clear the vision for His Beulah, I suddenly began to pray for the members of our leadership team. A slip of paper fell out of my Bible, it was a little slip of paper that I had forgotten about. It contained the words of a poem that one of my Seminary professors liked. It was written by Charles Thompson and goes (May, 104):

You can not pray the Lord's prayer,  
 And never once say "I."  
 You can not pray the Lord's prayer,  
 And even once say "My."  
 Nor can you pray the Lord's prayer,  
 And not pray for another;  
 For when you ask for daily bread,  
 You must include your brother.  
 For others are included  
 In each and every plea,  
 From the beginning to the end of it,  
 It does not once say "Me."

I was reminded of Dr. May's observation that the Church is not an organization, but a living organism; the body of Christ (May, 37). I believe God is guiding me to focus on making one change, adding a second service and to begin praying this week for my leadership team as God prepares their

hearts and minds to receive this vision for Beulah. I know God wants to move us forward and guide us through this change. However, other changes such as updating our worship and expanding or revitalizing Sunday School will need to cease as we do not want to tax the living organism more than she can bear. I am reminded of elderly hospital patients that must recover from one trauma to the body before receiving further treatment for other ailments. It would do no good for the body if we tried to fix all the problems at once and we lost the life of the patient.

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #046*

After sharing the vision God has given me regarding the need for a second service at Beulah with my leadership team, I was surprised that five of my seven leaders seemed enthused and ready to join me in seeking God as we began this endeavor together. To be honest, the two that seem to be highly critical of this pursuit have often been critical of my leadership although not usually united in their cause. This vision for a second service has caused them to unite and I suppose that now I need to 'get over it.' As leaders, we have now chosen a ministry direction and as Reggie McNeal explains in his book, *A Work of the Heart*, I have "chosen my pain" through establishing a direction for this ministry (McNeal, 157). I know this to be God's direction for us and have received much encouragement from scripture, pastors and mentors that I trust and even from leaders in this church that I have polled through my time of searching. However much I feel this is God's will, I am also committed to staying humble as a servant leader and approaching these leaders with a "let's see if it will work" mindset that does not make me a know-it-all. I must not say "God wants it this way" as Doug Murren points out, innovators are not always right (Murren, 174). This pursuit is one that will bring out the innovations of our staff and people and not the brilliance of me as a leader.

## **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #055*

One of my friends handed me a book today. He is the pastor at Second Baptist Church in the city. Although he has been at Second Baptist for over twenty years, Rev. Tiggs told me that he almost left seven years ago when they added a second service and began a building program simultaneously. He had heard of our situation and wanted to assist. The book he gave me was, Your Church can Grow. I really appreciate his support and continue to be relieved that Beulah is not alone in her struggle. This book lists the qualities found in church growth leaders and I think they are vital for our staff to have, so I will list them here (Wagner, 33):

1. Single minded obedience.
2. Clearly defined objectives.
3. Reliance on discerning research.
4. Ruthlessness in evaluating results
5. An attitude of optimism and faith

## **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #066*

Following the Biblical model of Luke 10:38-40, I had to explain to a church member today that the added service time is not a choice between good or bad. It is rather a choice between good and best (Munroe, 141). This church member thought that continuing to update our worship services with more contemporary worship styles should not be put off. I assured this person that we need to reach this goal of adding a second service to most directly follow our mission statement, "Fanning the flame of Christ in our hearts and igniting the fire of Christ in our community." Through creating greater access to worship of any type, we are getting more 'air to the fire' right now. No matter what type of worship we engage in, it is being stifled by a lack of space. Limited access to worship keeps some from the fire. After this discussion, I realized the need to meet tonight with many of the church leadership team and the other leaders in the church and ask them to create and agree on the decision to add a second service

in three months. Setting a specific time and agreeing to this as a church will keep the focus clear for us in the days ahead.

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #076*

We have decided to create 'the document' (Nehemiah 9:38-10:29). As with any significant change, this course has been plotted with much serious thought and months of planning. I have met with multiple leaders, committees and members and confirmed the priorities of God's word and the priorities of our church. I am encouraging everyone involved that the document we have developed outlining our change in adding a second service contains the right priorities for our church and confirms these priorities by documenting them. Our structure must bow down to our priorities and our strategy is clearly to keep the fire of God from being stifled in cramped services that keep new members of our community out of the church. As we trust in each other and share our commitment to the mission of this church, we will be united as a church no matter how many services we have.

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #086*

Just as Sanballet became enraged at Nehemiah (4:1), the enemies of the vision to establish a second service have now fully awakened and there is fierce opposition to the vision from several corners of the church. One of the main opponents of the change is our Sunday School Superintendent who resides on our leadership team. He has accused me of desiring to add a second service for two reasons.

