

Adaptive Change for Congregations
[presented for the Northern Lights Regional CC]
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Annotated Syllabus for further study
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Opening prayer from the Book of Common Worship:

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Websites

www.hsdinstitute.org

Human systems dynamics institute focuses on adaptive action in all disciplines. They offer workshops, trainings, a blog, and many other resources.

<https://www.davidcooperrider.com/ai-process/>

David Cooperrider was one of the developers of the Appreciative Inquiry process. There is lots of helpful information here.

www.arl-jrl.org

Academy of Religious Leadership provides many articles on various aspects of adaptive change and leadership within various religious contexts. Peruse their library!

Articles

<https://hbr.org/2002/06/a-survival-guide-for-leaders>

Harvard Business review has many articles on adaptive change, this is a good one for leaders.

<http://arl-jrl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Reid-Becoming-a-Built-to-Change-Congregation-2014.pdf>

This is one I mentioned in our gathering.

<https://faithandleadership.com/david-lose-risks-and-rewards-adaptive-change>

From David Lose, a congregational pastor. This article is part of a 4-part series and all are worth a read.

Books

Bolsinger, Tod. (2015) *Canoeing the Mountains: Christina Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. Great book for a leadership team to read together.

If you search for Tod Bolsinger you can find several videos of him lecturing on this book.

Branson, Mark Lau. (2004) *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change*.

This will teach you how to implement appreciative inquiry in your congregation and give an example of a congregation who used it.

Eoyang, Glenda and Royce Holladay (2013). *Adaptive Action: Leveraging Uncertainty in Your Organization*.

This is not a religious book, but an in-depth description of how to lead adaptive actions in your congregation. This is a slightly academic book, but very useful as you engage in adaptive action.

Heifetz, Ronald and Marty Linsky (2002). *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*.

This is my “go-to” book on adaptive change and leadership.

Heifetz, Linsky and Grashow (2009). *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*.

A great companion to *Leadership on the Line* with lots of practical helps for leaders.

The pair are a combination of theory and practice.

Kinnamon, Michael and Jan Linn (2009) *Disciples: Reclaiming Our Identity, Reforming Our Practice*.

If you haven't read it, it is a must for Disciples leaders. I have another workshop on how Disciples should be uniquely poised for managing adaptive change – it's embedded in our DNA, if we remember our DNA. This was revised in 2019 to *Disciples: Who we are and What Holds us Together*.

Robinson, Anthony (2003). *Transforming Congregational Culture*.

This is getting to be a bit dated, but it is an easy read, written by a pastor, and would be a great introductory study for a leadership team.

Steinke, Peter (2010). *A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope*.

Another very easy read for leaders.

Tickle, Phyllis (2008). *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*.

This is a wonderful introduction to the major shifts happening in Christianity and the broader religious landscape. There is also a video series/adult study rooted in the book available from Church Publishing called “Embracing Emergence Christianity: Phyllis Tickle on the Church's Next Rummage Sale.” I have used it with my adult Sunday school and it is quite good.

Wheatley, Margaret (2006). *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*.

This is a great source for several organizational development theories. A bit academic, but also readable. The section on Living Systems Theory is quite useful – maybe find it at your local library, rather than purchase.