

Why Adaptive Leadership?

1. GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY



2. MISSIONAL OPPORTUNITY

3. INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY

‘During liminal seasons, our destination is not yet clear. The leader must keep the people moving forward, but the endpoint is fuzzy. Liminal seasons require us to build the bridge as we walk on it.’

Susan Beaumont

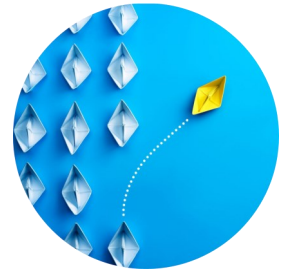


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LEAD
ON

Adaptive Leadership



Definition: the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.

What did you learn about adaptive leadership during the pandemic?

WHAT ADAPTIVE LEADERS EXCEL AT

1. Embrace uncertainty and change – growing in Christ centred courage, resilience and faith-filled trust.

- Calmly confronting the unknown as a less anxious presence.
- Willingly addressing systemic issues.

2. Facilitate healthy collaboration – building gospel focused collective engagement and wisdom.

- Humbly working with, listening to and learning from others.
- Sensitively understanding and managing our own emotions and the emotions of others (EQ).

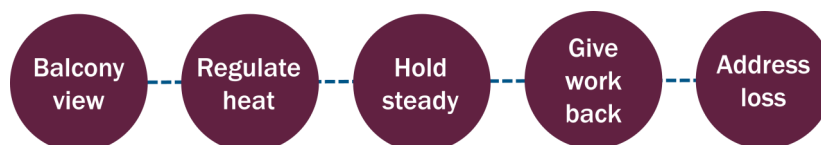
3. Lead a learning process – experimenting through God honouring innovation and creativity.

- Patiently exercising vulnerability and trust through trials and pilots (failing fast, learning quickly).
- Humbly modelling reflective learning and personal transformation.

4. Engage with conflict constructively – navigating resistance with Spirit fuelled love and grace.

- Courageously leaning into conflict, believing the best of others.
- Gently pressing on through the difficult times, trusting in God's good purposes.

WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE?



SCENARIO 1	SCENARIO 2
Something is going on amongst under 35s. How are we going to respond to those who 'turn up' at church?	It is less than a year to Passion for Life 2026. How are we going to engage in this in a way that uses it as an opportunity for the whole church to work as a pathway to help people of all ages come to know Christ?

Choose one scenario. What might adaptive leadership look like in this scenario?

FOR REFLECTION

What one things you will do as result of this seminar?

The Difference Between Technical Problems and Adaptive Challenges

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

- A-B.
- Problem to fix.
- Relatively clear solution.
- Can create a plan.

Bolsinger suggests:

- Solutions available within the repertoire of the community.
- Require education, experience and expertise.
- Nothing trivial about them, can be big, serious and weighty.

Three things tend to push us towards a technical approach to change even if it is an adaptive challenge:

- Crisis.
- Anxiety.
- Desire for speed.

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

- A to many possible Bs.
- Puzzle.
- Multiple potential solutions.
- Emergent.

Bolsinger suggests:

- Cannot be solved with existing knowledge, experience, skills.
- Require people to make a shift in priorities, values, expectations, attitudes, roles and practices.
- Arise from changing environment and uncharted territory where there is not a clear way forward.
- Need leaders and followers both to learn.
- The new way forward will result in loss.

‘LEADERSHIP IS
ENERGISING A
COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE
TOWARD THEIR OWN
TRANSFORMATION IN
ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH A
SHARED MISSION IN THE
FACE OF A CHANGING
WORLD.’

TOD BOLSINGER

RESOURCES

THE ONE TO READ

- Canoeing the Mountains, Tod Bolsinger (IVP)

TOP READS

- Uncharted Leadership, Angie Ward (Zondervan)
- How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You are Going, Susan Beaumont (Rowman and Littlefield)
- A Non-Anxious Presence, Mark Sayers (Moody)
- Anxious Church, Anxious People, Jack Shitama (Charis Works)

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Leadership principles for having good conversations when there is disagreement](#), a webinar recording available at CPASnews on YouTube.
- [How to become a more adaptive leader](#), a two part video available at CPASnews on YouTube unpacking Bolsinger's approach.
- The Practice of Adaptive Leadership, Ronald Heifetz (HBP)

