



Responding to the Times

Evergreen Association



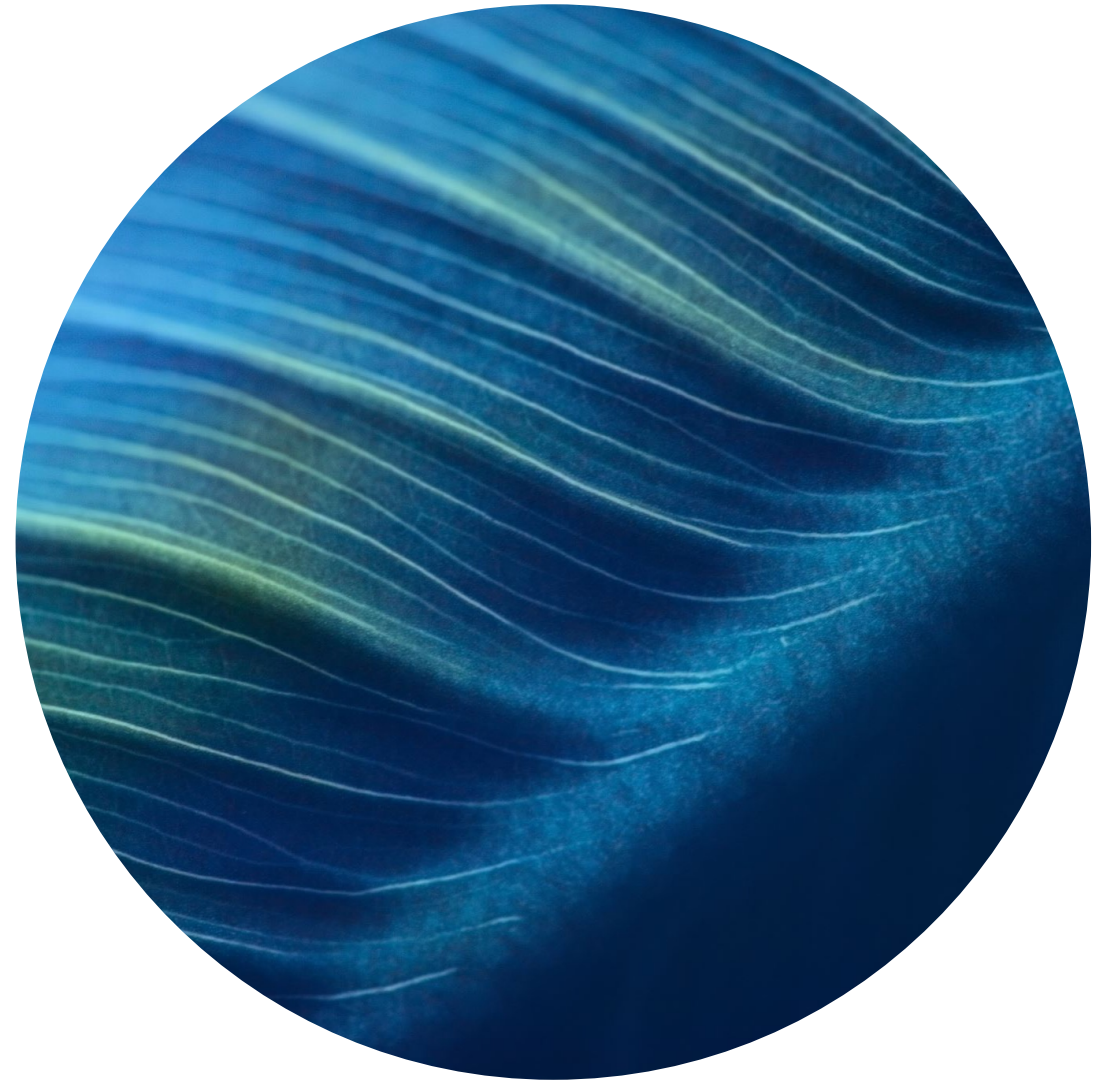
What do you
do when
you're stuck in
crisis?

Creative Confidence

How confident are you in your creativity?

How confident are you in the creativity of your church's leadership?

