God's Timeless Change Management Plan: An Exegetical View of Revelation 19
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Abstract

Leaders are change agents.   It would be plausible to suggest that change is usually associated with situations that are undesired.   Rarely is change viewed when the situation is positive and productive. This could be said for both secular situations as well as scriptural situations. Arguably speaking, since the beginning of time, as chronicled in the Bible, God has been executing His change management plan; to move from a hopeless and sinful world to one of internal life. This paper, through exegetical techniques, socially rhetorically criticizes the Book of Revelations, specifically, chapter 19 as the culmination of God's change management plan. Consequently, this paper will utilize intertexture analysis, specifically an oral-scribal approach. Through hermeneutical exploration and expository techniques, utilizing Kotter's (1996) change management framework as the backdrop for expository analysis of the Scriptures, parallels are drawn to expose the similarities found in secular change management and apocalyptic Scripture. Conclusions and areas for further analysis or also suggested.

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Much of the leadership literature suggests that leaders do exert influence on followers to achieve a common goal (Yukl, 2010), which also implies that leaders are change agents. It would stand to reason then that if leaders are change agents the ultimate achievement would be that of change. Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggests that change is brought about the change in the people and not processes or systems. "People change what they do less because they are given analysis that shifts their thinking them because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings (p. 1)." From a secular perspective, this statement is rather curious, as it has unspoken Christian underpinnings and potentially carries a double meaning implied in the word 'truth'.

Bass and Bass (2008) submit that for a transformational leader to bring about change they must possess the ability to paint a vision for the followers of an organization. As the term vision implies, it is a type of imagery that conveys a condition of the future. Because vision is so essential in leading, vision statements are often generated by the top leader of the organization. DuBrin (2007) posits a study in which the findings described a few identifiable factors of a vision statement; involves far-reaching strategic planning, sharing with others, innovative realism, and risk-taking. Each of these items are related to the relationship aspects of an organization more so than a product for a brand name. So it's plausible to submit that vision statements are statements about leader follower relationships more so than direction as many vision statements are classified.

Examining a leader, as a change agent requires them to set a course in the vision from what is to something better, instilling a change management plan. This paper presents chapter 19 in the Book of Revelation as God's change management plan for this world. Through exegetical methods, specifically intertexture, and expositional analysis, utilizing Kotter (1996) eight-step change management framework (see Table 1 for detail) as a backdrop, reveals God's timeless and congruent plan for a fallen world into a perfect ending. Utilizing this parallel approach, Scripture can also enlighten modern-day Christians to operate in a secular world in perfect harmony with God's will.

Kotter's 8-Step Change Management Plan

- Establishing a Sense of Urgency

- Creating a guiding coalition

- Developing a vision and strategy

- Communicating the change vision

- Empowering employees for broad based action

- Generating short-term wins

- Consolidating gains and producing more change

- Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Table 1 – Kotter's (1996) eight-step change management plan

Intertexture Analysis

Intertexture analysis is a component within the social- rhetorical discipline that is more concerned with the text in question and the external context in which it resides (Robbins, 1996). Intertexture is concerned with the relationship between the text and the author and focuses on its internal understanding of the text itself using external sources (p. 96).   To enable this analysis, the intertexture framework is comprised of four specific domains; oral-scribal intertexture which addresses the different uses of external text in the text being analyzed, culture intertexture, in this application, is concerned with the symbolic words and the logic derived from that particular culture (Robbins, 1996), historical intertexture, similar to social intertexture, however does focus on a specific set of events in history as opposed to social norm of the time (p. 118), and social intertexture addresses the information of the text as it pertains to the people of the Mediterranean (Robbins, 1996). Given the structure for this research and the fact that the text analyzes is the Book of Revelation, only an oral-scribal perspective is applicable in this paper because the book of Revelation utilizes strong metaphors and imagery to reveal God's plan which deemphasizes the aspect of culture, history and social norm.

More specifically, oral-scribal intertexture addresses the recitation, recontextualization and reconfiguration of external text whether captured verbally or written, in the text (Robbins, 1996). This research analysis certainly incorporates the logical supporting text found in other

portions of the Bible, however, it also introduces other contemporary literature found in the secular domain. This approach places greater emphasis on the supportability and validity of Scripture within the tested confines of secular design. This type of analysis, for this paper, will assist in utilizing hermeneutical context as well as expository perspective. The approach will utilize secular frameworks in which to dissect scriptural discourse.

