



Christianity at the Crossroads

Note: This thinking is transformational in nature. It does not conform to conventional viewpoints



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By Robert Porter Lynch, Version 2.45 February 2020

Summary

For those of us who are devoted Christians, the time is at hand, not for an apocalypse, but for a major course readjustment.

Most of us may have taken for granted the very existence of the hallowed Christian Church as a fixture in our lives and communities.

But times have changed rapidly. We have believed our Churches to be a stanchion of modern civilization; they are fast becoming a relic of the past.

The statistics in this paper are just a small representation of a larger, pandemic problem that strikes at the soul of every person, particularly the younger generation.

The decline of Christianity in both Europe and America comes into stark reality when we see the At a time when we need Christianity most, we are becoming marginalized.

Historically Christianity has been both a beacon and a beckoning to provide a coalescence of civilization at the larger level and creation of community at the local level. Christianity has softened human tribalism, brought civility to discourse, inspired cooperation in lieu of conflict, and found a point of unity amidst competing ideas and ideals. With the withering of Christianity, the worst in humanity is beginning to prevail.



This paper is about a “paradigm shift” that is deeply rooted in Christian theology and tradition. It’s a new way of thinking, which may be disturbing to many in the Christian community because requires: 1) looking at disturbing facts straight in the eye, and 2) solutions that can be unsettling to traditionalists who’ve practiced their faith from an orthodox perspective.

For every problem, there is a solution, and we actually have a pathway forward built into our faith. It is the path of the Holy

Spirit and guidance from the New Testament, if we choose to follow.

Now is the time, for within another generation, the task will be far more difficult as our Churches slip deeper into darkness.



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Please let me know your comments, ideas, concerns, additions, omissions, etc

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Crisis on our Church Steps

We must face the unsettling facts – if nothing is done to change course, Christianity is doomed to be a marginal blip in the Western World. Figure 1 speaks volumes ... we simply cannot solve our 21st century problems with the same level of thinking and strategies from the 1800s – repeating the same things expecting a different result.

Over the past 500 years, our Christian values have built a prosperous world based on elevating the dignity and spirit of human existence.

However, today we are mired in the depths of the most serious challenge to both Churches and our social order. Several converging problems (illustrated by charts below) will epitomize that America is at a serious tipping point:

1. Distrust in Religion
2. Shrinking Christian Populations
3. Millennial Distrust of People

1. Distrust in Religion

While most clergy will focus their attention on the shrinking Christian population (addressed below), the decline of Christianity may be best evidenced by the serious loss of trust in religious institutions, as illustrated in Figure 2.

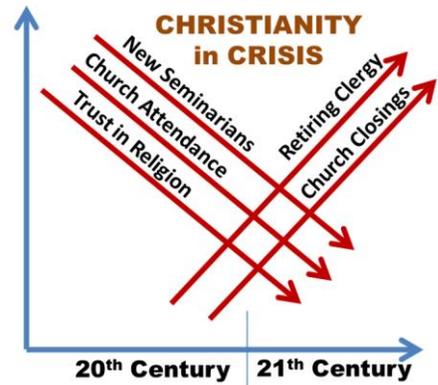


Figure 1: Crisis at the Crossroads

These are the “Tipping Point Triggers” that have become massively out of balance. Unless reversed, the future of Christianity in America is in peril.