How confident are you in the creativity of your congregation as a whole?



FOUR TYPES OF CRISIS RESPONSES

Positive Action	3. Caring Fool	4. True Leader
Negative or No Action	1. Dangerous Dunce	2. Calculating Opportunist
	LOW CRISIS READINESS Low Business Skills and/or Low Crisis Knowledge	HIGH CRISIS READINESS High Business Skills and High Crisis Knowledge

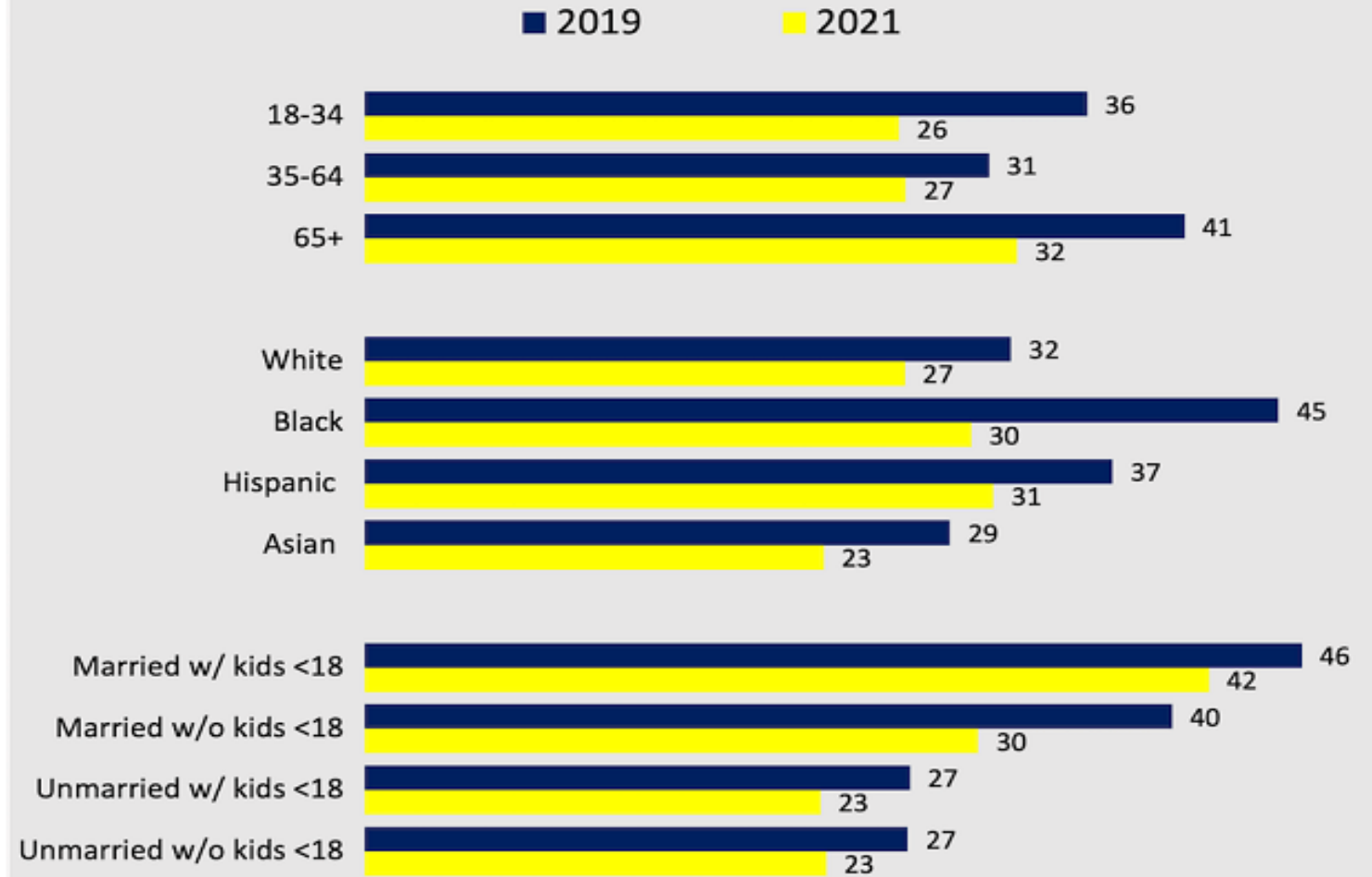
Creativity and Crisis

Forbes, 2020, Rajeev Peshawaria in regards to pandemic leadership responses.

