



# Christian Leaders as Agents of Change: A Biblical Perspective with Practical Implications

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Change of any kind within an organization can be a difficult task but having someone to champion the cause can make all the difference in the world. Change agents are individuals who are able to champion organizational change. These individuals can come from within the organization or from outside of it, but regardless of where they come from, they have the unique ability to ignite and fan the fire of change that all organizations will eventually need to grow and stay successful (Hoppmann, Sakhel, & Richert, 2018). Change agents are specifically talented at being able to relay a new vision to the members of an organization, and in relaying this new vision, they are able to enact cultural change (Yukl, 2013).

With the rise of globalization, organizations are feeling increased pressure to remain competitive, which is requiring them to adapt and reshape themselves (Barratt-Pugh, Bahn, & Gakere, 2013). Often times, this requires a change in values and beliefs; meaning the culture of the organization must be transformed before new strategies can be employed

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(Groysberg, Lee, Price, & Cheng, 2018). Agents of change help organizations to move past the various roadblocks and barriers they are certain to encounter on the path of change (Eskerod, Justesen, & Sjøgaard, 2017). Christian individuals working in the business world as agents of change can find a biblical example to follow in the prophet Elisha.

The Scriptures point to Elisha as not only a person called to proclaim the Word of God, but also an individual appointed by the Lord to bring about institutional change in Israel (Keil & Delitzsch, 1969). The Scriptures tell of a time when the prophet Elijah was running for his life and hiding from the king of Israel. It is during this season that the Lord spoke to Elijah:

Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. (1 Kgs 19:15–17, NRSV)

Israel's leaders had led the people down a path of idolatry, and its current leaders, Ahab and Jezebel, had done more evil deeds than any of the kings or queens before them (1 Kgs 16:30). God looked to bring change to the monarchy and to the nation, and Elisha would be one of the individuals charged with seeing to it that the needed changes would be brought to past (Keil & Delitzsch, 1969). As we study the life and work of Elisha, we can identify at least ten themes that helped him to be an effective agent of change: team player, creativity, gratitude, concern for others, global thinker, accountability, encouragement, resolute, truth teller, and motivator.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE TEAM PLAYERS

When Ahab was king of Israel, the Moabites were subject to him and paid him a yearly tribute, but when Joram becomes king they rebelled against him (2 Kgs 3:5). Joram calls on the king of Judah and the king of Edom to help him as he marches out to re-subjugate the Moabites (2 Kgs 3:9). Before they march into battle, King Jehoshaphat of Judah requested that they inquire of the Lord (2 Kgs 3:11). The Prophet Elisha is summoned by the king and reluctantly agrees to call on the Lord for

them (2 Kgs 3:14). Elisha will not attempt this task by himself but looks for the help of a harpist (2 Kgs 3:15). It was a common practice for many prophets in the ancient world to call on the help of certain musicians to play their instruments while they sought out the Lord (House, 1995). Elisha does not merely depend on his own ability, but rather enlists the help of another Israelite in his efforts to complete the needed task (House, 1995). Elisha, as an agent of change, was a team player and looked to get other skilled members involved in the task at hand.

Leaders who function as agents of change realize that the individuals within their organization all come with gifts and talents, and they learn to make the most of those gifts and talents, recognizing the instrumental primacy of each of member (Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000). Leaders must recognize the importance of each team member and integrate them into the process by which change will be implemented (Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, & Jung, 2002). This not only makes the process of change more manageable and efficient, but it also serves to create a strong cohesion among team members such that each member has a sense of purpose and belonging (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002). Working within a team of multitalented and culturally distinct individuals requires a leader who is able to manage the diversity of a team in a manner that makes the most of the uniqueness that each individual team member brings to the table (Maznevski & Distefano, 2000).