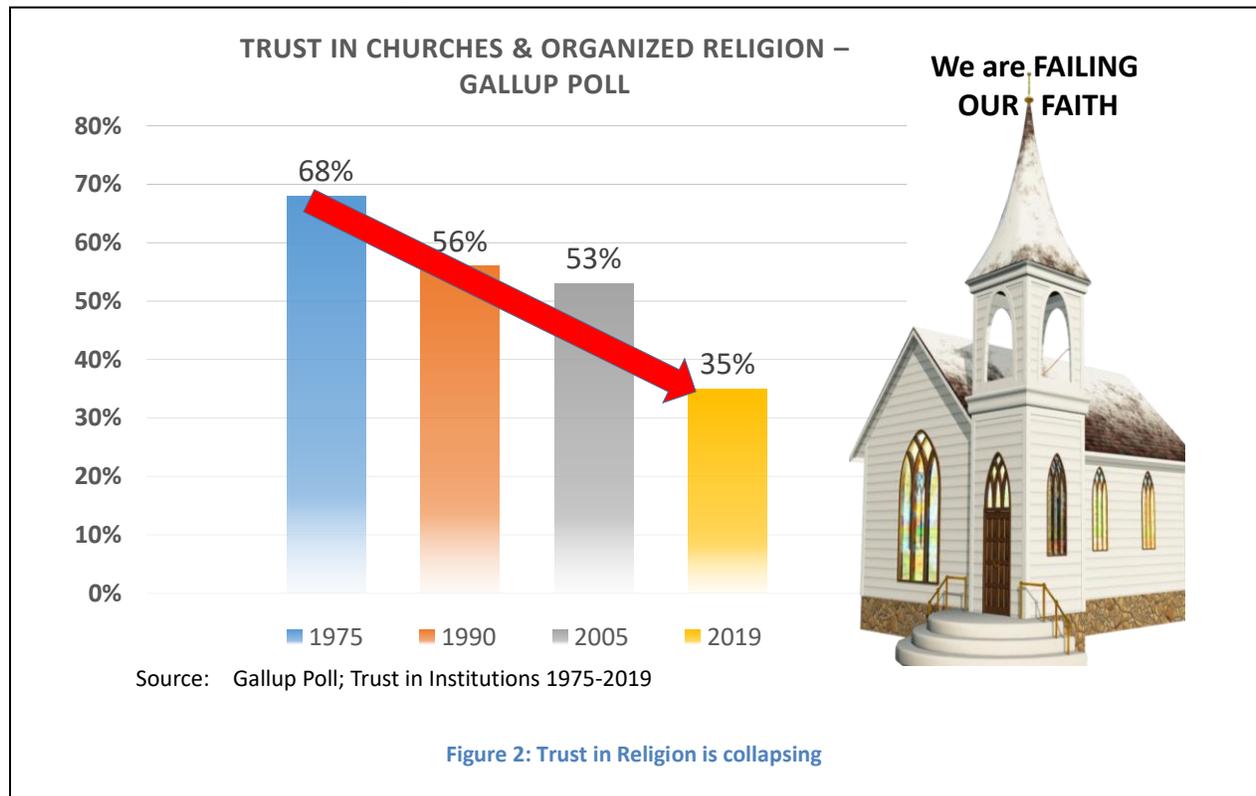


Figure 2: Trust in Religion is collapsing



Religion is failing in both its mission and its constituency.

If we can't rebuild trust, all other efforts will be fruitless, which explains a typical story from clergy:

Over the last 40 years, we have spent an enormous amount of energy trying to turn the tide.

Sadly, we have little to show. Attendance has steadily declined, our parishioners are getting older and older. It's because of the massive cultural shifts at the root of this decline are, essentially, beyond our control.....

The Trust Crisis is like a growing cancer that will erode confidence in everything, leaving fear, uncertainty, doubt and discord in its wake.

We have already entered this phase of decline in civilization.

While this type of comment is prevalent, it certainly feels like commentary by victims ready to be slaughtered by lions in the colosseum.

Religious leaders are not looking deeply enough and certainly not adapting to the times. A turnaround is called for both at the highest religious organizational levels and in the field where local churches make the biggest impact in communities.

Christianity Today, in an editorial about moral decline commented:¹

The [social] fabric of the nation ... is built on a presumption of trust: trust that the milk your grocer sells you is wholesome and pure; trust that the money you put in your bank can be taken out of the bank; trust that your babysitter, firefighters, clergy, and ambulance drivers will all do their best. And while politicians are notorious for breaking campaign promises, while in office they have a fundamental obligation to uphold our trust in them and to live by the law.

Revitalization is not about what's "wrong" with Christianity; it's about what's "missing."

Core questions must be addressed:

"Why is Religion no longer a trusted American institution?"

"What will happen if we don't change course?"

"What Shifts in Thinking are required?"

"Are there any leverage points of optimism and opportunity?"

"What will a revitalized Christianity look like?"

"What must be the strategy for the future?"

Trust is Multi-Dimensional

Trust (and its companion word: *confidence*) is a multi-dimensional issue with many facets. While the focus of *ethics* is primarily on *morality*, *trust* is much more *multi-faceted*, which causes us to examine a multitude of questions that cause this falling faith in religion:

¹ Galli, Mark; Trump Should Be Removed From Office; Christianity Today, December 19, 2019



- Why is God important? We need to be able to answer this question in straightforward terms that people of the modern age can connect to their lives.

Here the Trinity gives Christians a real leverage point and serves as an anchor to windward in stormy seas.

