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# PRESS RELEASE

## Change is a learning process

*New book outlines how congregations can change into missional, fruitful learning communities*



**Seattle:** Change is seldom easy for an individual, much less an entire group of people such as a church congregation. In ***Learning Change: Congregational Transformation Fueled by Personal Renewal*** (Kregel Ministry/May 27, 2017/ISBN: 978-0-8254-4455-5/ \$18.99), authors **Jim Herrington** and **Trisha Taylor** share the stories of church leaders who were able to transform their congregations by first making changes in their own lives.

Based on their previous research and work with church organizations, Herrington and Taylor were invited to develop a collaborative process focused on personal and congregational transformation. They created a 30-month pilot project with 16 congregations. Many of the leaders involved in the project felt trapped in unhealthy, even toxic, church situations and were desperate for hope. *Learning Change* chronicles these transformations lived out in practice, in community, and throughout time in a wide variety of congregational contexts.

“One thing all the participating churches had in common is they needed deep change in the mental models guiding their decisions about how to impact their communities effectively with the Gospel,” Herrington explains. “This included confronting and changing mental models about things dear to us as Christians: discipleship, mission and the role of the church. They all also needed support and encouragement as they worked to change those mental models.”

Each chapter includes stories of real-world applications, questions and suggestions to practice in congregational contexts and resources for further exploration. Breaks are built in throughout the text to invite readers to engage with God. The book is divided into four parts:

- The keys to real change
- Four core values necessary to effect change
- Mental models showing how the ways we think affect the church
- Additional tools for more effective leadership.

“The world is changing at the pace of a jet in flight, and the church is changing at the pace of a horse and buggy,” Taylor offers. “What doesn’t need to happen is for congregations to double down and work harder at 20<sup>th</sup>-century strategies and ways of thinking. We hold that congregational transformation is not possible apart from being accompanied by a journey of personal transformation. Personal transformation is found in the lost art of spiritual formation, and we want to help church leaders find it.”

*Learning Change* is more than a story of how one church changed. This is a resource for church leaders who are faced with the challenge of congregational revitalization and ready to accept an invitation to join in a process of powerful transformation. The method is proven as the pilot project is now a thriving process in two nations, two denominations, six regions and more than 100 congregations.

Learn more about *Learning Change* at <https://ridder.westernsem.edu/learning-change/>.

## About the Author



**Jim Herrington** is an author, former pastor and conference leader. He holds a Masters of Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is in the process of completing his D.Min. in Spiritual Formation from the Houston Graduate School of Theology.

Herrington is the founder and team leader at [Faithwalking](#), an organization that teaches, coaches and empowers leaders to equip their communities to live the fully human, fully alive life that Jesus lived. He is also the founding executive director of Mission Houston.

In his spare time, Herrington enjoys running, gardening, travel and a whole lot of reading. Jim and his wife, Betty, live in Houston, TX, and are the parents of five adult children.

Visit Jim Herrington's online home at [www.jimherrington.com](http://www.jimherrington.com).



**Trisha Taylor** is a counselor, minister, author and consultant. She is a fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and has worked with pastors and congregations in Houston and across the country for more than two decades.

In addition to *Learning Change*, Taylor is also the co-author of *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*. She is a co-founder of [Faithwalking](#), a spiritual formation process that equips people to live missionally.

Taylor enjoys good stories wherever she can find them and life-giving friendships. She and her husband, Craig have more than 30 years of experience as a clergy couple and have two adult children. They live in Houston, TX.

Learn more about Trisha Taylor at <http://trisha-taylor.com/>.

## Suggested interview questions

- How did you find and collect the stories of churches who were able to institute lasting change in their congregations for this book?
- In what ways did the churches participating in the study most need to change? Did they all share a common goal?
- Tell us about your observations and research that led to the pilot programs you started in Houston to reconnect pastors and congregations to their calling.
- Who is the intended audience for *Learning Change*, and how should the book be used?
- Explain the learning process involved with making a change. How is the transformational learning model different from other methods or models of learning?
- What are the keys required for real change?
- Why is dreaming such an integral part of change?
- In the second section of *Learning Change*, you write about the four core values that drive our process of learning and effect change. What are those values, and why are they imperative?
- How does a church leader take what he/she learns about change and the changes he/she makes within himself/herself and move the congregation to changing as a whole?
- Part three of the book delves into mental models and shifting the way we think about ministry and the church. What are some of the old ways of thinking that need to be reexamined in order to move forward as more missional congregations?
- In what ways is the church losing its impact here in America? What does and doesn't need to happen for the church to regain its ground?
- What kind of leadership is required to move a congregation of many views and opinions through a process of change as one body?
- What are some of the additional tools offered in the last section of the book for more effective leadership?
- Is there a destination churches should hope to arrive at after reading *Learning Change*?

To request a review copy of *Learning Change*, to schedule an interview with Jim Herrington and Trisha Taylor or for more information, please contact Audra Jennings, [audra@liffusegroup.com](mailto:audra@liffusegroup.com).