Leaders, as agents of change, must take responsibility for motivating employees and increasing their performance as team members of their organization, bringing the best out of each member so that the team may remain healthy and productive as they initiate the desired organizational change (Tebeian, 2012). This can only be done if each member perceives themselves as a valuable asset in the change process, which will hinge on the leader's ability to strategically incorporate each member in a manner that utilizes the strengths of each individual (Light Shields, Gardner, Light Bredemeier, & Bostro, 1997). Leaders who step into unknown territory, where they are expected to produce change, must learn to trust in the ability of their subordinates, helping members to embrace their role and perceive their importance in bringing about change within the organization (Gillette & McCollom, 1995). Christian leaders, who take on the role of an agent of change, know they cannot do it on their own, nor do they attempt to, but rather make the most of other organizational members talents and skills, assuring that they feel valued and important as

a member of a team charged with bringing about change for their organization.

Principle One: Christian leaders as agents of change are team players who enlist other organizational members to help achieve the goals and mission of the organization.

### AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE CREATIVE

One day, the Prophet Elisha is approached by a widow woman whose deceased husband had been a member of a group of prophets (2 Kgs 4:1). She is in desperate financial need as the creditor approaches to take her two sons as payment for the debt owed him by her husband. Elisha perceives the woman's problem from a different angle and tells her to gather as many jars as possible and to pour the small amount of oil she has into the jars until it is no more (2 Kgs 4:3-5). She is then to take the jars of oil and sell them so she will be able to pay off the debt and use the extra money to live off (2 Kgs 4:7). Elisha is unable to stop the debt collector, but he is able to see another way around the problem as an unexpected miracle is brought to the widow and her dire circumstances (Cogan & Tadmor, 1988). Elisha, as an agent of change, is able to see the situation from a different perspective, bringing a creative solution to seemingly hopeless situation.

Leaders who serve as agents of change are able to respond to problems and challenges from a perspective that creates opportunities and the potential for advancement (Runco, 2004). The creativity of a leader enables them to face the challenges of organizational growth and advancement in a manner that permits them to make the most of every situation; where others see problems, they see opportunities (Ford, 2002). These leaders see things from a different perspective, and the perspective of a leader determines how they respond to the various stimuli they are confronted with (Konopaske, Ivencevich, & Matteson, 2018). Their creativity causes them to interact with their surroundings from a possibility perspective instead of a problem perspective. The creativity of an agent of change allows them to articulate a compelling vision and strategy of a better tomorrow for their organization, and at the same time, they are adept and competent with the technical and operational aspects that will be required to move their organization into that better tomorrow (Pisano, 2019).

Agents of change stay flexible and attentive to their environment; their creativity then allows them to initiate relevant changes and responses to the problems with which they are faced (van Woerkum, Aarts, & de Grip, 2007). The chaos, complexity, and unpredictability of their environment present opportunities to respond with creative ideas and concepts that enable their organizations to advance in their mission (van Woerkum et al., 2007). Leaders, as agents of change, stay aligned with the mission and goals of their company and at the same time do not allow their responses and actions to be hindered by organizational tradition and bureaucracy (Franklin, 2016). Christian leaders, who take on the role as agents of change, are not limited by traditional thinking patterns but are creative in their responses, seeing things from an outside-of-the-box perspective that drives and creates new possibilities for their organization.

Principle Two: Christian leaders as agents of change are creative; seeing problems from a different perspective and looking for opportunities in each challenge.

### AGENTS OF CHANGE SHOW GRATITUDE

As the Prophet Elisha went about his efforts to enact change throughout the land of Israel, he would often pass through Shunem where a wealthy woman lived (2 Kgs 4:8). The woman provided a place for him to stay and fed him whenever he passed through. Elisha looks to express his gratitude for all she has done and enquires of his servant Gehazi for a tangible way to show his appreciation (2 Kgs 4:14). Elisha wants to acknowledge that he recognizes the love and kindness this woman has shown him, that he is grateful for her service and efforts to make his travels more pleasant (Keil & Delitzsch, 1969). Elisha, as an agent of change, looks to express his gratitude toward this woman who has become a humble supporter in his efforts to effect change throughout Israel.