- God the Father calls to us with authority to a higher order of values and principles that give order and rational thought to our mortal passions. Righteousness and justice rules over revenge and demagoguery. This is the Moral Compass to ensure we can trust ourselves and build a world we can trust around us.
Without a sense of higher authority, our egos get blown up like a blimp, masking our own ability to connect with others and create something all will value.

- Christ provides guidance and instruction on our relationship with God and with people – the path to the universal premise of humanity: The Golden Rule, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Christ is multi-dimensional: humbleness, mercy, forgiveness, resurrection, transformation, courage under fire, gratitude, and so many others.

Christ's teachings are the central premise of our faith, and rightly so.

- As Christ states boldly in John 16, the Holy Spirit was sent on Pentecost to expand our spiritual vitality, to reaffirm our spiritual partnership, speaking the quiet words of solace, revelation, joy, and wisdom. We just need to take the time to listen to wisdom speaking through her soft calming voice. Our frenzied hyper-kinetic world needs the Holy Spirit for a soothing the rough edges of daily agitation.

What's more, through biblically-inspired wisdom we can find the highly sought after meaning and purpose for our lives that elevates and guides our destiny.

As will be explained later, the Holy Spirit can provide the impetus and leverage to shift the tide in ways that we have not utilized effectively.

- Meaning: One of the most important facets of human existence in today's world is to live a life that has meaning and purpose. Churches are failing in this area (see [Figure 3: Where people find meaning in their lives](#) Source: Pew Research Center) according to a [recent study from the Pew Research Center](#) shows that spirituality and faith has lost its competitive advantage on this critical point, falling far behind on list of sources of meaning for Americans, after family (69%), career (34%), and money (23%). People are turning elsewhere to find meaning, purpose, identity, and community. If faith cannot provide meaning to people's lives, then maybe it's not "faith" that should be the primary calling card of Christians. We must get a far better grasp on becoming responsive to the day-to-day turmoil in the lives of people in their community.

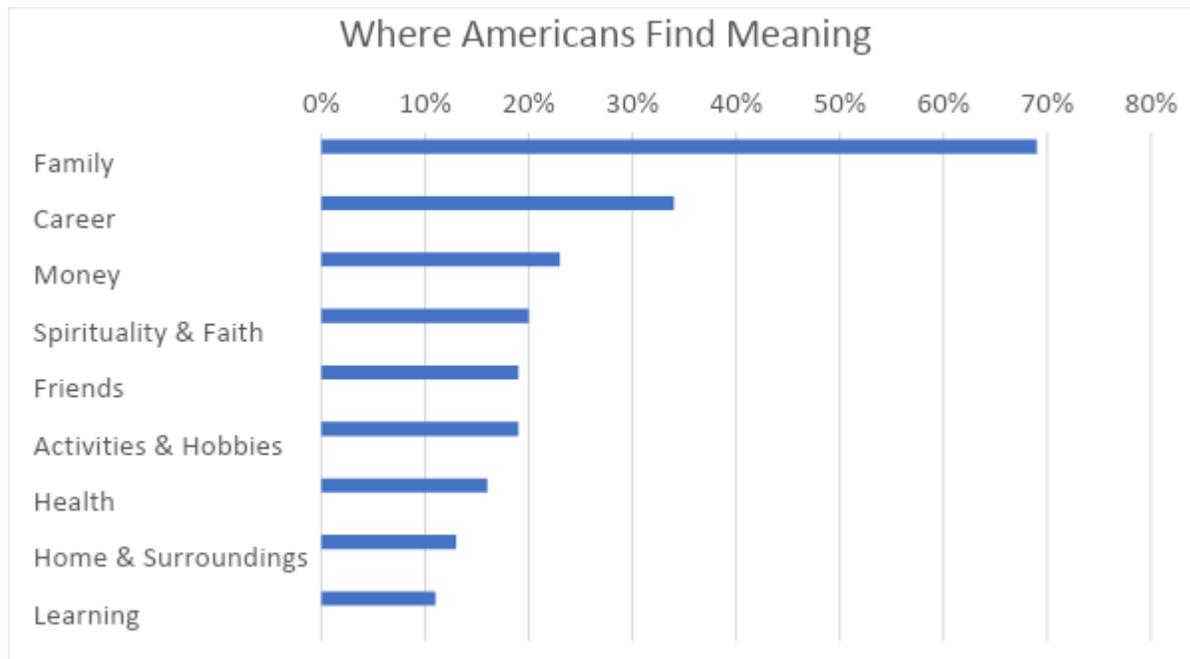


Figure 3: Where people find meaning in their lives Source: Pew Research Center

If religion is to be a trusted partner and counselor in people’s lives, it must create more meaning that is relevant to people today, focusing on new learning, language, mindsets, and skills that resonate in the head, heart and soul.

