



Congregation Vitality

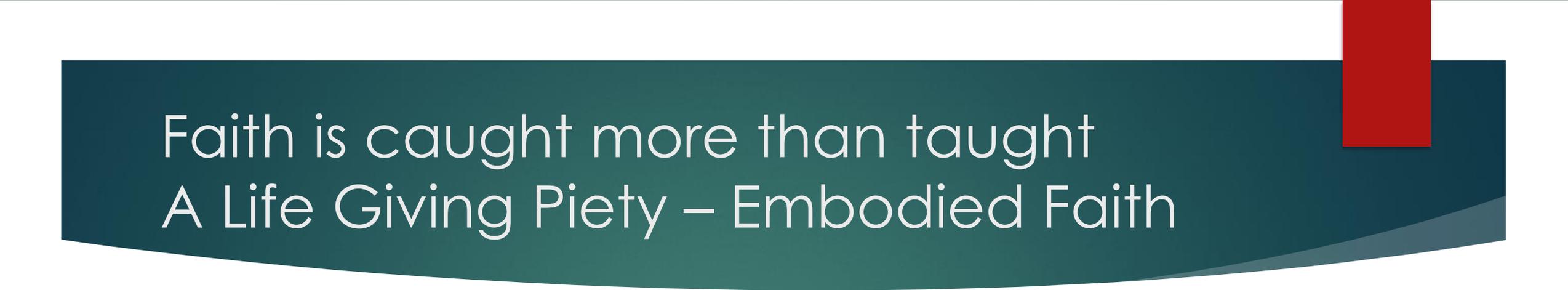
LIVING THE DREAM

Dwelling in the Word – John 15

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

The Third Petition - Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

- ▶ **What is this? or What does this mean?** In fact, God's good and gracious will comes about without our prayer, but we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us.
- ▶ **How does this come about?** Whenever God breaks and hinders every evil scheme and will—as are present in the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh—that would not allow us to hallow God's name and would prevent the coming of his kingdom, and instead **whenever God strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his word and in faith until the end of our lives. This is God's gracious and good will.**

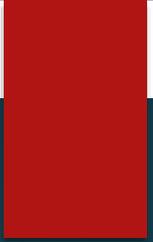


Faith is caught more than taught A Life Giving Piety – Embodied Faith

- ▶ What does that look like?
- ▶ Who comes to mind?

Spiritual Practices



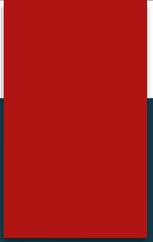


“

God calls people deeper in faith,
hope and love as gracious
resilient disciples.

”

God is the center of Congregational
Vitality. God is the primary agent...and the
center of our life.



“

What do you see that
makes you believe a
congregation is vital?

”

What are the marks of congregational
health? What does it look like?

What is your
definition of
congregational
vitality?

WHAT ARE
SOME WORDS
THAT MIGHT BE
USED?

❖ FAITHFUL

❖ FRUITFUL

❖ HEALTHY

❖ CENTERED

❖ SENT

Congregation Vitality

- ▶ **¹Communities of Jesus²,**
- ▶ **that nurture life changing relationships³**
- ▶ **with God, one another, and the world.**

1 This phrase is meant to evoke an expansive understanding of the how, in this age, people are gathering to engage God's Word. We envision campus ministries, Bible Camps, pub theology gatherings and more as places where the Triune God is at work creating faith.

2 We understand that it is God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who through the power of the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and makes holy.

3 In relationship with the Triune God and others we are most certainly nurtured, but we are also changed, in other words the Word has the power to transform.