Leaders operating as agents of change must understand the power of actively expressing gratitude to other members of the organization who have exerted effort and have made sacrifices to help implement the desired organizational changes (Kumar & Epley, 2018). Lambert, Clark, Durtschi, Fincham, and Graham (2010) conducted research to determine the effects of expressed gratitude on communal strength. Their findings indicated that when gratitude is expressed toward another individual, the strength of that relationship is enhanced, increasing their willingness to

perform a given task for the benefit of that person (Lambert et al., 2010). Leaders who have taken on the role of an agent of change would be wise not to underestimate the power of expressed gratitude to strengthen organizational relationships, motivating others to make sacrifices for benefit of changes they don't fully understand (Kumar & Epley, 2018).

Leaders, as agents of change, appreciate the power of expressed gratitude to influence the behavior of others (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). They understand that other organizational members will be willing to assist them in their efforts to bring about organizational change, even though it may be costly to them on a personal basis, when they realize their efforts are noticed, appreciated, and valued (Bartlett & DeSteno, 2006). When leaders, who are attempting to induce organizational change, express gratitude to subordinates and upper management alike, it has a positive psychological effect that influences the behavior of that individual toward the efforts, and the person, of the change agent (Hammer & Brenner, 2019). Christian leaders, who take on the role of an agent of change, understand the need to express gratitude, and the power of doing so, toward those who are aiding them in their efforts to bring about organizational change.

Principle Three: Christian leaders as agents of change openly show their gratitude and appreciation for the efforts and sacrifices of other organizational members.

### AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE CONCERNED FOR OTHERS

Once, when a famine swept throughout the land, Elisha found himself in Gilgal with the *Company of Prophets* (2 Kgs 4:38). There he shows concern for the well-being of the other prophets and instructs his servant to prepare a pot of food for the men to eat. The prophet uses the power given to him by God to purify the food, so that the physical needs of the Company of Prophets could be met (Clark, 1977). Elisha was openly concerned for the needs of these men and took action to meet the physical needs of his fellow laborers (Clark, 1977). Elisha, as an agent of change, uses his power to meet the needs of those who are laboring with him in his struggles to bring change to Israel.

Leaders functioning as agents of change should show concern for the needs of others organizational members, knowing the concern they demonstrate toward them will have a direct effect on their relationship

(Clark, Robertson, & Young, 2019). Research shows that the more subordinates perceive their leaders as being concerned for their needs as an individual, and not simply concerned for their *on-the-job performance*, the more productive subordinates become at work; a direct link exists between concern for individuals and their productivity (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). When leaders openly demonstrate concern for the individual needs of their subordinates, they increase the level of commitment those individuals are willing to express toward the mission and goals of the organization (Kim, 2014). Leaders looking to enact change within an organization would do well not to overlook the needs of the individuals who are helping them in their efforts to enact such change.

Showing concern and empathy for the things that directly affect the personal lives of individual organizational members is a way for leaders to build healthy and strong relationships with those they lead (Clark et al., 2019). Leaders desiring to accomplish extraordinary things will need to build strong relationships with those they lead as extraordinary accomplishments take extraordinary relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Successfully enacting change within an organization, in a manner that can propel a company forward is not an easy task, but rather an extraordinary one. Christian leaders, who take on the role of an agent of change, understand this and refuse to overlook the needs of the individuals who are laboring with them, fully realizing the value they add in their efforts to bring about change and demonstrating that realization through their words and actions.