In a tumultuous world, finding meaning and purpose in life is a paramount quest. If religion doesn’t give a person a pathway to embrace the answer to the question: “Why did God put me on this earth?” then we have failed at one of the central spiritual issues of life itself.

- Purpose: If you ask a hundred Christians: “What is the purpose of Christianity?” you’ll probably get a myriad of answers. This confuses outsiders on the fence wondering “why get engaged?” The answer should be simple – it’s the “11th Commandment” [John 13:34] “I am going to give you a new commandment: Love one another just as I have loved you.” In simple terms, it’s the Golden Rule. Think of this as the “Collaborative Commandment” telling us to “create thy spiritual community” right here, now.

Also, we need to use more precise words for the English word “love,” (see Appendix) for in the original Greek, love was far more refined with a wide variety of expressions. For example, in today’s world, it’s important to be skilled in *collaborative innovation* [another way of expressing *love & creation* – the divine energies of the Holy Spirit]. Christianity can be purposeful and relevant if we choose to see our mission through this light.

But more: From informal surveys of Christians, fewer than 10% seem to have a sense of personal mission and purpose in life. Christians must increase our effort to help people find their personal purpose, else lifelong wandering in aimless ambiguity and uncertainty.



- **Relevancy:** We live in a world where immediate potency is esteemed; if what is learned can't be quickly used, it won't be remembered nor value, thus will seem irrelevant. Churches must embrace this. Relevant Churches make an effort to connect Christian principles with daily practice in ways that are deemed useful by the practitioners.

Often church sermons are score high on ideals and low on utility. Every Sunday service should provide at least one or two "takeaways" that can be used within the next several days, or it will be forgotten, extraneous, of no earthly value. Preaching about entering the gates of heaven after one dies is little consolation to a depressed teenager grappling with suicide or to a parent with a child on drugs.

This is where the wisdom of the Holy Spirit comes into play; for in a world deluged by data, *knowledge is but a commodity*, but *wisdom is precious and sacred*. All generations need wisdom to make knowledge meaningful and relevant. The Holy Spirit is the path of wisdom, which is so lacking in our haggard world.

- **Value:** People are open to learning if they learn something that they didn't know and can use the insights in the near future. People will remember 80% of what they learn three weeks later if they were able to apply their learning quickly. Conversely they will forget 80% of what they learn if they can't apply the information.

Sermons are wonderful opportunities for people to learn something really useful, but most parishioners will have forgotten most of what they heard by Monday morning.

Bottom Line: People value what they remember and what they can use.

- **Benefit & Advantage:** In today's distrustful world, people want to know if they will gain a *benefit or advantage* from believing in Christian Principles – this is another dimension of measuring *value*. One aspect of Distrust in Religion is related to We know for certain several things that are valuable:

- People who:

1. believe in God,
2. have mission and purpose in their lives, and
3. have a strong sense of community and friendships ...

... live 15% longer. That's a big advantage. They not only live longer, but also happier, have more reliable and honorable friends, and avoid many of the traps and tribulations that ensnare others. These are key factors in building [*Christian Identity*](#).

- When used with prudence and skill, people who are trusting and collaborative have a 25% *competitive advantage* in terms of producing better results in their everyday lives.
- Just a 10% increase in trust produces a 40% increase in *sense of well-being*.



These are a massive advantage to anyone leading an organization, family, or team. We live in uncertain times. People need and want clarity to guide life's decisions along with unambiguous guidance in life's challenges.

In addition to added longevity cited above, those who practice Christianity with integrity provide a cushion of security in their relationships with others. True Christians are more likely to be honest, fair, reasonable, forgiving, and merciful. (Of course, this is not an absolute guarantee, as the world is filled with hypocrisy, but, by and large, most would rather place their bets on those who practice their faith. And certainly the prosperity that has been generated in the last three hundred years is testimony to the combination of faith and good works based on Christian values.