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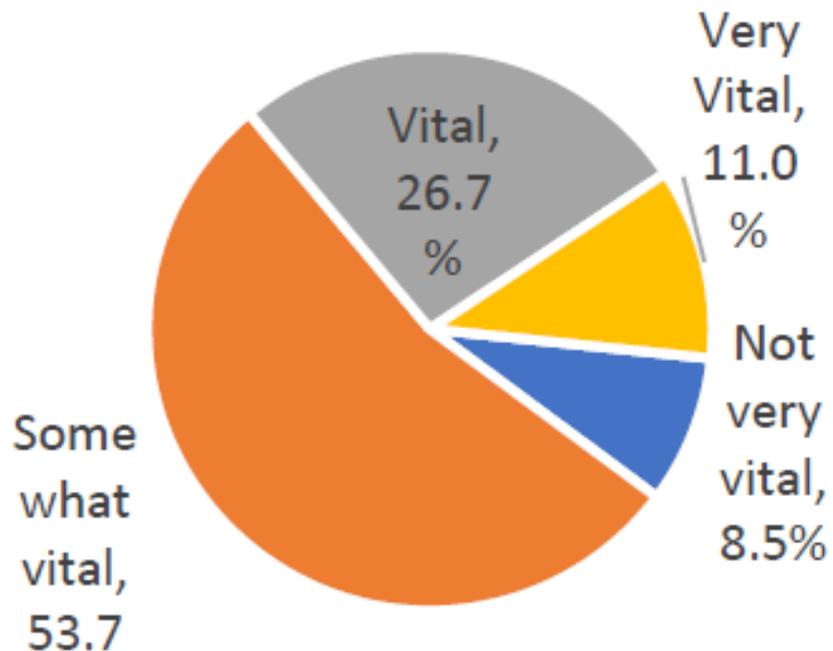
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2016 Data – Key Findings

Annual Report Vitality
Averages



- ▶ The most vital congregations can be any size or shape;
- ▶ vitality is not directly connected to numeric growth
- ▶ nor is it related to congregation location;
- ▶ more vital does not mean more sustainable.

KUDZU

SMITE MINE
ENEMIES, LORD!



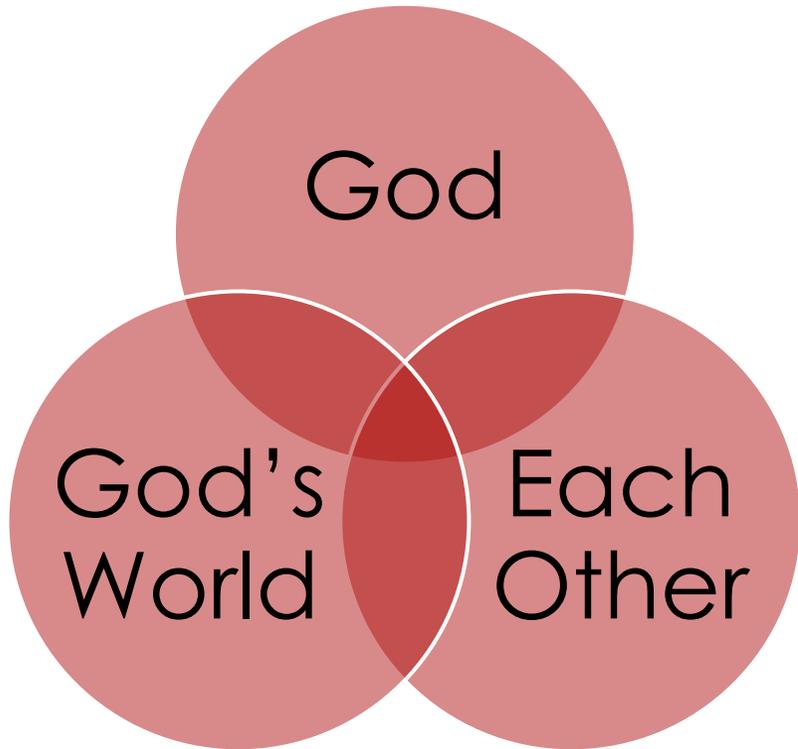
SMITE MY WORST
ENEMY WITH A
PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS!



LET ME
REPHRASE
THAT!