Principle Four: Christian leaders as agents of change are concerned for the individual needs of other organizational members and express that concern in both their words and actions.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE GLOBAL THINKERS

Naaman was the captain of the army of Aram, a mighty warrior with a mighty problem. Naaman suffered from leprosy, but through a slave girl he hears about the powerful prophet Elisha and seeks him out, hoping to be healed (2 Kgs 5:1–2). Naaman is a foreigner, but nonetheless Elisha is willing to grant his request and Naaman through a humbling process receives the healing he sought (2 Kgs 5:13–14). Elisha’s willingness to show kindness to a foreigner earns Naaman’s favor and expresses God’s desire to bless all nations through Israel (House, 1995). Elisha’s vision

and mission goes beyond a single nation, as Naaman's conversion brings an altar of worship to Aram (House, 1995). Elisha makes an ally in Naaman that is willing to honestly embrace the God of Israel (Henry, 1983). Elisha, as an agent of change, shows his ability to think from a global perspective, enlarging the reach of his mission to institute change.

Leaders working as agents of change must be aware of the benefits that can come from globalization, and not underestimate the potential gains this phenomenon can produce for them (Ghemawat, 2017). The phenomenon of globalization is not a new one, sense World War II has continued to increase creating an interdependency between nations (Northouse, 2013). The increase of globalization has served to intermingle the various world cultures, creating bridges between leaders and developing alliances in their efforts to bring change (Kling, 2010). Leaders who are looking to initiate change within an organization must be global thinkers, not overestimating the harmful consequences that a global market could produce but rather recognizing the possibilities that globalization brings (Ghemawat, 2017).

Leaders who look to make the most of globalization should be aware of the factors that drive politics, business, and the varying cultural environments worldwide (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). They should also learn to see things from the perspectives of other nationalities so that they may successfully interact with other nationalities in a way that is beneficial to both sides (Adler & Bartholomew, 1992). Leaders who think globally must know how to communicate their vision for change in a manner that transcends cultural barriers, creating a transcultural vision for others to embrace (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Christian leaders, who take on the role of an agent of change, understand the need to think globally, to relate their ideas and concepts in such a manner as to draw other nationalities to their cause, creating greater opportunities to successfully create change.

Principle Five: Christian leaders as agents of change are global thinkers; seeing beyond the borders of their organization and country to create international connections and partnerships.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE PRACTICE ACCOUNTABILITY

When Naaman receives the healing he sought, he returns to offer a gift to Elisha as an expression of his gratitude; however, the prophet refuses his gift and sends him on his way (2 Kgs 5:15). Gehazi, the servant of Elisha,



is overtaken by greed and goes to Naaman with the ill-intention of taking some of the gifts falsely in the prophet's name (2 Kgs 5:21). Elisha is aware Gehazi's scheme and holds him accountable for his actions, assigning Naaman's leprosy to him (2 Kgs 5:26–27). Gehazi failed to consider the consequences of his actions, but the prophet does not fail to hold him accountable for his bad judgment and moral failure (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, & Smith, 1945). Elisha, as an agent of change, holds his servant Gehazi, who was to be supporting him in his efforts to enact change throughout Israel, accountable for his actions and refuses to overlook his deceitful practices.

Leaders operating as agents of change understand the need to behave and work in an ethical and productive manner, and they hold themselves and others to a designated standard of behavior (Behnam & MacLean, 2011). Accountability speaks to the way leaders and subordinates conduct themselves while fulfilling their responsibilities to which they are held liable for and to ensure they are done in a principled and satisfactory manner (McGrath & Whitty, 2018). All leaders have a set of values and guiding principles that have been defined by their personal beliefs and those of their organization (Gini, 1997). These values and guiding principles are the foundation from which they define the expected behaviors to which they hold themselves and subordinates accountable.

In order for leaders to effectively lead change, they will need to have the firmness that is necessary to hold team and organizational members accountable from the onset, setting a standard for acceptable conduct (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). They will need to hold themselves and each member accountable for not only what they achieve but also they must also be willing to hold them accountable for how they achieved it (LaFasto & Larson, 2001). Leaders looking to induce change must ensure that expectations are clearly defined and understood by all team members as is certainly an important role of every leader (van Ginkel & van Knippenberg, 2012). Leaders who understand and model the manner in which they expect others to behave and perform their appointed task will find that their subordinates and team members have a clear grasp of what is and what is not acceptable, and, are more likely to perform up to those expectations (van Ginkel & van Knippenberg, 2012). Christian leaders, who act as agents of change, must be able to clearly express acceptable standards of behavior and performance and then be willing to hold themselves and others accountable to those defined parameters.