Kotter's Eight-Step Chance Management Plan

Establishing a sense of urgency

Kotter (1996) simply puts that people won't change unless there's a reason to do so. Silvia and Duval (2001) submit that the byproduct of understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, and their ability to overcome the weaknesses, is by addressing the dissonance that is created when one's self compares themselves to a higher standard. Yukl (2010) submits some perspective to the resistance of change and specifically for this stage in the change management process there are a few that believers and unbelievers alike share. Superimposing a lens of Scripture, there continues to be a lack of trust as well as a belief that change is not necessary because the scales of economy are seen through man's perspective and not that of God (p. 299).

From a biblical perspective, Scripture submits that there is an urgency addressed by the fact that Christ will come again in the future, which at that point "(…) His judgments are true and righteous (…)" (Rev 19:2). Specifically we see the same words being used in the Old Testament (Ps 19:9), which would indicate a temporal consistency throughout the Bible. Arguably, there are many other places where authors and characters urged the reader to have a sense of urgency as it pertains to their relationship with the Almighty.

Kotter (1996) suggests that the enemy of urgency is complacency and there are many sources for complacency, which is the major reason for lack of action. Arguably speaking God provided his only son Jesus Christ for our internal salvation (John 3:16), which in turn signifies an aspect of hope. The apostle Paul suggests that it's only through our faith and not our doing our works that provide that salvation (Eph 2:8-9). From a moderating perspective, it would appear that this "salvation by faith" might be a source of complacency if addressed to an extreme. One may argue that if no action can truly bring about salvation then why act at all. If that is the case, a leader is challenged to instill action in their followers into combat

complacency. It is plausible to suggest that the imagery found in Revelation is to instill a level of urgency if immediate action is not taken.

Creating the guiding coalition

Even the creator of the universe, Jesus Christ, chose to execute his mission with 12 other men. In this particular phase of the change management process corridor suggests that 75% of the guiding coalition must be congruent with the leaders box. Scripture documents that Jesus' guiding coalition was not 100% on board with his mission as Judas betrayed him. However, utilizing cotter is a quantitative standard Jesus met the criteria. Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggest that a guiding coalition is essential to carry out the change management plan; however, they also must be team.

Stewart, Manz, and Sims (1999) put forth that there is a difference between a group and a team as a group is a set of people that share a common interest while a team have interdependence. A group, having a common interest, does not require collaboration to achieve a common goal. However, teams that have interdependence, by implicit definition, require collaboration. Stewart, et al. (1999) also state that there are two major components that draw people to becoming a team; functional perspectives and interpersonal perspectives. Functional perspective suggests that a team with diverse skills can accomplish much in a short appeared of time while interpersonal perspective are divided into two areas; affiliation and affection. Affiliation is an effective feeling that comes from our nature to be connected with others such as family. The other basic psychological main is associated to the desire to give and receive affection similar to family relationships; the need to give and receive affection is inborn from our childhood. These aspects appeared to be more connected toward formative years however the literature does suggest that the psychological needs are carried with us through life (p. 5).

The only plausible reason that God would give His only son to save us and give us the internal life is (John 3:16) that God wants to be affiliated and has deep emotional affection for us. In the New Testament, the relationship described between Christ and the church is one of bridegroom and bride, another metaphorical perspective to relay the relationship. That metaphor continues in Revelation as John states "(…) Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (…) (Rev 19:9)." It is one verse or earlier, (Rev 19:8) that John suggests that those that are to engage in this relationship are 'saints', believers and the faithful that will

join Christ in marriage (Ryrie, 1995).   In essence, this is a culmination of God's mission to be affiliated and have affection for us similarly to a contemporary leader engaging in teambuilding activities. This parallel supposition is not meant to trivialize internal solvation, however, at a microcosm they share similar characteristics.