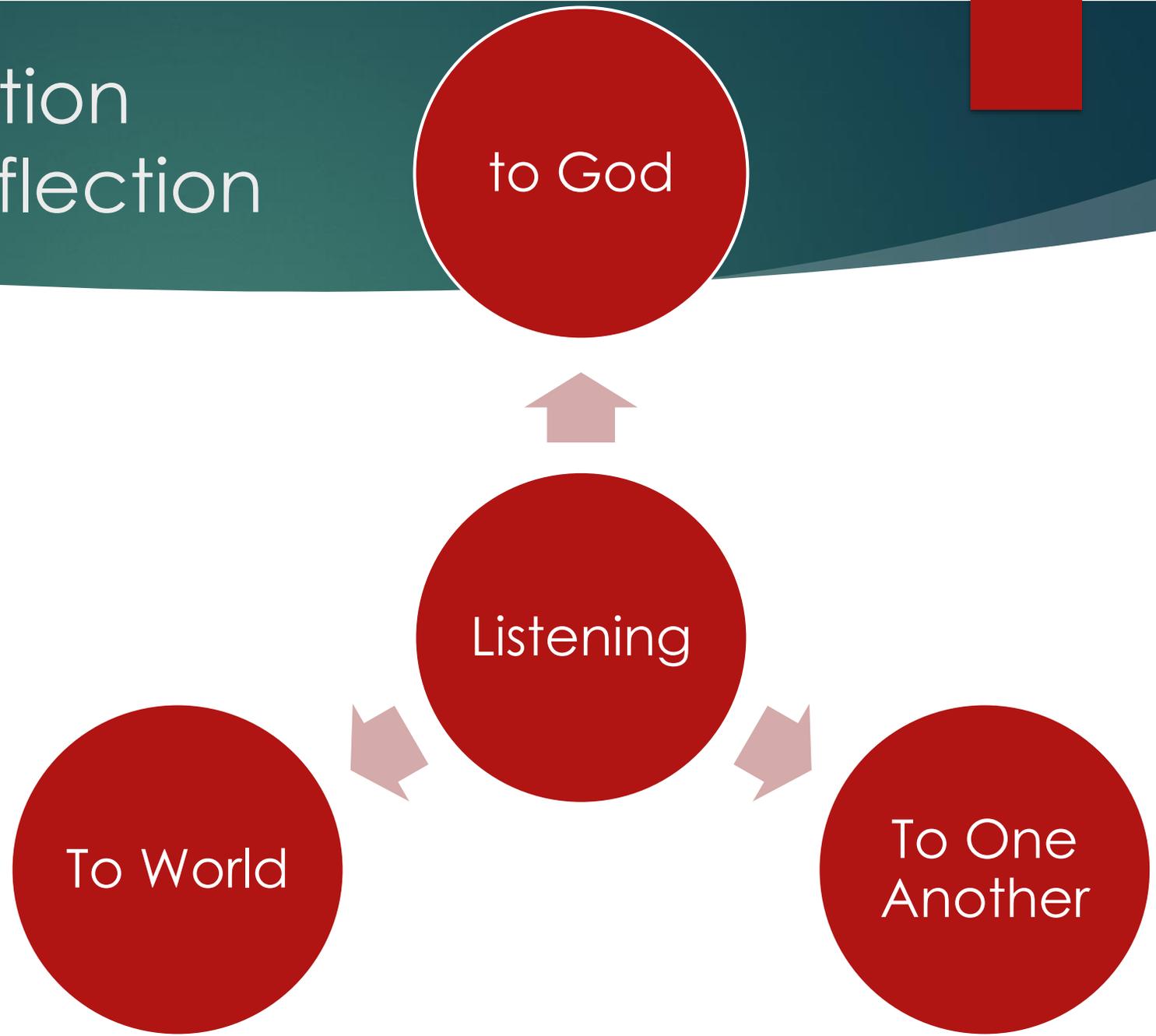


Vital Congregations Have a Strong Relationship with



- ▶ Holy Spirit working to create, sustain and send
- ▶ Great Commandment – Love God heart, soul, strength and mind and love neighbor as self
- ▶ Great Commission – Go. Make disciples of all nations/peoples teaching them all I command you. Lo, I am with you always.

