



## Conclusion

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The authors of this book all earned their PhD degree in Organizational Leadership at Regent University. Although they live across the globe, the bond that was created by these authors and others while going through their doctoral journey is strong, to say the least. While in the program, *The Images of Organization* (Morgan, 2006) text was introduced in their Organizational Theory class by Dr. Bruce Winston, and the major project was to go beyond Morgan's work and build a new metaphor. The publishing of these metaphor extensions provided the opportunity for the authors to establish collaborative publishing relationships. To tie all the chapters together and wrap this book up nicely with a bow, this epilogue will briefly revisit each chapter and summarize the text with concluding remarks.

Without much effort, one can identify an organization that is in chaos or dysfunction. The inner workings of the organization may look different, but many companies use the same tools to get work done, and those tools can be used to identify that very chaos or dysfunction. There are employee handbooks; equipment and machines; ethical codes of conduct; goals and objectives; hierarchies; job descriptions; mission, vision, and, value statements; people; and policies and standard operating procedures.

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R. B. Huizinga, D. J. Dean (eds.), *Organizational Metaphors*,  
Christian Faith Perspectives in Leadership and Business,  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41712-3\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41712-3_14)

The unique feature within all organizations are the people that form the group dynamics. As people come and go from job-to-job, the group dynamics of each organization will change. And, within all the flux and transformation, each new person brings their own personality and perspective to the organization (Morgan, 2006). The same is true with this book. Each author brought their own unique personality and perspective to organizational metaphor.

Huizinga used his extensive experience in the bio-pharmaceutical world to demonstrate how an organization is like the human body. At any time, the body can become victim to a germ or disease. In order to have a healthy body or a healthy organization, there are specific protocols that can be followed; although it does not guarantee health, it assists in the possibility of health. Part of the beauty of how God created the world and all that is in it is the aspect of self-preservation and healing. Just as a human body has miraculous healing, the organizational body can rid the community of the germ or disease and experience healing as well as moving from dysfunction to utopia.

Renz and Renz examined the organization from the perspective of the living dead or zombies and explained that Christian leaders battle with such soulless beings to build organizations that are resistant to their destructive ways. Understanding that organizational scandal is in part due to individual characters who spread their immoral, corrupt, or even illegal behavior throughout the organization. When organizations become zombie enterprises, the individuals within the organization place their needs and wants above others, without examining the impact of those needs, wants, and actions on the organization or their environment. As defined by Renz and Renz, a zombie enterprise “is one that is based on self-centeredness and power.”

Jones used the story of Samson’s overconfidence in leadership that led to organizational jeopardy to illustrate a Pygmalion Mirage. An extension of the Pygmalion effect, which describes the impact one individual has upon another, a Pygmalion mirage occurs when the illusion of organizational success occurs regardless of the mismatch between organizational strategy and environmental conditions. This results in an organizational culture which becomes overconfident. Jones identifies the following four conditions that must exist for a Pygmalion mirage: confusion about the organization’s purpose or mission, misreading the environment, escalation of commitment by senior leaders, and inappropriate organizational design strategies in response to the environment.

Building upon the Biblical metaphors described in the beginning of the book, Averin discusses the metaphor of the flock and shepherd leadership. The shepherd metaphor has the elements of nobility and honor as the shepherd becomes kenotic, self-emptying and becoming submissive to God's will. Averin builds upon the understanding of shepherd leadership, where the leader emphasizes relationships, self-sacrifice, while effectively communicating the organizational vision and bringing forward the followers' needs.

In the ladder metaphor, Dean compares the generational (Baby Boomer, Generation X, Y, and Z) and gender understanding of the corporate ladder to the historical understanding of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Developing the "Climber's Toolkit," Dean draws upon her extensive corporate expertise to note that key skills for effective leaders today include communication, flexibility, information management, negotiation, people skills, task management, and spirituality. Importantly, the Faith at Work movements and workplace spirituality are becoming more relevant to all generational leaders and therefore organizations.

Thomas' vineyard metaphor expands vineyard management and Matthew 13 to organizational adaptation utilizing population ecology theory, resource dependency theory, institutional theory, and enactment theory. Examples of vineyard management include soil, climate, and canopy management which can be applied to organizational management. The vineyard metaphor discusses the organizational ability to produce high-quality wine in poor soil conditions and discusses the inclusion of spiritual integration in understanding organizational leadership concepts.