Developing a vision and strategy

   Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggested there are a few imperatives when creating a vision and managing change. Visions must be clear such that they can be articulated in a few minutes, however common visions are also ones that move and stir others to action. Northouse (2010) suggests that leaders that want to transform people or an organization must possess a vision that can be articulated such to inspire others while promoting intellectual stimulation (p. 191). George and Sims (2007) utilize a metaphor for leading followers from a visionary perspective; it is the authentic leader that provides the compass pointing to 'True North' and fulfilling the leadership role (p. xxxv).   Before the journey towards true North, George and Sims (2007) suggests that values and principles or the cornerstone to initiate the first step.

   John reveals to us God's vision of a triumphant return of Christ and does so in allegories and metaphors. Geary (2011) suggest that metaphors is a way of thought before it can become a way with words. Neurologically speaking in metaphors, which have meanings to us, can be retained as information longer because they actually are located in two parts of the brain with a connection. A simple example might be the metaphor of the stoplight, where red signifies stop, yellow signifies caution and green signifies proceed. From a business perspective that metaphors have continued as financial charts often utilize red to signify a loss ingrained to signify a profit. It would be plausible to suggest that God, through the writings of John, intended revelation to be internalized them memorized by all believers by its strong use of metaphorical language.

   The term vision denotes imagery as it implies some type of visual perspective. DeSilva (2004) describes the Revelation of John in such words, "Many popular interpreters of revelation try to make sense of its *visions* [my emphasis] by looking to the future, decoding its images in terms of contemporary politics and forecasting how our history will unfold (p. 885). DeSilva (1998) the suggests that the term vision can be bidirectional, and in this case, submits that John is providing a vision to the readers that we are to honor God at whatever point the events of

Revelation occur. From a statistical research perspective, this bidirectional observation may suggest that a moderating effect is present (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Communicating the change vision

It is not enough to just have a vision but it is essential to communicate in such a way that it is actionable and believable by those who can affected and will be affected. Kotter and Cohen (2002) emphasize that it is essential to understand what people are feeling such as their anxiousness, potential confusion, internal anger or overall distrust by the leader. Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus (2006) suggests that the erosion of trust comes from missed expectations. It would be plausible to then submit that the opposite is true, that met expectations would maintain trust or potentially even increase it between two people. Hence, it's understandable that if a leader is communicating a vision that they creating expectations and their intention to meet them therefore maintaining or increasing trust. Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) suggests that leader transparency is a essential ingredient for setting a precedent to meet or exceed follower expectations.

DeSilva (1998) submits the fact that the entire book of Revelation is really aimed at communicating a vision to seven specific churches in which John may have had some level of intimacy through acquaintance in the past. We understand that the book of Revelation was given to John through visions and dreams (Ryrie, 1995, p.2009) that imply imagery from God and potentially utilizing these specific churches personalized John's perspective on the urgency of the message. This personalization, at face value termed 'strong ties', may be viewed as a inefficient way of communicating specific content as often intimacy dismisses factual information (Granovetter, 1973). However, in this case, the use of imagery is powerful such to capture the imagination of the reader and potentially the use of this medium invokes a greater sense of urgency (Wurman, 1990).

Empowering broad-based action

Kotter (1996) submits that empowering people to affect change requires the ability to communicate a sensible vision to employees such that if employees have a shared sense of purpose with the leader it would facilitate action to achieve that purpose. In parallel, it is the leaders responsibility to adjust structures to align with the vision hence allowing the

empowerment of followers to affect change. In addition, providing the improvements to follow her skills will not only assist in executing the vision but will also increase commitment towards the organization. Allen and Meyer (1996) suggests that there are three aspects of follower commitment that are essential for the leader to address; affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment.   In each have their place in increasing follower organizational commitment, however, in the context of this discourse, it is normative commitment that assists in creating the buy-in required to gain follower compliance. In essence, normative commitment, suggests that a follower often may feel obligated to invest in an organization that has invested in them, potentially through training and skills improvement, and has a feeling to repay the organization for their investment.

　　　Throughout the chronology of the Bible, God has provided many directives and commands that would constitute empowering believers to live a moral and just life. Covenant theologians suggest that each major phase of the Bible constitutes a level of commitment that God extends to his people, and as the term covenant would imply, and expectation that same commitment would be reflected back (Johnson, 2010). In each of these covenants, God provides a vision and follower empowerment to accomplish his goals. As we understand from Scripture, it is only through the sacrificial actions of Jesus Christ that we as believers are saved from eternal damnation (Eph 2:8-9). Therefore that physical empowerment, provided by God, is not one that is self-generated but one that is dependent on Christ's actions. Arguably, it would be difficult to assess a life lived as a Christian, without Christ's resurrection. Though it's well chronicled that Jesus' ascension into heaven was critical for all salvation, it also sets up the conclusion in such it allows for Christ's second coming.