Listening -> Action
Action and Reflection





**STRENGTHEN THEIR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD**

- a. Leadership articulates how God shows up in and through the congregation and its people*
- b. The congregation has a clear understanding of God's larger mission and members know their purpose in this time and place*
- c. The congregation can articulate that purpose and create a plan for implementation*

Vital Congregations - ELCA Futures Direction



**NURTURES
RELATIONSHIPS**

- a. Relationships among leadership, pastor(s) and staff, and members create a loving community with good communication*
- b. People work together respectfully through successes and challenges*
- c. There is a sense of ownership and belonging that drives the commitment and engagement in the mission of the church*

Vital Congregation

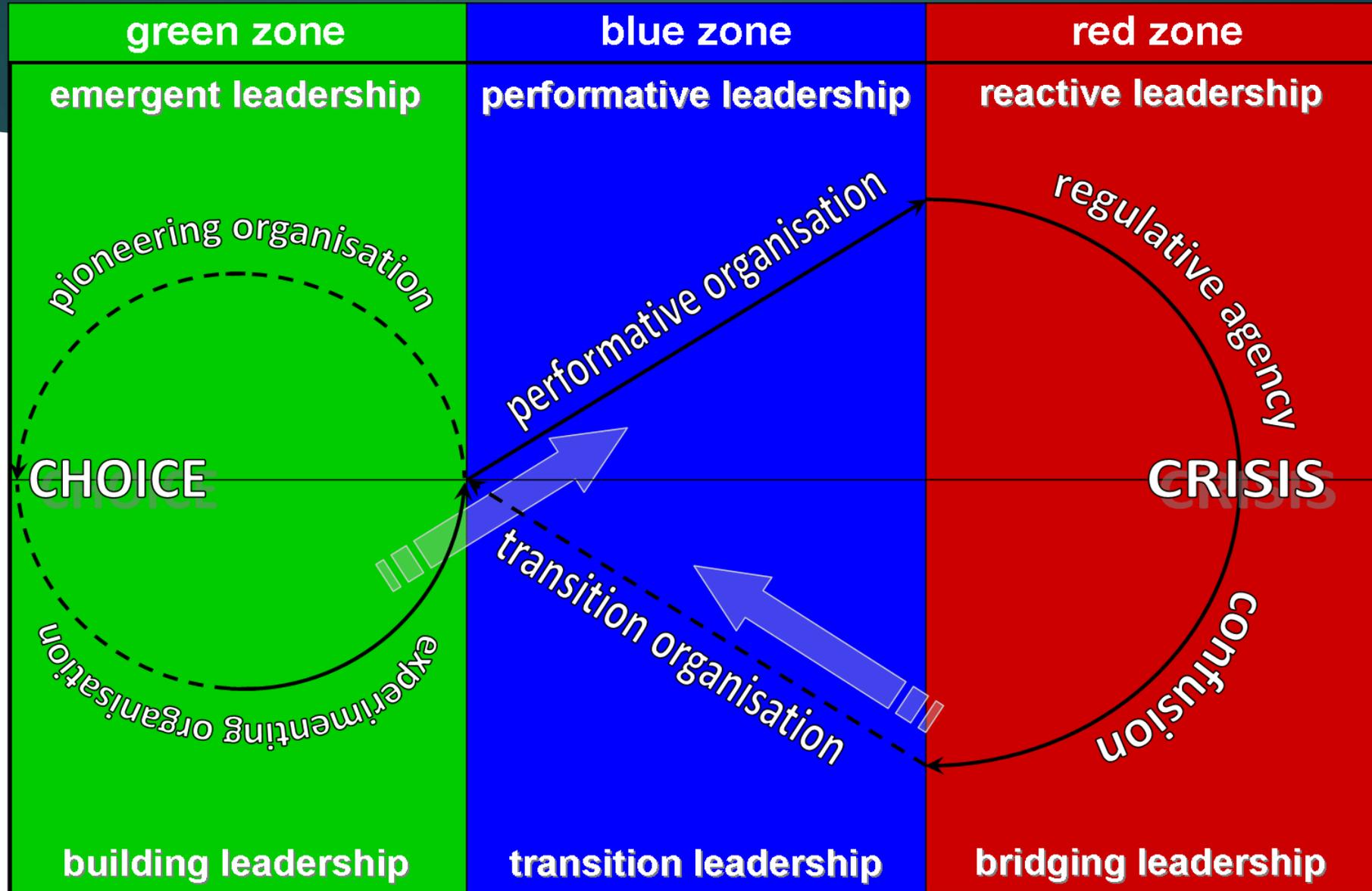


A STRONG PRESENCE
IN THE COMMUNITY

- a. *The congregation opens its doors to welcome the stranger and goes beyond its doors to share the love of Jesus Christ*
- b. *Creates and nurtures partnerships within the community to make a positive impact on the strength of the community*