While describing the dysfunctional organization as a dystopia, Newton described a study where activities in the workplace had an adverse effect on employee performance. He described the resulting feelings for employees as the four Ds, including (a) disregarded, (b) dehumanized, (c) devalued, and (d) disposable. In order to move from dystopia to organizational convergence, such behaviors will need to change for employees to have a sense of human dignity and respect within their workplace. Newton relates this type of behavior to Ecclesiasticus 27.

Serrano examined the flexible, adaptive, and resilient parallels between martial arts and the workplace. He wove scripture into his chapter to explain how Paul found flexibility necessary for his survival in Phil 4:11–12. The Apostle also proclaimed the need for adaptability in 1Cor 9:22. And, he wrote of the requirement for resilience after suffering physically on multiple occasions (2Cor 11:16–29).

And last, but certainly not least, is the book metaphor by Kawuma. In his chapter, he explains how books come in all shapes and sizes, just as organizations do. Utilizing scripture throughout this chapter, the scholar demonstrates how books can be used for different purposes, just as each organization will have its own purpose. Books are now available in different formats, just as some workplaces are virtual and others are brick-and-mortar. And, the content of books can range from simple to complex, as do organizations.

Each of these individual metaphors represents the uniqueness of the author, as well as the distinctiveness of each workplace across the globe. While some workplaces are sick, others are healthy. The purpose of this book is to show how dysfunctional organizations with characteristics of germs, disease, zombies, and confusion can transform into fit, high-performing workplaces on mission with tools that address the entirety of the organizational body.

So often, companies address such sickness with a band aid, overlooking the root of the issue. Tools such as workplace spirituality, recognition of leader responsibility in shepherding their flock, intentionality of climbing the correct ladder for the right purpose, and nourishing the soil of the vineyard as employees need nourishment for their own soul in the workplace to flourish will help companies and all of humanity within to heal.

Ultimately, this book gives hope that organizations can move from sickness to utopia and uses metaphor to help leaders understand their organization. So how does one move from dysfunction to function practically? There are many books, and even journals based around organizational change, but the steps are practical. The organizations that conducted successful transformations developed a sense of urgency, gathered a coalition of members, created a vision, overcommunicated, removed obstacles, and found short term wins (Kotter, 2017). But before these well-known steps can be enacted, we need to step back.

The first real step is a recognition of dysfunction, where unethical, immoral, or illegal behaviors are seen as such. In similar fashion to diagnosing a disease, leaders and followers need to recognize the existence of dysfunction. Recognizing that this process is a struggle, the company and followers will need a sense of flexibility, adaptability, and resilience and an understanding of the power dynamics.

The second is commitment to change. Nastase, Giuclea, and Bold (2012) note that the leaders need to communicate the necessity of organizational transformation. That change must take place considering

environmental uncertainty, but these changes could allow the organization to offer new services or improvements on existing services. Lastly is the strength to carry out the changes. As noted in the metaphor on books, dysfunctional organizations must change or die. There are many examples of dysfunctional organizations that didn't change (Enron and WorldCom are two that come to mind). However, it is easy to say that organizations must change. Every organization needs resources in order to carry out change, and those resources must be identified otherwise transformation cannot happen. Luke 14 speaks to the cost of becoming a disciple, but the literalness of this metaphor can be applied to the necessity of resources: "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'" (Luke 14:28–30, ESV).

Moving from dysfunction to function is possible. There are many examples of organizations that successfully changed: Ford, General Motors, British Airways (Kotter, 2017). But as we think about organizational transformation, a sense of lifespan is also needed. The beginning of the book or startup of the company seeks to solve a problem or hedge an opportunity. The beginning of a career for a young person full of ambition and dream. The middle of the lifespan contains the rising action or climax where the company may be a well-oiled machine humming along with harmonious deeds positively impacting people, planet, and profit. Conversely, the organization may be in crisis, barely keeping afloat (e.g., Lehman Brothers). And the end represents the failing action and resolution. This is where companies may close their door for good or an employee may exit for one reason or another. It could be a bittersweet end with a legacy of good deeds, or a horrible demise of reputation and failure seen on the front page of the newspaper.

Metaphors simply provide a shortcut to understanding problems through a visualization of a known entity. It clarifies issues, brings new meaning to the organization, and provides both leaders and followers a guide to thinking about organizational transformation. But it does not negate the hard work of change. Speaking life to a metaphor within an organization does not bring about change. It is then incumbent on the leaders and followers to enact change.

Our prayer for you is that God is your chief advisor for your journey on this earth. He will guide your steps as He has a plan for you. Enjoy the ride and do all for His honor and glory!

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