- **Ethics:** There was a time not long ago when Christian educators taught the vital linkage between Moral Character Development and Christian Values. Christianity and ethical practice were tightly bound. One of the principle reasons why Christianity is distrusted is because of the ethical transgressions of key leaders who should have been outed earlier in their careers by their peers. Scandals of people like Jimmy Swaggart, Jimmy Bakker, or an entourage of Catholic priests molesting alter-boys have done massive damage to the reputation of Christianity. The resounding silence of church leaders destroyed trust.

Ethics is not an easy, but a large part of the difficulty is twofold:

1. "Complexification:" those who teach ethics often tend to throw students into *no-win* conundrums instead of how to design *win-win* solutions. Simple ethical principles are the origin of our basic laws.
2. "Anything Goes:" this position, which is essentially nihilistic, tells people to be non-judgmental, that ethics don't count as long as it doesn't break the law (and if you have the ability, just change the law to enable unethical conduct.)

Without a solid sense of ethics, trust (which is more intricate) cannot prevail.

- **Less than Collaborative Culture:** From the perspective of trust, we must be honest about the real culture of the Christian Church(es) over the centuries – an abundance of conflict, divisiveness, and adversarial relations have permeated religion far more than most want to acknowledge.

Starting in the second century, various sects of Christianity began vying for power as each claimed sole dominion to the only authentic interpretation of Christ's message.

While both the Great Schism (1054) and the Reformation were massive Christian conflicts, the never-ending drumbeat of turmoil continues to play behind the scenes as denominations, synods, and sects have feuded for the right to be proclaimed righteous. Then and now, energies have been wasted in valueless antagonisms; passions that could and should have been used to love thy neighbor and create thy communities instead was



squandered on idiosyncratic eccentricities swirling in eddy currents of quarrels, as churches falter instead of working together.

Many churches don't act or feel collaborative, mainly because the church leaders are either too bureaucratic or theological to understand how to build and sustain grass roots collaborative communities.

Without improving Trust in Religious Institutions, much of our effort will fail. Later in this paper will be a number of concrete recommendations for Rebuilding Trust.

Guidelines for a Steady Moral Compass

A Higher Standard for Rebuilding Trust in American Institutions

1. Follow the Golden Rule:

- a. Be Golden: Do Unto Others as you would have them do unto you.
- b. Be Respectful: Respect everyone, even those you don't like.
- c. Be Gracious: Show your gratefulness to others for little things.
- d. Be Righteous: Protect the rights and freedoms of those being violated.



2. Fulfill Your Responsibilities:

- a. Be Dutiful: Fulfill your responsibilities to your conscience, your family, and to America.
- b. Be Benevolent: Give aid to others in need or in danger.
- c. Be a Role Model: Demonstrate the highest standards of excellence
- d. Be Disciplined: Obey righteous laws.

3. Be Trustworthy:

- a. Be Truthful: Tell the truth. Keep your word and promises.
- b. Be Fair: Listen to all sides before making judgements.
- c. Be Honorable: Do not lie, deceive, cheat or steal.
- d. Be Courageous: Stand for what's right and against what's wrong.

4. Be Friendly:

- a. Be Co-Creative: Turn differences into opportunities to learn and innovate.
- b. Be a Guardian: Do not deprive others of safety, security, or family.
- c. Be Humane: Do not intentionally cause pain, harm, or murder.
- d. Be a Partner: Work with others as a teammate

In the last two decades, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) lost about 30% of its congregation and closed 12.5% of its churches: the United Methodist church lost 16.7% of its congregation and 10.2% of its churches. The Presbyterian Church has had the sharpest decline in church membership: between 2000 and 2015 they lost over 40% of their congregation and 15.4% of their churches. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_Christianity_-_cite_note-star-33 Infant baptism has also decreased: nationwide. Catholic baptisms are down by nearly 34%. and ELCA baptisms

Collapse of Family & Child Rearing Structure

The moral vacuum has created a precarious breach in our social structure. The coherence of the family unit is collapsing with tragic consequences. Today there is a very high likelihood that a child will be born to an unwed mother (see Figure 4).