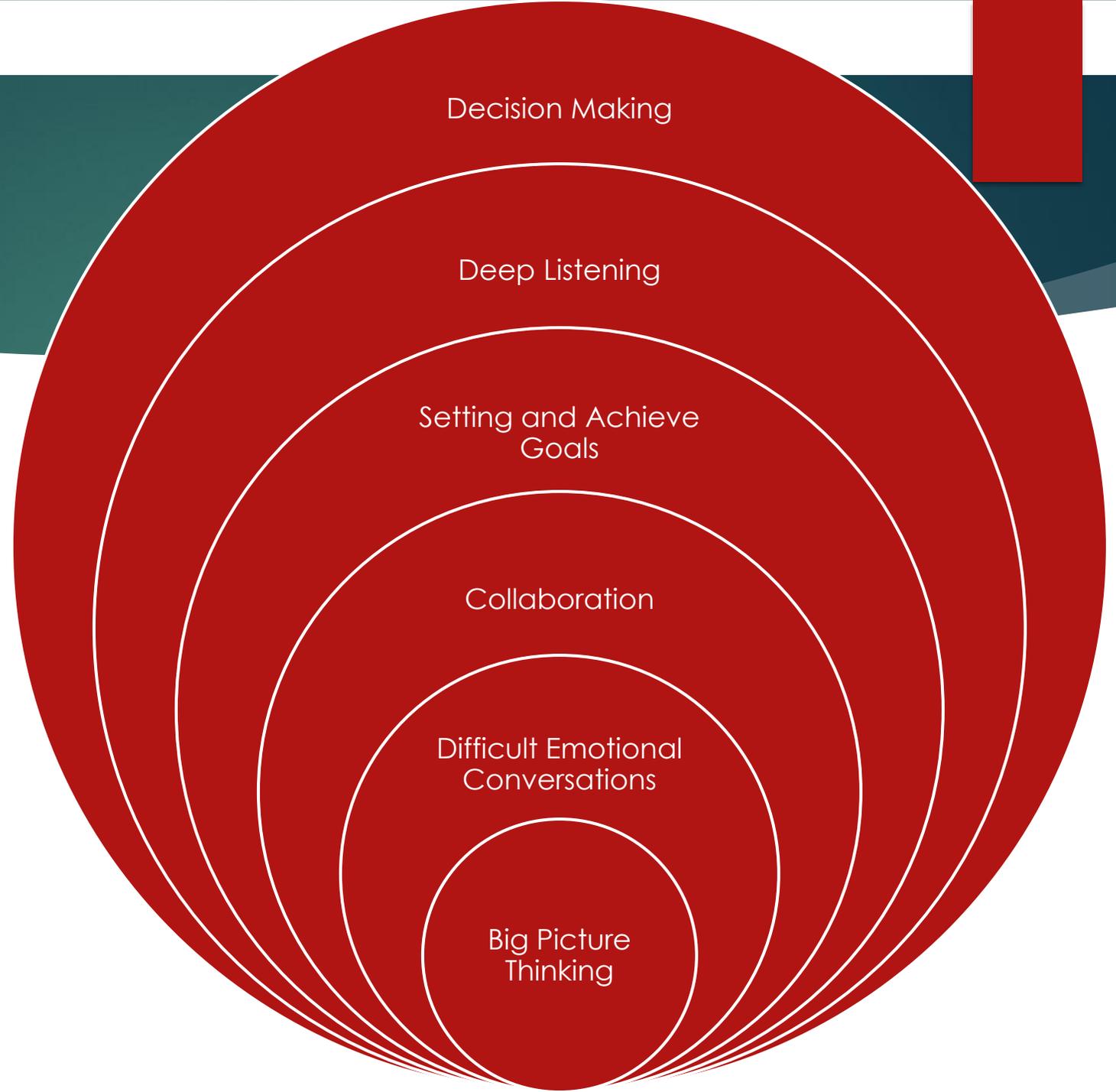
Vital Congregations

Adaptive Leadership – in changing culture



Alan
Roxburgh

Basic Leadership Skills



Pace – Sequence

- ▶ Change is slow
- ▶ Small Steps
- ▶ Grow muscles
- ▶ Grow competency
- ▶ Shifts in missional imagination appear to precede shifts in missional behavior
- ▶ Tractors before power steering
- ▶ Praxis
 - ▶ Attend
 - ▶ Assert
 - ▶ Discern - Decide
 - ▶ Act
 - ▶ Reflection

We have to be willing to look beyond current models...

Box

Book

Preacher

“To get unstuck, congregations need to stop asking “**church questions**” (e.g. How do we fix the church?) and start asking “**God questions**” (e.g. “What is God doing and how do we join?”).”

“Church questions limit their imagined solutions to past versions of what it means to be “fixed”. God questions allow them to see opportunities and imagine new, more contextually relevant image of success.” Bobbit – Cong. Vitality Report

Congregation Participant Short Survey

This short survey is designed to help congregational leaders understand participant perceptions of key missional areas. Please mark inside the box that best represents your perception of the congregation. *Please do not mark between boxes. (e.g. Marking 1,2,3,4, or 5 is okay. Marking between 3 and 4 or 3.5 is not okay)*

	Poorly		Some-what		Great
How well do these phrases describe your congregation?	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Example</i>			X		
Worship nurtures people's faith					
Deepens people's relationship with God					
A clear sense mission					
Excitement about the congregation's future					

ELCA Congregational Vitality Survey

<http://www.congregationalvitalitysurvey.com>

- 
- Worship nurtures faith
 - Helps deepen relationship with God
 - Clear sense of mission
 - Excitement about the future
 - Always ready to try new things
 - Works for social justice/ advocacy
 - A positive force in the community

- 
- 
- Incorporate newcomers
 - Seek out and use gifts of all ages
 - Build strong, healthy relationships
 - Manage disagreements health, respectful
