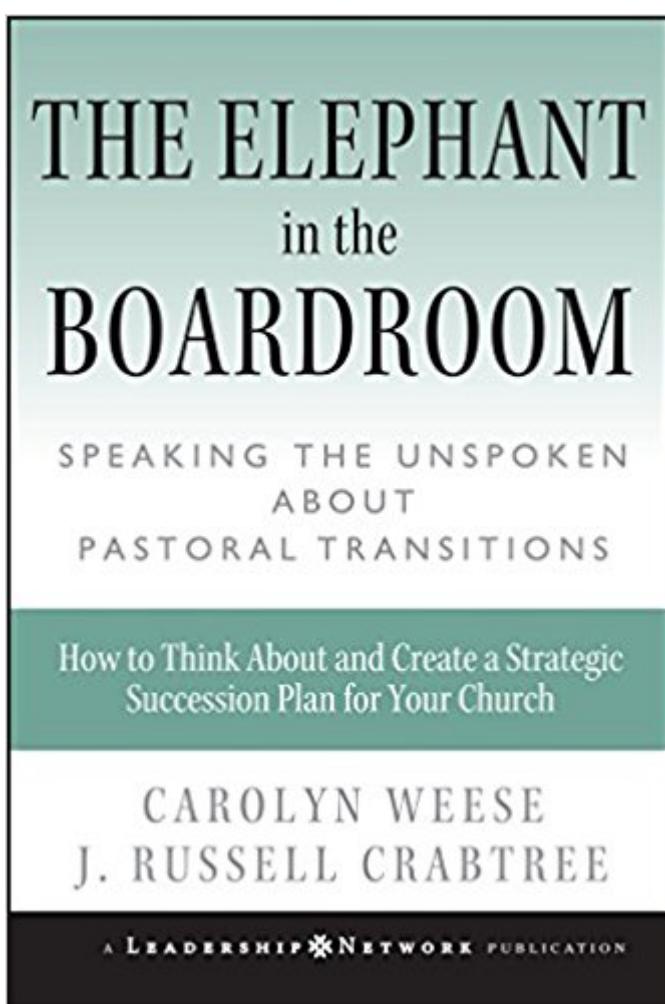


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# The Elephant In The Boardroom: Speaking The Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions (Jossey-Bass Leadership Network Series)



## **Synopsis**

Carolyn Weese and J. Russell Crabtree "experts in the field of church leadership" have written a nuts-and-bolts guide to developing a succession plan for smoothing pastoral transitions. Filled with strategies and solid advice, this handy resource is based in solid research and the authors' many years of experience working with churches in a wide variety of denominations. Weese and Crabtree clearly show that leadership succession should be part of every church's planning process.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The first part of the book sets an example of Christ's way of handling transition. It then gives various circumstances in which transition happens and how various role players ought to handle them. Part two is in my view the heart of the book. It posits a theory of four church cultures: the family, the icon, the archival and the replication culture. Each culture must have a different transition approach and failure to adhere to it will result in a failed transition or one that does not favour the health and of the

congregation. Part three gives strategic ways of planning for a transition for churches at various capacity levels and using different transitional schemes. The appendix provides tools in a form of a questionnaire, testing the health levels of a congregation and their readiness for a pastoral transition. Overall, the book is a practical guide for those who need a step by step outline in pastoral transition.

This is probably the most insightful book I've ever read. The church I attend is studying this very issue. The Elephant in the Boardroom may be the issue nobody wants to talk about, but the book could not have been called the Zebra in the Boardroom because Pastoral changes in a church is anything but black & white. Because the issues are so numerous, complex, and sensitive the authors have organized and labeled the issues. A church going through transition identifies with one of four culture types, and one of four Pastor categories. In reality, I think these labels can bleed into each other, but making these identities, can simplify creating a strategy far ahead of an unexpected change or a much needed change. Pastor may not be the only label. Clergy by other names in various churches may spearhead the strategies outlined by "The Elephant in the Boardroom".

Bravo!

I read this book after reading *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* and seeing how often it's cited. This book is the theory behind the stories in "Next," but this book is more geared towards smaller churches (< 1,000), while "Next" focused on more glamorous ministries. If you need info for pastoral transition, do not complete your course of study without going through this. It has info that other books don't. Some other reviewers have said that the four church cultures the authors describe aren't perfect boxes, and I agree. At first blush, they seemed to me to be man-made constructions, somewhat arbitrary. They might be; but most of us can envision one or more churches in each category, thus making them useful to spur up thought on how idiosyncrasies of church cultures can severely impact the transition strategy. Also, it's obvious from the title that this book tacitly assumes the most common form of church government: Professional clergy with a lay "board." I'd like to see more attention given to a structure made up of multiple elders of equal authority, paid or not; but you have to seek out resources like *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* to get that info.

Changes in pastoral leadership are inevitable in any church, and often those pastoral changes come suddenly. What would your church do if your pastor suddenly died, became disabled, received a "call" to move to another church or was reappointed by the district bishop? Churches are

usually unprepared for these moments. Why do churches pretend this "elephant in the boardroom" does not exist? Why do churches not speak openly and plan appropriately for these transitions that everyone knows will one day come (even if they be many years off?) Does your church have a plan in place to make that transition as smooth as possible when it happens? What strategies for transition will work best for your congregation? What strategic options do churches have? This book has chapters specifically related to churches with differing styles of church culture and government. It was highly recommended to me by both an Episcopalian priest and a Presbyterian pastor, and this Baptist Preacher found it most helpful! If you are the brand new pastor coming on the field, or the pastor considering a move from a church to another, or a long-term pastor who wishes to mentor a successor, or even a pastor who has no thought of moving from your present position, you need to read this book. It is good stuff!

Value explained retiring ministers allowing the new minister space to develop their style.

I found the book overly complicated by the use of the four different models, the identification of which did not come easily for my church. I was hoping for a more straightforward and linear description of the best practices for transitioning to a new pastor. It would have been helpful to provide a matrix illustration of what the key ingredients of how each of the four models differed from each other.

This book is very helpful for any church to prepare for sudden or planned minister transitions.

Great insights for pastoral transition. The section on church cultures is worth the whole book.

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