Principle Six: Christian leaders as agents of change hold themselves and other organizational members accountable for their actions and inactions.

### AGENTS OF CHANGE OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT

As the King Aram attempted to cause havoc in the land of Israel, Elisha kept the officials of Israel informed of his plans (2 Kgs 6:11–12). When the king of Aram learns what Elisha is doing, he sends out a great army to take him (2 Kgs 6:13). When the servant of Elisha sees the great army, he is terrified, but Elisha comforts him by saying, “Do not be afraid, for there are more with us than there are with them” (2 Kgs 6:16, NRSV). In a moment of seemingly overwhelming odds and impending doom, Elisha is able to both comfort and steady his servant, so that his heart doesn’t fail at the sight of the great Aram army (Exell, 1975). Elisha, as an agent of change, is able to offer encouragement in the midst of confusion and fear.

Leaders acting as agents of change understand the power of their words to help others see new possibilities and a better tomorrow (Mayfield, Mayfield, & Sharbrough, 2015). Leaders who offer encouraging words to others have the ability to inspire them to believe that a better outcome can be achieved than the one they presently seem to be confronted with (Sweeny, 2009). They offer encouragement that helps team members and subordinates cope with the difficulties that appear to be out of their range of competence in a courageous manner that allows for a clearer pattern of thought and an optimistic perspective (Dinkmeyer & Losoncy, 1996). Leaders working to bring change and transformation to their organization choose their words with diligence, strategically placing them in the lives others in a manner that produces hope and encouragement.

Leaders who are attentive to the words they speak and the ideas they allow their actions to convey, have the power to bring encouragement that stimulates the behavior of others in a manner that cause them to labor with an optimistic perspective on future outcomes (Azoulay, 1999). Leaders are able to use motivational language to inspire others and to help impart a shared vision to them, encouraging them in a manner that drives them to take risks, to work harder, and to commit to an organizational mission as though it was their own (Mayfield et al., 2015). In speaking of the power of encouragement, Wong (2015) asserts that it “involves instilling strengths that may potentially address the recipient’s perceived limitations. For instance, the instillation of courage reduces fear,

perseverance combats a desire to give up, confidence addresses low self-efficacy, inspiration resolves a lack of motivation or creativity, and hope decreases pessimism about the future” (p. 184). Christian leaders, who operate as agents of change, must understand the power of their words and actions to bring encouragement that helps others to see beyond their circumstances, moving them to strive for greater possibilities and a better outcome.

Principle Seven: Christian leaders as agents of change encourage other organizational members in trying and difficult times by speaking life-giving words.

### AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE RESOLUTE

When Samaria was besieged by King Ben-hadad of Aram, a time of great famine was experienced by all living in the city (2 Kgs 6:24–25). The famine was so terrible that the king of Israel finds two women arguing over a child they have contemplated eating (2 Kgs 6:29). When the king hears this, he is so disturbed that he seeks to kill the Prophet Elisha for it had not been too long ago that the prophet had him release and show kindness to the army of Aram, which was now besieging the city (2 Kgs 6:31). The king and his officials hunt down Elisha, when they find him; he gives them a report that sounds impossible to believe. Elisha assures the king, and all with him, that about that time tomorrow the famine would be over, and food would be abundant in the city (2 Kgs 7:1). One of the king’s officials, whose opinion and wisdom the king respected, remarks, “Even if the Lord were to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen” (2 Kgs 7:2, NRSV)? At this point, there had to be a great deal of pressure on Elisha. The king wanted him dead. The siege was making life unbearable in the city, and the report of deliverance he had given was met with mockery (Exell, 1975). Yet, even when facing pressure from outside forces and from governing officials, Elisha did not waver in his stance (Exell, 1975). Elisha, as an agent of change, stood resolute to uphold what he knew to be true, refusing to compromise truth in the face of external and internal pressures.