 - Help those in need
 - Equip people to share their faith with others
 - Interact with the local community
 - Help people live out faith in daily life
- 

Seven I -

1. Investment: Invested in the process emotionally, spiritually, relationally and willing to put in the time and energy required.
2. Imagination: Open to, and expecting imaginations to be expanded.
3. Intentionality: Intentional this work, setting aside time and space, and holding themselves accountable to the process and expecting change to be an outcome.
4. Inspiration: See the Holy Spirit as guiding this effort and trust in the Spirit's agency.
5. Intimacy: Know one another and be invested in the wellbeing of each other.
6. Integration: In mutual relationships with the community.
7. Internal: Leadership and buy-in come from both lay and clergy within the congregation.

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6. Bobbit – Cong. Vitality

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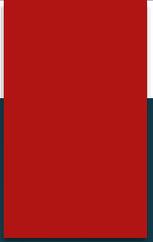
In some places the **Claimed, Gathered, Sent** model is shifting to a **Sent, Gathered, Claimed** model.

”

People (especially millennials) feel sent by a strong sense of passion into the world to work in areas like social and environmental justice. Bobbit

Wellbeing – A Lot of Little Things – No Silver Bullet

Connections with God	Connections with each other	Connections with the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worship nurtures faith• Deepens people's relationship with God• Clear sense of mission• Excitement about the future• Always ready to try something new	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build strong, healthy relationships• Seek out and use gifts of all• Manage disagreements• Incorporate new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A positive force in the community• Works for social justice/ advocacy• Address social concerns (helps those in need)• Interact with local community• Equip members to share faith• Helps people live out faith in daily life



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