- 1) A **Me Too** view of ministry – there are other churches in the area that run multiple services and he believes some of us want this simply because other churches are doing it.
- 2) Our **Inability to maintain the status quo** – I believe this is true. Holding things level really means sliding backward; we must move forward to receive God's blessings for us.

George Barna calls these, "Loser Strategies" and I was deeply hurt that our faithfulness is having such negative attacks launched at it (Barna, 148). Following my reading in Nehemiah (4:2), we can see

that Sanballat asks just such discouraging questions of Nehemiah. This dream cannot be sacrificed due to this type of conflict. We must remain independent from this person's expectations (Munroe, 156).

**The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #108*

So far five families have left the church and two from our leadership team have resigned. One resignation came after my first sermon of three that I have presented on this situation (our Sunday School Superintendent). The series is really a three part series on Stewardship. We are praying that this series (that is also being discussed in our adult SS Classes) will help our members feel connected to the upcoming change. I have wept over the loss to our family and tried to be as mature and loving in the situation as possible. There are those that are concerned that we should stop the change or that continuing will kill our Sunday School program. But for now God has provided a wonderful lady of God who wants to support our Sunday School until we complete the addition of a second service time and are ready to review and possibly grow this program. She understands the vision of the leadership team and I would say she is an innovator. I would like for her to continue on as a part of our leadership team after the major change. I will begin to seek God on this situation, for now however, she is more than happy to help us stabilize the program.

**The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #126*

I have responded to criticism and misinformation from church members many times regarding the additional service. It takes time to help people see by opening our sanctuary to greater availability to our community that we are becoming better stewards of God's facilities and resources. After responding to what seemed like ten thousand critical members, my tone became slightly harsh and there was some wear evident on the explanation. I have contacted my accountability partner to ask him to pray for me and my attitude. He assured me this is a tough situation and God does hold us to a higher level of

accountability in these situations with our attitudes. He and I prayed together. Thank you, Lord, for the friends you have given us. The path is easier to walk when we walk together!

### **The Case of Double Trouble**

*Journal entry #146*

We have begun to plan our first Sunday of two services as a celebration Sunday (Neh. 12:27-30). It is four weeks away and all the planning has been done. Leaders are in place and additional greeters and ushers recruited (our teaching Pastor, Ron, took care of all of this and has told me not to worry about it!). Our Music Minister has contacted special musicians and I have been told that all I will need to do on this Sunday is a prayer of blessing at the end of each service! The service is to be filled with praise and worship, a service of celebration. Perhaps the church knows how tired this situation has made me. I appreciate the rest and look forward to the celebration. Our Youth Department is going to be putting up signs around town inviting people to the services and our Music Minister has planned a promo that will run on our Christian radio station. I do not know how it happened, but the church seems revitalized and excited. Others own this project now and I am so overjoyed to see smiles on their faces. This is truly something great for Beulah and our community. Our joy when we are together, even for two services, is something that I cannot wait to see!

### **III. Step 2: Preaching, Teaching, Feedback**

#### **“Priorities”**

I will lead a three-week sermon series on stewardship. The series is titled “Priorities” and will feature the ongoing visual icon of a to-do list.

#### **Week 1**

#### **Attacking our Me-Attitudes – *Matthew 5:3-16***

Jesus calls into question the prevailing assumptions of His day and ours; that it is more blessed to be rich, powerful, full and happy. These Me-Attitudes focus our attention on what is best for my needs, my possessions, my power and my rights. Jesus presents a different way for us to live. His way

removes us from our self-centered schemes and places us in a setting in which we are called to be a **we**, putting others first, rather than a **me**!

## **Week 2**

### **Train for the right Race! – 1 Corinthians 9:25 and Colossians 3:12-17**

Are we training for the right race? Are we in the people business? This sermon ponders the depth of our commitment to the race for Christ that we run each day. Training can be painful and take over our whole lives. Are we prepared to offer this level of commitment to God and each other? The outcome of running well is perfect love and unity.

## **Week 3**

### **Bear Fruit! – Mark 11:12-23**

Jesus curses a fig tree and then drives the money changers from the temple courts. These two actions relate to each other and help us understand why the temple courts were meant to be a place of prayer for the nations. Jesus expects us to not just give the appearance of bearing fruit, but to actually be open and accessible to do just that! God will wither and destroy things that just look good on the surface such as the fig tree and the temple. Our job as good stewards is to look to the heart of Jesus' teaching here and be a people that love God with our whole hearts and bear fruit; not just look good and keep up appearances!

### **Teaching and Feedback**

Each sermon will also have a study guide with discussion questions for reflection on how these sermons relate to our individual lives and impact the way we live. They also contain questions designed to gather feedback on how these sermons could effect the upcoming addition of a second service time. The study guide has a tear off tab for questions that can be given to the discussion leader. The pastor and our leadership team are always available to take questions regarding these teachings and the upcoming addition of a second service.