Leaders engaging in the role of an agent of change must be resolute in their commitment to follow through with the actions needed to bring about organizational change (Nikolaou, Gouras, Vakola, & Bourantas, 2007). A leader’s resolve speaks of their determination to do what they

believe is right, based on the evidence they have, regardless of the pressures they receive from those inside or outside their company (Pittard, 2015). Leaders must base their decisions on how they will bring about change, founded on the facts and evidence they have uncovered, regardless of the resistance they face from those hoping to sway their resolve using sentiment or intimidation (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). Although it is necessary for leaders to move with resolve in their efforts to bring about change, based on the facts they have available to them, it is not always easy and can come with a cost. Both history and empirical research have shown that resilient leaders may have to face retaliation from organizational opposition for their determination to bring about needed change, which can cause some leaders to compromise their resolve and ignore the facts (Besley, Persson, & Reynal-Querol, 2016).

The need for change is inevitable for organizations desiring to stay competitive and ahead of the competition. Therefore, strong leadership that is able to initiate change and bring about new innovation is necessary (Lane, McCormack, & Richardson, 2013). Leaders with strong resolve are able to cope successfully when faced with the risk and adversity that can come when change is initiated (Peterson, Balthazard, Waldman, & Thatcher, 2008). These leaders of change are able to thrive in the midst of difficulties and setbacks that change often brings, and they are capable of rising to the challenge and performing at a higher level than before (Peterson et al., 2008). Christian leaders, who take on the role of an agent of change, must be resolute in their decision making and their stance to bring about organizational change based on the facts and truths they have unveiled.

Principle Eight: Christian leaders as agents of change will not waver in their resolve when faced with either internal or external pressure.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE TRUTH TELLERS

Once when the king of Aram was sick, he sent his servant to Elisha to ask him if he would recover (2 Kgs 8:8). The king sent great gifts that were to be presented to the prophet on his behalf (2 Kgs 8:9). Elisha shows no regard for the gifts, but only for the truth; the prophet cannot be bought (House, 1995). He tells the king's servant that the sickness will not kill him, but that he would die, which happens when the servant returns home and murders the king (2 Kgs 8:10–15). Elisha doesn't allow

the position of the king or the servant of the king to influence his words. He maintains his integrity and proclaims the truth (House, 1995). Elisha, as an agent of change, shows himself to be a person of integrity; speaking the truth in the midst of political uncertainty.

Leaders, who act as agents of change, must understand the importance of winning and maintaining the trust and respect of those whom they lead by displaying an unwavering integrity that is devoted to speaking and acting in truth (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Research has shown that across cultural lines being trustworthy, just, and honest is a universal facilitator of effective leadership (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). Followers desire, and will readily follow, leaders who are committed to telling the truth. As truth telling helps to facilitate effective leadership, dishonesty aids in impeding the effectiveness of leaders (House et al., 2004). The commitment of followers can effectively be established and strengthened by leaders who show themselves to be honest and transparent in their decision making (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Truth telling can be a powerful vehicle by which leaders establish the trust needed to usher in organizational change.

Leaders who say what they mean and mean what they say have the ability to create a high level of commitment among organizational members which can incite followers to go beyond the regular call of duty (Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012). Leaders hoping to enact change will certainly need relationships established with their followers that will move them to go beyond their required duties. Leaders who are perceived as ethical truth tellers have been shown to have a positive influence on followers' helping them to identify with the organization and its mission which in-turn has a positive impact on the way subordinates perform their duties (Zhu, He, Treviño, Chao, & Wang, 2015). Christian leaders, who look to initiate change within their organization, will find their success in inspiring their subordinates to such change is directly connected to their perceived integrity; therefore, they must be committed to speaking the truth at all times.