Church at the Crossroads

Decline in Church Attendance by Demographics, 2019 and 2021

% who attend religious service at least 1-2x a month



Notes: Based on adults ages 18+.

Source: BYU/Deseret News, American Family Surveys, 2019-2021.

State of the Church

By September 2021, 98% of churches had returned to in-person worship services, according to Lifeway Research.

The average pastor saw 73% of their church members in person on Sunday mornings. In other words, more than 1 in 4 pre-COVID churchgoers are still missing.

State of the Church

Adults who are 65 and older are much less likely to attend at least monthly now (32%) than before the pandemic (41%), according to the IFS analysis.

The largest age demographic drop happened among young adults. In 2019, 36% of 18- to 34-year-olds attended church at least once or twice a month. That has fallen to just 26% now.

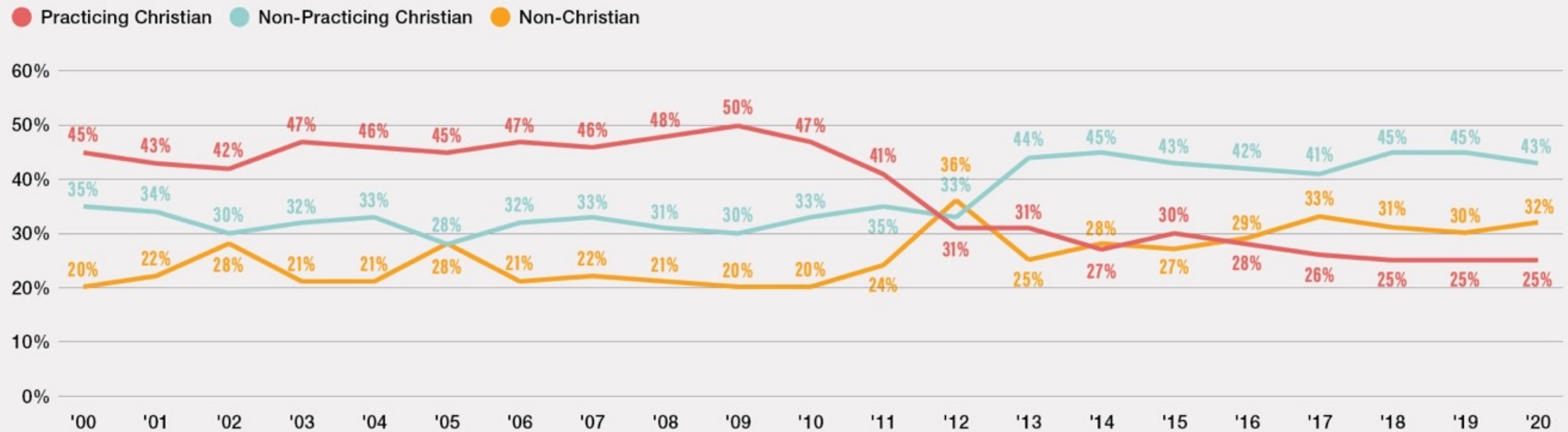
State of the Church

The largest demographic drop has been most pronounced among Black churchgoers.

Prior to the pandemic Black Americans were by far the group most likely to attend religious services regularly, with 45% attending at least monthly, according to IFS.

Today, 30% of Black Americans attend, similar to the current rates among white (27%) and Hispanic Americans (31%).