> "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse and he who sat on it is called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges in wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name written on him which no one knows except himself."

Generating short-term wins

Kotter (1996) provides an understanding of the role of short-term wins as a sign of hope for everyone involved in justifying the short-term cost required for the change. Kotter (1996) also suggest other benefits and providing an understanding of short-term wins, however, the actual wins are you relevant to the rationale but more so the understanding of the different external factors that may influence the continuation of the change. Often these change plans require a level of effort from others in which the change may not sound rational and therefore the involuntary calculation of expectancy is triggered (Kotter). Vroom submits that expectancy theory addresses the followers perception of their effort and the expectation of what they will gain in return (Bass & Bass, 2008). One could then assume that purely from a morale perspective, it would be essential for leaders to provide short-term wins as an offering to followers that the plans in place are sound.

Throughout the Bible, as God interacted with followers over long periods of time, they were always some associated short-term wins as depicted in the journey of the Israelites vacating Egypt (Exodus). Even as Christians persevere on a day-to-day basis to achieve God's will, believers often seek for those short-term wins to continue to renew their faith. Since the beginning of time, as chronicled in Genesis, believers have engaged in battle with Satan (Gen 3:1-7) as the enemy and often have fallen to his deceit. This confrontation set the stage for a continuous battle between good and evil. As the imagery of Revelation reveals, the first to be defeated, hence depicting a short-term win within the confines of the. Revelation exposes, it is the beast and the false prophet or thrown alive into a lake of fire period (Rev 19:20). From an intertexture perspective, there is a an implied continuum between Genesis and Revelation where Satan first deceives mankind (Gen 3:7) and the beginning of the culmination of the end (Rev 19;20) and resolving the conflict between good and evil.

Consolidating gains and producing more change

Kotter and Cohen (2002) suggests that intrinsically utilizing the gains from earlier interventions will continue to provide efficiencies in future interventions, there's also a consequential benefit as it will continue to provide reasons to continue the urgency. Conversely, this step following generating short-term wins may also induce a level of complacency by suggesting that the team is done when in essence they are not and therefore losing momentum for

future improvements (p. 159). Collins (2001) suggests that that momentum is fueled by focusing on the greatest competency that one possesses. Silvia and Duval (2001) posit that objective self-awareness, identifies one's strengths and weaknesses may assist in a continued improvement model such to continue to accumulate success.

All other books in the Bible chronicle events from the past and it is only Revelation that prophesizes the future (Ryrie, 1995), therefore it is difficult to assess precisely when these events will occur and therefore placing the responsibility of motivation on God.   As believers in the Gospel and superimposing our timeline of existence in this world over top of God's timeline for the culmination of the end of the world would require a personal motivation to continue to strive to produce ongoing change; God would have to nurture a collaborative perspective between Himself and His followers. Reicher, Haslam, and Hopkins (2005) that leaders and followers must collaborate to create a social reality that is transformational. It is challenging to presuppose man-made constructs such as the one implied as a constraint to God's actions, however, this notion is helpful to generate a hypothesis as to God utilizing our perception of economy to better communicate his plan.

Anchoring new approaches in the culture

The last step in the change management process is to assimilate new approaches cultivated through the change management process into the organizational culture (Kotter, 1996). Hofstede (2001) suggests that culture is a collection of shared norms and values by a people group in which the shared norms emanate from thinking and feeling and reacting while acquiring and transmitting information through symbols, distinctive achievements often embodied in artifacts. All of these items are essential to the core of culture and gain strength through timely tradition and from there value is assessed. From an organizational perspective, Schein (2010) suggests that "When we are influential in shaping the behavior and values of others, we think of that as 'leadership' and are creating the conditions for a new culture formation (p. 2)."

