



HANDLING CHANGE

Preparation for Wednesday 6 October 2021

Introduction

This day deals with how to lead change in a way that increases the probability of success.

As we have seen in the last year, change presents enormous challenges to leaders. It exposes the strengths and weaknesses in leaders approaches and skills and it heightens the risk – of personal and corporate failure.

It is the ability to manage the people side of change effectively that is the most important ingredient in leading through it successfully:

Research shows that around 2/3rds of major corporate changes fail to reach their objectives (sources include Gartner group, Mckinsey, IBM and many other analysts) and the main reason is the failure to manage the people side well - not just communications but the orchestration of the change with people. This is especially true where changing attitudes and mindsets is critical or changes to corporate culture are sought.

As we live in a society and world of constant change it will remain one of the most important skills of effective leaders.

Aims of the day

The day aims to help you to more effectively participate in and lead significant change. It will give you an awareness of frameworks and tools that might be helpful and help you to address the most significant area of risk - the response of other people.

Agenda and timetable

The day will be hosted on Zoom and the timetable is:

- 09.50 Get online and join the call
- 10.00 Welcome and introduction
- 10.10 Session 1: The pattern of human change
- 11.10 Coffee break
- 11.25 Session 2: The role of leaders in change
- 12.30 Lunch break
- 13.40 Session 3: The cycle of change and getting going
- 14.30 Tea break
- 14.45 Session 4: Handling resistance
- 16.00 End

Making the most of the day

Changes are incredibly varied even though the principles of the approach to any change with people are constant. In church life they include - new service formats and times, community projects, changes in leaders or governance, new tech, building a missional culture, reordering, stopping a group or activity...and many others.

As a 'soft skill', you will get most out of the day if you come with either specific challenges or a specific change in mind. This will help anchor the frameworks or insights that you gather and apply them more easily.

Key concepts that will be covered

Amongst the key concepts that we will cover in the day will be the following:

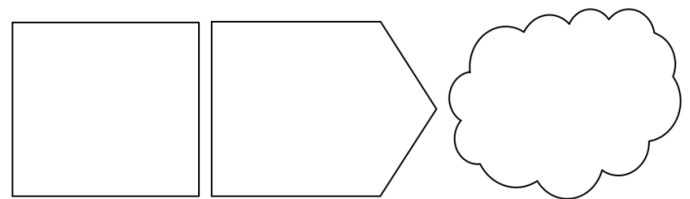
THE PATTERN OF CHANGE

Major change is best characterised as comprising three fundamental parts. These steps have been identified by many different analysts looking at how people respond to discontinuities and major changes in their lives.

The present state

Transition

The future state



The steps apply at every level of change from person to society and are represented by different titles but these explain the same underlying concepts:

1. An unfreezing or ending from the starting outlook - representing the period in which people identify (voluntarily or under compulsion) that something needs to change. This is well illustrated by our initial responses to Covid.
2. A transition phase – sometimes called the neutral zone or change – which is a kind of no man's zone between two steady states where the signposts and stability are unclear. This is a fluid, uncomfortable and temporary stage that people have to move through to reach the third step.
3. A new beginning, a 'to be' stage which represents the ending of transition as the move to a new stable equilibrium is completed and the individual feels comfortable and accepting of the new position.

The value of identifying these steps is that they help in the planning and navigation of any change, provide a sense of what to expect through each step and highlight the requirements that are needed to be able to progress to the next step

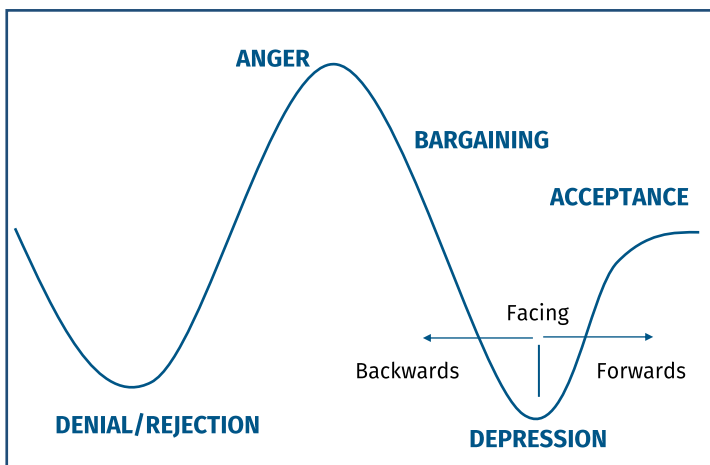
Importantly these are psychological steps – not physical steps. As a result it can take a long time for an individual to progress through these steps. Inevitably in this journey people will always resist certain aspects of it - even in positive change.

It is important to recognise that people do not resist change per se (despite what we might think!) but they resist those aspects of even a positive change which involve losses to them.

Interestingly these steps and the resistance involved can be seen in both imposed change (like the pandemic) and change which has been chosen (like job change, getting married etc) and have been captured by analysts through the years.