Principle Nine: Christian leaders as agents of change speak the truth to both organizational leaders and members. They value their own integrity.

## AGENTS OF CHANGE ARE MOTIVATORS

When Elisha was close to dying, King Joash of Israel went to pay his last respects (2 Kgs 13:14). The old prophet speaks to him of future military campaigns that he will be engaged in with the Arameans (2 Kgs 13:17). In doing this, he has the king strike the ground with his arrows, when the king only hits the ground three times, the prophet becomes upset (2 Kgs 13:18–19). He wanted the king to strike the ground many times, which would have symbolised his unshakable victory over Aram and the determination of his faith (Keil & Delitzsch, 1969). Elisha wanted the king to seek for a great victory. In his final moments, the prophet was pushing and motivating the king to reach for a higher goal (Keil & Delitzsch, 1969). Elisha, as an agent of change, was a motivator, looking to encourage others to push forward into greater victories and not to settle for what was good when they could have something that was great.

Leaders taking on a role as an agent of change should have a firm understanding concerning the power of motivation to help followers reach beyond their perceived limits to attempt new and greater endeavors (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2012). Leaders looking to create change are able to do so by encouraging their followers to set goals and then motivating them to strive toward those goals, going beyond their self-imposed limits (Schweitzer, Ordóñez, & Douma, 2004). Goal setting is a powerful method to motivate subordinates to perform at a higher level, to consider possibilities they once felt were off limits, and to participate in organizational change (Schweitzer et al., 2004). The words that a leader speaks can serve as a motivational vehicle to help subordinates understand, accept, and partake in the various actions that must be taken to implement change (Antonakis et al., 2012; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016). The motivational words and actions of a leader, who desires to implement change within their organization, can serve as a key that unlocks the door for others to willingly, and even enthusiastically, step through.

Leaders who use the power of motivational behavior on a regular basis when interacting with subordinates will find they have the ability to inspire them to attempt increasingly difficult tasks (Kim, Dansereau, & Kim, 2002). A leader's motivational behavior can inspire followers to take on new roles, building their confidence level to a point where they are able to engage in difficult tasks with the belief that they will be successful (Jiang, Gao, Yang, 2018). A leader's behavior and words can be

**Table 2.1** Leadership principles of “agents of change”

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Christian leaders as agents of change</i>
1	Are team players who enlist other organizational members to help achieve the goals and mission of the organization
2	Are creative; seeing problems from a different perspective and looking for opportunities in each challenge
3	Openly show their gratitude and appreciation for the efforts and sacrifices of other organizational members
4	Are concerned for the individual needs of other organizational members and express that concern in both their words and actions
5	Are global thinkers; seeing beyond the borders of their organization and country to create international connections and partnerships
6	Hold themselves and other organizational members accountable for their actions and inactions
7	Encourage other organizational members in trying and difficult times by speaking life-giving words
8	Will not waver in their resolve when faced with either internal or external pressure
9	Speak the truth to both organizational leaders and members. They value their own integrity
10	Are motivators; pushing organizational leaders and managers to strive for greater goals and objectives

*Source* Editor’s creation based on principles within the chapter

both strategically and intentionally be used to purposely motivate subordinates to engage in a desired course of action (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016). Christian leaders who desire to bring change to their organizations wield the power of motivation to inspire followers to strive for new heights, creating a motivational force that propels them to attempt new and daring things.

Principle Ten: Christian leaders as agents of change are motivators; pushing organizational leaders and managers to strive for greater goals and objectives.

## SUMMARY

Championing change for an organization can be a difficult task for leaders who accept the challenge. Although it is a difficult task, it is certainly one that can be successfully done with both precision and intentionality. Christian leaders who have stepped into the role of an agent of change,

regardless of the sector or industry they operate in, have the possibility of making their efforts much smoother and successful by implementing the leadership principles displayed by the Prophet Elisha. Table 2.1 is a composite of the principles that have been extracted from Elisha's leadership as depicted in Scripture.

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