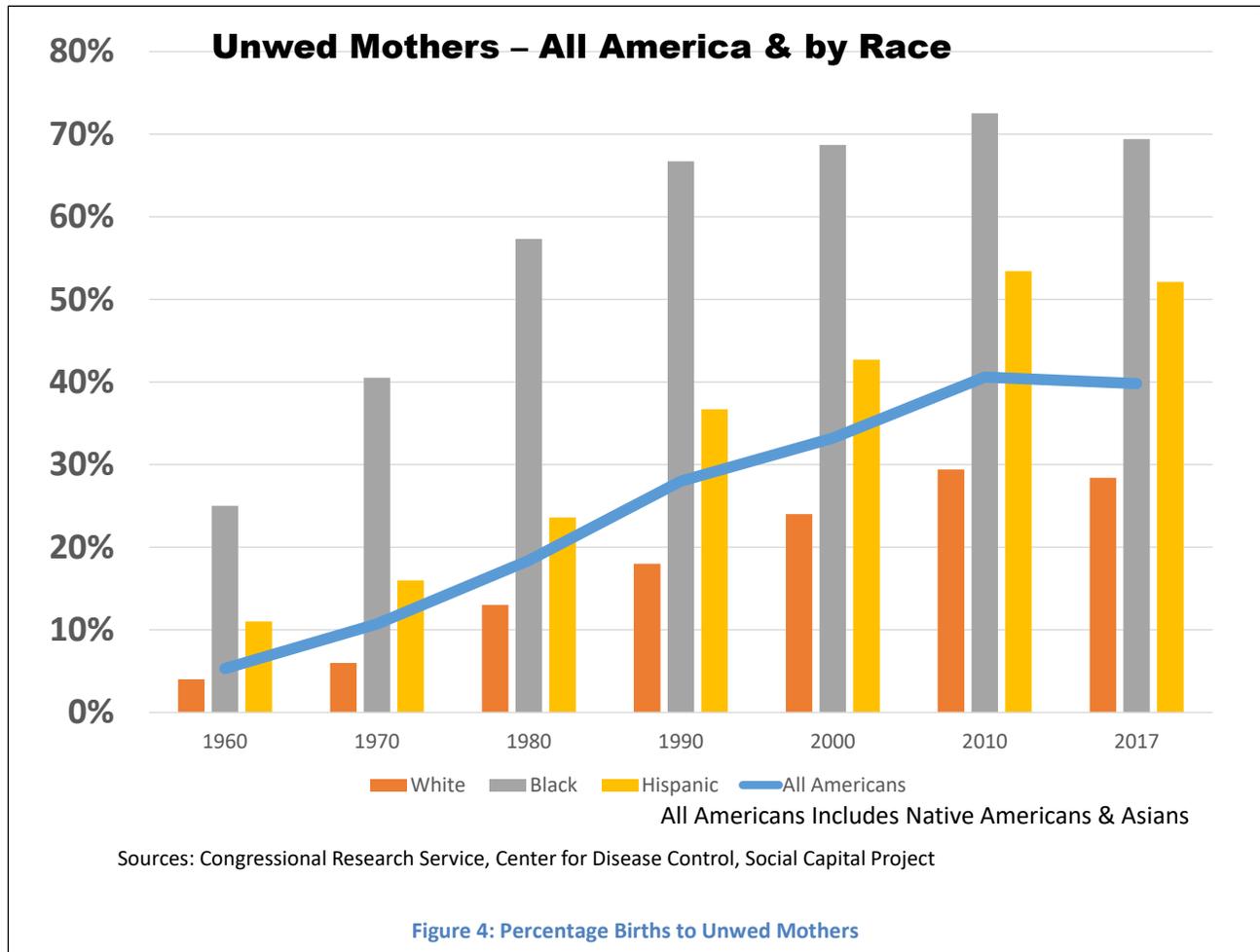


Figure 4: Percentage Births to Unwed Mothers

A half century ago, many of the unwed births would be followed by a “shot gun” marriage, whereby the man was forced to wed the mother for the sake of rearing the new born in some semblance of a real home. Today shot gun marriages are almost unheard of.²

The dissolution of the family unit, where it is likely there is no father to assist a mother in rearing children, who thusly feel “abandoned” by one parent, certainly explains one of the causes for dissolution of trust. It’s important to bear in mind that the first persons a child learns to trust are its mother, then father, in that sequence. Trust is a “natural act” in infants.

² According to a [Pew Research Study](#): Through the 1960s, most Americans believed that parents should stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children. By the 1970s, this view was not as prominent. Divorce and not getting married to the father of a child—which were generally considered not to be in the best interest of the child—became more acceptable if they resulted in the happiness of the adult. Thus, many observers and analysts agree that marriage is now more likely to be viewed through a framework of adult fulfillment rather than through a framework of child well-being.

