

## Living Ministry Research Briefings

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*Holding Things Together: Church of England Clergy in Changing Times*

*'Trust that God will Work His Purposes Out': Wellbeing and Change Management in Ordained Ministry*

## Change Management

The fourth wave of Living Ministry explored how clergy lead and manage change. Two change management frameworks were used. Hiatt's 'ADKAR' model<sup>1</sup> is built around the process of change, entailing the stages of awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement. Rowland's 'Still Moving' model<sup>2</sup> focuses on the person leading the change, identifying four 'inner capacities' (staying present, curious and intentional responding, tuning into the system, and acknowledging the whole) and four 'external practices' (attractor, edge and tension, container, and transforming space) that work together for successful change.

### Key observations

- Both change management models correlate with wellbeing, most strongly with mental wellbeing, suggesting that **good mental health and a strong ability to manage change go hand in hand**. A barrier to wellbeing may be an inability to implement and sustain change as desired.
- Respondents tended to show **more awareness of and desire for change than knowledge of how to bring change about and ability to implement it**, suggesting that interventions should focus more on supporting clergy to act than on promoting awareness of the need for action.
- Clergy may be **more adept at practices which provide stability, structure and support to those around them than practices which disrupt** in order to bring about change. This may be an indication of respondents' strengths and weaknesses in regard to the models, or of the models' limitations for the context of ordained ministry.

### Factors influencing change processes

- **Attitudes and behaviours** of the people among whom the clergyperson ministers, for example: resistance stemming from lack of awareness of the need for change or desire for it (because of loss, fear or fixed cultures and practices); and capacity, passivity, engagement and openness affecting ability to implement change, along with willingness to take responsibility and accept accountability. In a context of volunteering, management skills and investment in relationships are crucial.

<sup>1</sup> See Jeff M. Hiatt (2006), *ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government and Our Community*, Loveland, Colorado: Prosci Learning Center Publications; and <https://www.prosci.com/methodology/3-phase-process>.

<sup>2</sup> Deborah Rowland (2017), *Still Moving: How to Lead Mindful Change*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.



- **Structures, systems and resources**, largely affecting knowledge of how to bring about change and ability to implement and reinforce it, including: training, structural rules and processes (including relating to multi-parish benefices, church closures and decision-making within parishes); expertise; funding; and support and permission (where relevant) from the diocese or elsewhere.
- **Personal qualities** of the minister, including: awareness of self, others and context; curiosity and openness; willingness to confront difficult issues and disrupt pre-existing patterns; ability to hold and support other people through difficult or uncertain times; and ability to care for oneself. These qualities are closely related to the Still Moving inner capacities and external practices. Inexperience is a challenge for first incumbents developing leadership skills.
- **The presence and activity of God**, throughout the change process, motivating, guiding, initiating and enabling change, and recognised through prayer and theological reflection.

### Three change narratives

These are highly situational and individual clergy may draw on more than one.

- **Bringing people with you**, where the clergyperson identifies the need for change, develops a plan, and seeks to mobilise other people to engage with or make the change through clear communication and encouragement. Trust is located in the leader and in God (this is from God; God will do this).
- **Journeying together**, with the focus on enabling people to build a future together through listening and understanding, often in the context of uncertainty, difference or trouble, and requiring openness to self-change. Trust is located in the community and in God (God will bring us through this together).
- **Moving with the Spirit**, where change is agile and opportunistic, involving active disruption and trialling, or enabling others to join in with what God is already doing by giving permission, support and encouragement. Trust is located in other people, in the leader, and in God (God is already at work).

Trust is crucial to each and invested in by many clergy, e.g. through care for other people; genuine listening and consultation; developing a culture of grace, affirmation and accountability; and rooting relationships in a shared spirituality, sometimes including individual and corporate prayer, confession, repentance and forgiveness. Trust operates at each ADKAR stage and is core to the Still Moving inner capacities and external practices. The personal skills and qualities it entails are acquired through training, experience, personal spiritual investment, and regular, sustained reflection on practice, supported by others.

### Suggested areas for investment

- Formation of personal skills and qualities (e.g. the Still Moving capacities and practices)
- Self-awareness and self-care
- Working with and managing people, especially volunteers
- Leadership skills that foster theologically-informed trust
- Leadership skills for first incumbents
- Resourcing (expertise and simplified processes as well as funding)

