



Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities

By Roy M. Oswald, Barry Johnson

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Congregations often find themselves in power struggles over two opposing views. People on both sides believe strongly that they are right. They also assume that if they are right, their opposition must be wrong--classic 'either/or' thinking. A polarity is a pair of truths that need each other over time. When an argument is about two poles of a polarity, both sides are right and need each other to experience the whole truth. This phenomenon has been recognized and written about for centuries in philosophy and religion. It is at the heart of Taoism, where we find the familiar polarity of yin and yang energy. In the past fifty years, business leaders have come to appreciate the phenomenon, often called dilemma or paradox. No matter what it is called, the research is clear: leaders and organizations that manage polarities well outperform those who don't.

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Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities By Roy M. Oswald, Barry Johnson Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #811729 in eBooks
- Published on: 2009-12-31
- Released on: 2014-05-15
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

Finally--an insightful and practical guide for applying polarity management to some very common congregational dilemmas! This book unties knots that keep congregations stuck, and provides ways to shift conversations to new places. Oswald and Johnson are wonderful teachers of the principles of polarity management who reinforce your learning through illustrations and processes that can be grasped by congregational leaders and immediately applied. --Lawrence Peers, Senior Consultant, The Alban Institute

I was introduced to the concept of polarity management several years ago, but for me it remained a theory without a practical application. Recently I read *Managing Polarities in Congregations*, and the concept came alive! I now have an excellent tool for use with congregations as they encounter an increasing number of polarities. --B. Leslie Robinson, Jr., Interim President, Center for Congregational Health, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

A single polarity map can liberate anxious people from either/or thinking, enabling them to see options, value other perspectives, and think creatively. A robust set of eight such maps adapted to your faith tradition will prove an extremely useful tool as you follow the Spirit's leading into the fullness of God's will. The authors of *Managing Polarities in Congregations* taught me these concepts and I've used them many times as a pastor and consultant with blessed results! Read this book to revolutionize your capacity for critical thinking, creative problem solving, and organizational leadership. --Fred Oaks, founder of ChurchOver40.com and author of *Welcome, Pastor! Building a Productive Pastor-Congregation Partnership in 40 Days*

About the Author

Roy M. Oswald is executive director of the Center for Emotional Intelligence and Human Relations Skills. An ordained Lutheran pastor serving in a congregation and a Lutheran synod, Roy has consulted in the area of leadership development for over three decades. He is the author of sixteen books, including *Discerning Your Congregation's Future*, *The Inviting Church*, and *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*. Barry Johnson is president of Polarity Management Associates, an international training and consulting firm. The founder of Polarity Management® and the Polarity Map™, he is the author of *Polarity Management, Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*. Barry holds a Ph.D. in organizational development from International College and has more than thirty years of experience as an organizational development consultant.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Howard:

This *Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities* is great publication for you because the content which is full of information for you who all always deal with world and have to make decision every minute. This book reveal it info accurately using great manage word or we can state no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read the idea hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only provides straight forward sentences but challenging core information with beautiful delivering

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Randell Easley:

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Lydia Rogers:

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