As God closes out this chapter of eternity, there are implied cultural changes required to fulfill prophecy. The fact remains that Jesus Christ entered this world for the first time as a man, arguably as a poor man, to set the tone for how to conduct ourselves in this world. Critically speaking, though Christ ascended into heaven, he still ascended as a carpenter. Therefore, God as leader, must provide new conditions that will lead to a new culture formation. Consequently,

Christ's second coming is one that is depicted as triumphant as revealed in Revelation 19:16 "And on His robe and on His thigh he has a name written KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS."   Is this tone that is set that changes the perceptions of believers and nonbelievers alike as there will be no denying the power and might of Christ Himself. These events would then anchor new criteria in which contemporaries will need to adjust as it is chronicled that this would launch Christ's reign on this earth (Ryrie, 1995, p.2041)

Summary of Oral-Scribal Reconfigured Text

Below, in Table 2, is a summary of the parallel text between Kotter's (1996) eight-step change management plan and God's change plan revealed in Revelation 19.

Kotter's 8-Step Change Management Plan	Revelation 19	Comments
Establishing a Sense of Urgency	"(…) because his judgments are true and righteous (…) (Rev 19:2)"	The sense of urgency has been established since Genesis and been conveyed through Jesus righteousness which allows him or judgment.
Creating a guiding coalition	" (…) of the saints the righteous acts (Rev 19:8)	This is where the faithful will join Christ in marriage (1 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:26-27)
Developing a vision and strategy	"(…) He who sat on it is called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and wages war (Rev 19:11)"	This statement is the beginning of the declaration of Christ's second coming which has been God's vision throughout the Bible.
Communicating the change vision	"Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of the mighty peals of thunder saying hallelujah for the Lord our God the Almighty reigns (Rev 19:6)"	This type of change requires mass communications and therefore must be delivered in a grand fashion. The announcement must be commensurate with what's being announced.
Empowering employees for broad based action	"(…) Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb (…) (Rev 19:9)"	Throughout Scripture the Gospels have been claimed and the good news of Jesus Christ documented. This passage makes reference to those who accepted Christ

		as their Savior as a way into heaven.
Generating short-term wins	"(…) these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone (Rev:19-20)"	It is at this point that Jesus challenges and defeats Satan and makes the explicit truth that is he that will be the first occupant in the lake of fire.
Consolidating gains and producing more change	"And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of him who sat on the horse, (…) (Rev 19:21)"	As it was just understood with the defeat of Satan so will those that chose to follow him.
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	"And on his robe and on his thigh he has a name written King of Kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16)"	Throughout the New Testament we know Christ has come into the world, lowly, by man's standards, however, we know that he will reign forever. It is here that we see Christ take his rightful position.

Table 2 – Kotter's (1996) eight-step change management plan compare to scripture found in Revelation 19

Conclusion

There is no discussion in the scholarly world as it pertains to the complex city of imagery found in Revelation. Unlike his previous writings, John utilizes scenes and descriptions that are often hard to follow, however, they are obviously laced with much meaning. Each chapter in the book of Revelation unfolds in a chronological way such to reveal God's plan for the culmination of worldly life and the initiation of eternal salvation for those who believe.

This Revelation is no different than a revelation found within an organization that potentially is in dire straits, possibly through financial issues or some immoral and unethical events that have led to his impending demise. Often there is very little hope for the future, specifically, when the hope for the future lies within the responsibilities and actions of others. Those with strong internal locus of control find themselves at odds with their own understanding of what to do next. This situation would be colored as a hopeless environment and, therefore, often inducing irrational behavior for those seeking relief of the unknown.

In a contextual sense, it would appear that the end times will be a time of despair and hopelessness and fear, however, God provides us a change plan that takes us from that potential hopeless listen to spare tool place where everlasting joy emanates. It is that vision in that plan that a leader such as God in this context induces the hope from within. It is God's ability to communicate a sense of urgency throughout the Bible from Genesis through Revelation's, a need for God that is here to save us. He builds powerful coalitions throughout biblical history, which impart the vision. He provides multiple ways for believers, and in this vernacular, followers, to achieve this oneness with him whether it's the 10 Commandments or having faith in our Savior, each of these methods provide a means to that internal salvation. The Bible chronicles many victories for God, which are essential not for him but for our understanding as he provides empathy towards our disbelief and inducing confidence for each of us. From there, he provides many examples as well as metaphors for our understanding to persevere and lastly encourages us to learn from our past and our mistakes by forgiving us and commanding each believer to communicate the Good News of hope.

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