
**LEADING IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE:
A THEOLOGICALLY GROUNDED, THEORETICALLY
INFORMED HERMENEUTIC OF CHANGE**
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Abstract: This essay proposes a hermeneutic of change, grounded in theology and theory, which can inform church leaders' strategic actions in the midst of change. Drawing from the work of practical theology, it looks at four vantage points proposed by Don Browning: *descriptive, historical, systematic, and strategic*. The descriptive view offers two insights: God is active and present in the midst of change and God's people are simultaneously saints and sinners. The historical perspective points out that God has always been in the midst of change, but God's love and promises for the world have not changed. Systematic theology fuses the descriptive and the historical in a thoughtfully crafted argument that seeks to be true across time and place. Finally, strategic theology offers leaders the tools to use languages, relationships, and practices in managing change.

Introduction

Each September several students, having returned from internship, end up in my office frustrated. Their frustration has a common theme. These students, appreciative of their learning in systematic theology, church history, and Bible, know there's something missing in their theological education. The articulate ones identify the source as a gap between knowing theology and leading God's people in these changing times. As a teacher, I enjoy these teachable moments and engaging students as they reflect on the contemporary

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