If the vital linkage to learning how to trust is broken by the absence of a parent or the presence of a non-caring (or abusive) parent, then there will be an indelible scar of mistrust in the child’s psyche. Later in life, after the formative years of distrust have already left a trail of debris in a youth’s wake, real breakdowns -- like suicide, drugs, depression, and terrible relationships -- will take a much heavier toll.

A society build like this is called: “dysfunctional.” We are now at that stage. Our major institutions are failing us.

In the last half century, the idea of marriage was vitally linked to the dream of having and caring for a family to love, rear, and care for. Children were something to be yearned for and cherished.

As illustrated in Figure 5, the core values that bond family and community together have unraveled. With unwed mothers responsible for 40% of the births in America, we see a massive jump in fatherless homes. Mating patterns no longer value creating a family with traditions and reverence to wholesome compassion and ardent responsibility.

This is more than just a religious or moral issue – it’s even bigger – there is no know civilization that has ever survived when it couldn’t renew its culture and reproduce a new generation better than its ancestors.

We have *lost the power of progression* – the dynamism of building a better world. The continuous quest to build the capacity to enable people to work together in the face of adversity, different cultures, diverse points of view, and continuous change. Our younger generation know this power has been regressive – that’s one of the reasons they are disillusioned and don’t think their lives will be better than their parents.

Churches should be putting as much energy in building a better world for our young generations of mothers and fathers as they have in fighting abortion.

It’s time for the Church to play a starring role to put humanity back on an elevated trajectory, or suffer the dire consequences of darkness and destruction of our Beloved America

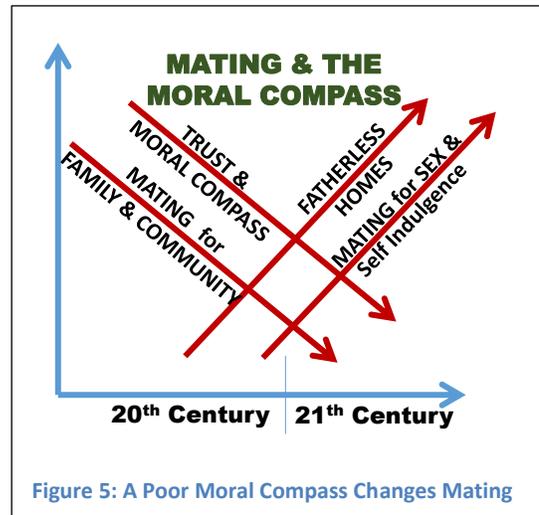


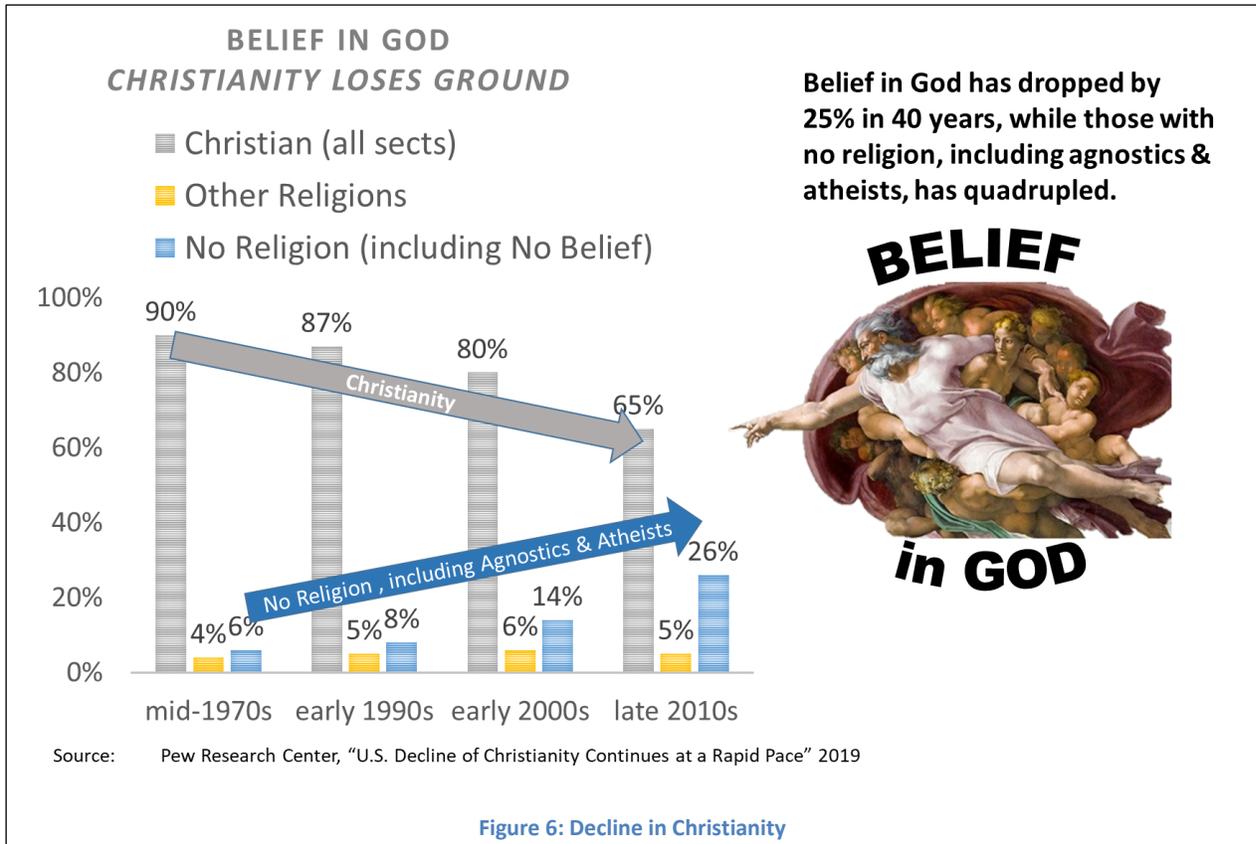
Figure 5: A Poor Moral Compass Changes Mating