HOW AMERICANS RELATE TO CHRISTIANITY IS CHANGING: 2000-2020



n = 96,171 U.S. adults | 2000-2020

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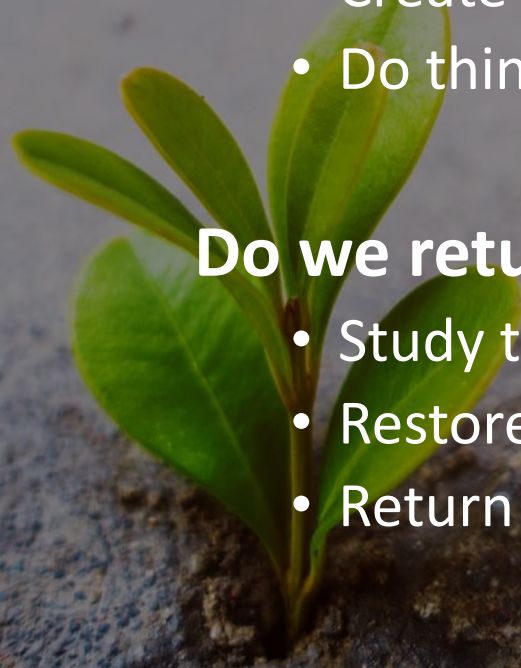
Where do
we go from
here?

Do we leave the past and create anew?

- Abandon broken systems
- Reject outdated approaches
- Create new programs
- Do things that have never been done before

Do we return to the lost foundations?

- Study the past
- Restore lost practices and traditions
- Return to simpler times





What would Jesus do?



John 12:24

¹⁷ “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”



Matthew
23:23

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.



Matthew
5:17

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.





We are called to
both

- We are called to hold in tension a journey that holds to our foundations in God but also renews and transforms constantly.
- As Christ's followers, we are in a continuing cycle of birth, life, death, and resurrection. This ongoing process is what we understand as sanctification. God's ongoing work of developing, renewing and restoring us into the full *imago dei* (image of God).

Constant Renewal

“...For to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read... But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3:14a-18

Ecclesia reformata, Semper reformanda

“The church reformed, always reforming”

- Jodocus Van Lodenstein was a minister in the 1600s for the Reformed Church of the United Provinces in what we know today as the Netherlands
- He spoke in reference to the reformations going on in his time, but this is not specific to just his tradition.
- Think of all the Christian reformations we have seen throughout history!





“The church reformed, always reforming”

- We are called to a constant state of reformation
- There has never been one sole movement of God. It has been a complex and diverse evolution of birth, life, and resurrection throughout time, backgrounds, and cultures. Every tradition has gone through its reformation and needs to do so in order for it to live forward.



Semper Reformanda is
Holy Innovation in action.