## IV. Step 3: Assessment Worksheets

### 1. Readiness for Change [For discussion among staff]

Derived from: Doug Murren's 'Steps in the Change Process' (Murren, 176) and Aubrey Malphurs 'Readiness for Change Inventory' (Malphurs, 189).

1. Who on the team supports this change?
2. Who outside the team in the organization supports this change?
3. Is there a strategy for collaborating with committed workers and allowing for dialogue with the congregation (through multiple venues)?
4. How secure are members with the current ministry status quo?
5. Why should the team want to make this change?
6. To what extent are team members merely tolerating the change?
7. Is there a strong champion for this change on the team?
8. What type of change is the most needed on the team now: evolutionary or revolutionary?
9. Is this the right time for the change? How do you know?
10. To what extent does the team feel politically pressured into making the change?
11. How high a price is the team willing to pay for this change?
12. Will we be able to celebrate the fruitfulness of this change?
13. What is our developing story as a church, our ties to our beginning, our legacy?
14. What are the motivating factors that are prompting this change?

### 2. Resolving Conflict Strategically

Compiled from: Phillip M. Van Auken's The Well Managed Ministry and Dr. Neal May's lecture notes.

This conflict seems to center more on: (Check Appropriate Answers)

#### HOT

#### COOL

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Personalities	Issues
Emotions	Ideas
Confrontation	Avoidance
Implementation (means)	Goals (ends)
The Past	the Future
Commissions (what was done)	Omissions (what was not done)
Interactions (within team)	Interaction (outside of team)

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If **HOT** issue, try these suggestions:

1. Ask team members to overlook personality differences and put the mission of the team first.
2. Minimize the use of "I" and maximize the use of "we" and "us."
3. Speak in the future tense rather than the past tense.

4. Replace “I feel” with “I think.”
5. Focusing on intentions rather than actual behaviors.
6. Stressing what we can accomplish in the future more than what we failed to accomplish in the past.

If **COOL** issue, try these suggestions:

1. Discuss what actions individual team members want to take regardless of how they feel about the team’s mission.
2. Place emphasis on the team’s rich legacy of past accomplishments and fruits of cooperation.
3. Focus on bridges that team members have built to one another.
4. Focus on the unique and distinctive contributions of individual team members.
5. Share how members have enjoyed team interactions even when goals were not ideally achieved.

### **3. Change in Retrospect**

1. I clearly understood the reason for this change
2. I supported this change
3. I am satisfied with my participation in the process of bringing this change about.
4. I understand the costs as well as the benefits of this change.
5. I feel the change was adequately discussed and planned.
6. The change was initiated and implemented in a personal rather than impersonal manner.
7. The change was officially endorsed by the organization before being implemented.
8. The change was smoothly implemented and well coordinated.
9. I was aware of the goals of the change.
10. I did not feel pressured or pushed to accept this change.
11. There has been no visible opposition to this change.
12. The change was implemented sensitively and at a reasonable pace.
13. I’m glad we made this change.
14. The organization has benefited from the change.
15. I would like all future changes to be handled in the same sensible manner.

## **V. Reflection**

### **A. Why this Approach?**

There are several reasons why I fulfilled this assignment through rewriting the case study into a journal log. I thought it would be good to highlight these reasons briefly along with a short reflection of the impact of this assignment on me personally.

1) The journal assisted me in my attempt to experience this type of process as deeply as possible. While there are many aspects to the change process, a major part of guiding change stems from the realization

that change happens over time and each block of time holds specific needs and requires specific areas of focus from the leadership team.

2) The log entries developed in me a greater understanding for the need to write things down. My earliest log entries in this assignment lacked the clarity and focus of later entries. I could see this because I was able to read these entries and begin to observe the process through scripture and in the light of wise counsel.

3) This format also encouraged me to write important scripture references, quotes and thoughts from lectures that I want to remember as I am involved in change in the future. By thinking through the steps of change, I was able to ask the question what have we covered this quarter in reading or lecture that could help at this point in the process or when and if I am faced with a similar tough situation?

### **B. Things learned**

There are three tough lessons that I know will be critical for me to grow in my maturity to handle. One is handling ‘Hot’ conflict without becoming emotional and making the situation worse. The other is responding ‘hotly’ to repeated ‘cool’ conflict questions. Many times I have snapped at others the tenth or twentieth time the same question is asked of me. During a time of change a leader needs to be optimistic and stable as questions that are asked for the fifty-third time receive answers levelly and appropriately with love and care.

The third lesson for me is that not all change is successful and not every person will benefit from change; an associate may leave, families may go elsewhere. As leaders we are called to follow God and do what is best for His church. Regardless of what some may say, a consensus may not always be reached. Holding onto two reigns, loving God and loving His people, can cause tension when there are those that move in a way that opposes God’s direction. Knowing this truth will not break my heart any less when the time comes for tough decisions as a servant leader of God and His people.

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