This cycling through the stages and the resistance within that can be seen readily in bereavement:

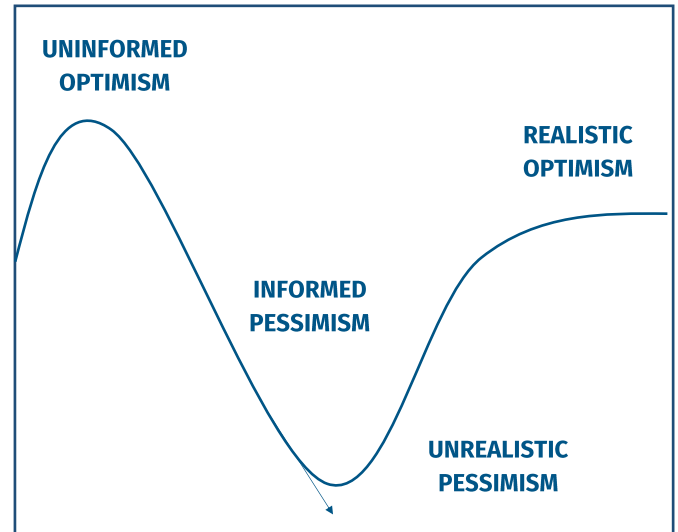
Negative Change



Source: On Death & Dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, 1969

But also in career advancement or exciting new steps in life:

Positive Change



Source: The career/entrepreneurial transition curve

The curves suggest continual forward progress and resolution but as we know this is a big simplification of the reality of major changes in the lives of people. They are most helpful in illustrating the swings in emotion and engagement, the wide range and strength of responses and the importance of acceptance and looking forward for emerging out of the transition successfully.

THE ROLE OF LEADERS

Leaders play a critical role in helping people to move forward and, in corporate change, to move forward together.

They do this in the five principle ways summarised below and bringing to these roles the characteristics of:

- Resilience to keep the group moving forward
- Timeliness to ensure that progress is made quickly enough
- Challenge to those individuals who want to waver, check out or pull in a different direction

These are a combination of activities and soft skills that help leaders to husband people and changes fruitfully in the life of the church:

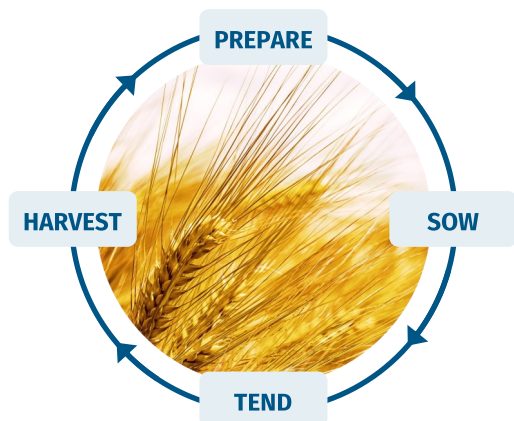
- Orchestrate a shared vision.
- Promote 'godly' dissatisfaction'.
- Encourage the heart.
- Engage in triple listening.

And do this by...

- Leading in obedience – show the way.

THE PROCESS OF LEADING CHANGE

The process is most helpfully thought of in similar steps to creating a productive plot of land with four main steps and the need to repeat the cycle at appropriate intervals if you want to reap as much fruit as possible.



This is different from the emphasis of some other process flows because of its equal focus on preparing the ground (before the change) and harvesting (at the end of the change) - both of which are often undervalued.

We will talk through each of these frameworks in the day.

Pre-work needed

1. Please complete the attached Change Leadership Questionnaire before the day. This includes both:
 - Totalling up your scores, and
 - Providing illustrative examples of your most frequent behaviours in particular situations.
2. Also think of 1 or 2 examples of significant and effective changes that you have experienced in the life of the church (or other organisation) and how leaders have introduced them.
3. Read the case study below and reflect on possible actions that you might take

Thank you. I hope it will be a very useful day

Rod Street

CASE STUDY

You are the leader of three churches in suburban Birmingham. One of your churches has a congregation of around thirty. It is situated in the middle of a well-established area of mixed housing – private and housing association homes; young people, families and retireds with a mix of ethnic origins.

The church has some community contact – there is a toddlers and young parents group in the premises in the week and some local, especially primary school, contacts, but none of these have encouraged people from outside to come along to the Sunday service. This is attended by thirty well-established members, who are largely elderly and have lived in the area and gathered together for many years, and rarely seem to consider their role in bringing God's good news into the community.

Unless the church grows, the diocese is very likely to close it and sell-off the building leaving the congregation who wish to continue to worship to go to one of the nearby sister congregations about a mile away (but not readily accessible for some of the current congregation, who do not drive and would need to walk to get there).

You are seeking to really engage with the families and community in the area and share with them Christ's good news but you are concerned that the current congregation may simply prefer to carry on meeting as they currently do.

How would you initiate this? Identify one or two key things that you might do.