Design Thinking and Innovation

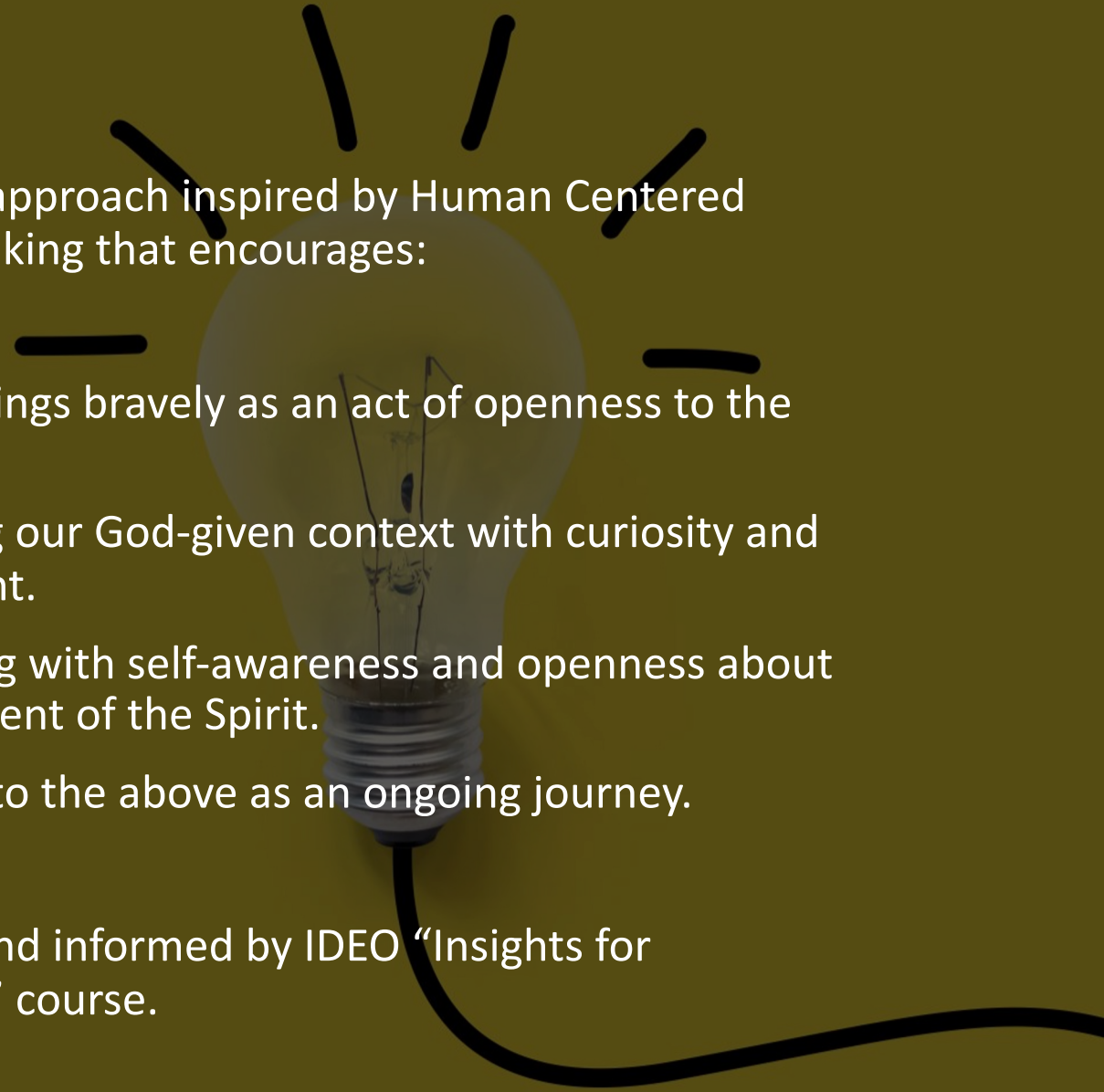
- Human Centered Design thinking is about joining up with people where they are in the world, attending carefully to their ordinary lives, and improvising solutions to challenges they face.
- It puts people at the center so that solutions always relate to people first and foremost.

What is Holy Innovation?

A ministry approach inspired by Human Centered Design Thinking that encourages:

1. Trying things bravely as an act of openness to the Holy Spirit.
2. Exploring our God-given context with curiosity and no judgment.
3. Reflecting with self-awareness and openness about the movement of the Spirit.
4. Commit to the above as an ongoing journey.

*inspired and informed by IDEO “Insights for Innovation” course.



What is Holy Innovation?

There is no one magic formula.

If we are struggling to reform, renew, or resurrect this mindset could help you find a framework of how to approach your challenge.

Be hopeful.

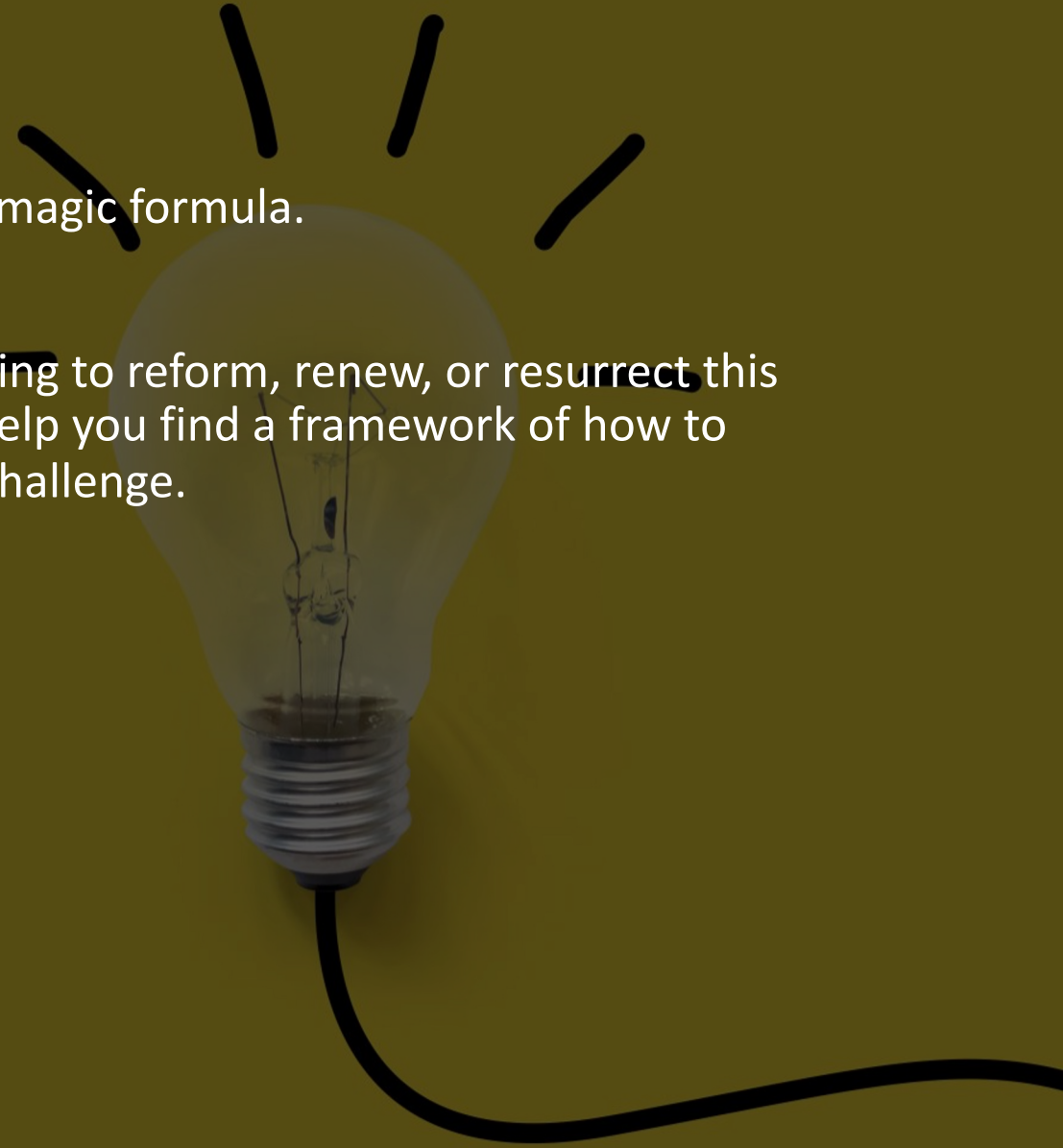
Try things.

Learn.

Reflect.

Change.

Keep Going!



Positive Deviance

- 1) Solutions to seemingly intractable problems already exist.
- 2) They have been discovered by members of the community itself.
- 3) These “innovators” (individual positive deviants) have succeeded even though they share the same constraints as everyone else.

Answers are there!

They are not magical outside solutions. Ordinary people are always innovating and finding solutions to the very problems we face.

They require attentiveness to what is going on around us.

Holy Innovation:

Observe

- Listen to what God has done and is doing.

Make sure that God and people are at the center of your attention and not abstract goals!

Insights

- Form insights from what we discover

Create

- Create ideas in community. Work together to figure out concrete actions.

Try

- Try something together!

Learn

- Learn from what you tried.

Ask questions about what worked and what didn't.

What can we do going forward?

Repeat!

- Try again in light of the new things you have learned.

What did we learn and observe this time around?

What can we do next time?

How can we take it forward?



Practicing Holy Innovation Together



Choosing a Project Challenge

A project challenge is a “How might we” statement that invites you to apply what you’ve learned in this time to a “real life” situation or scenario.

Project Challenge Examples

- “How might we provide a new ministry for an elder generation?”
- “How might our church participate in empowering our community to adapt practices that are sustainable and helpful for our environment?”
- “How might we create a robust hybrid system of in-person and virtual worship service?”
- “How might we inspire a thriving system of contribution and support for our church?”

Group Task (10 min.)

Choose a project challenge!



Questions and Reflections