*The power of progression
inspires and personifies vitality
– life itself.*

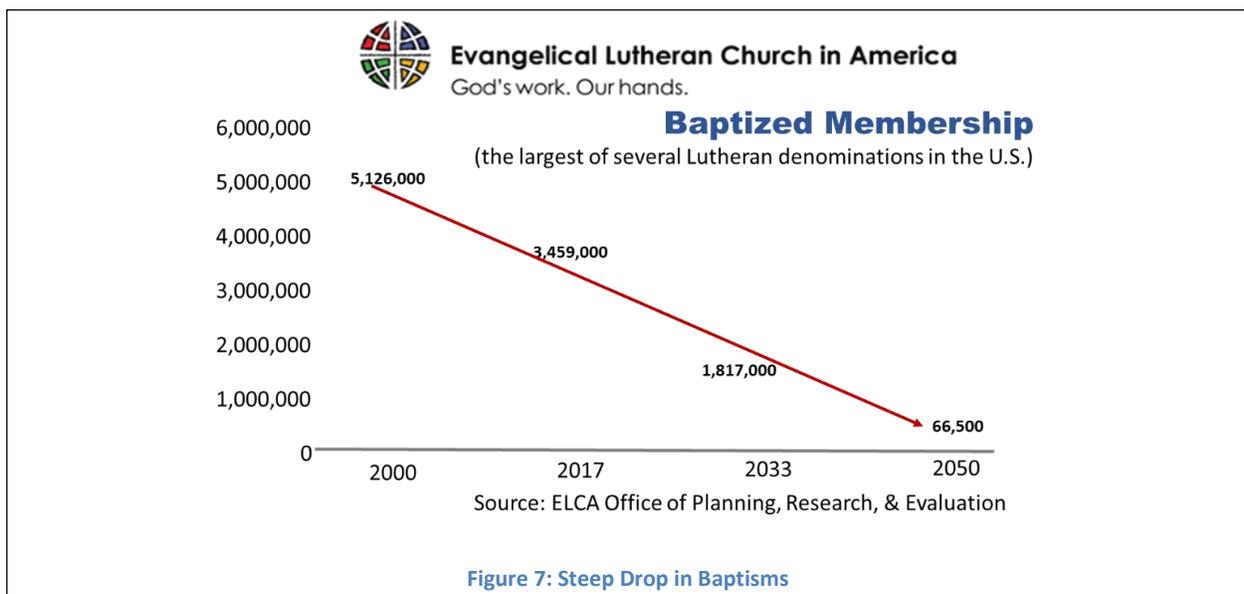
*We seem to revel in the power
of progression in technology,
but fear and polarization has
caused us to shy away from it
in humanity.*

2. Shrinking Christian Populations -- The Harsh Realities

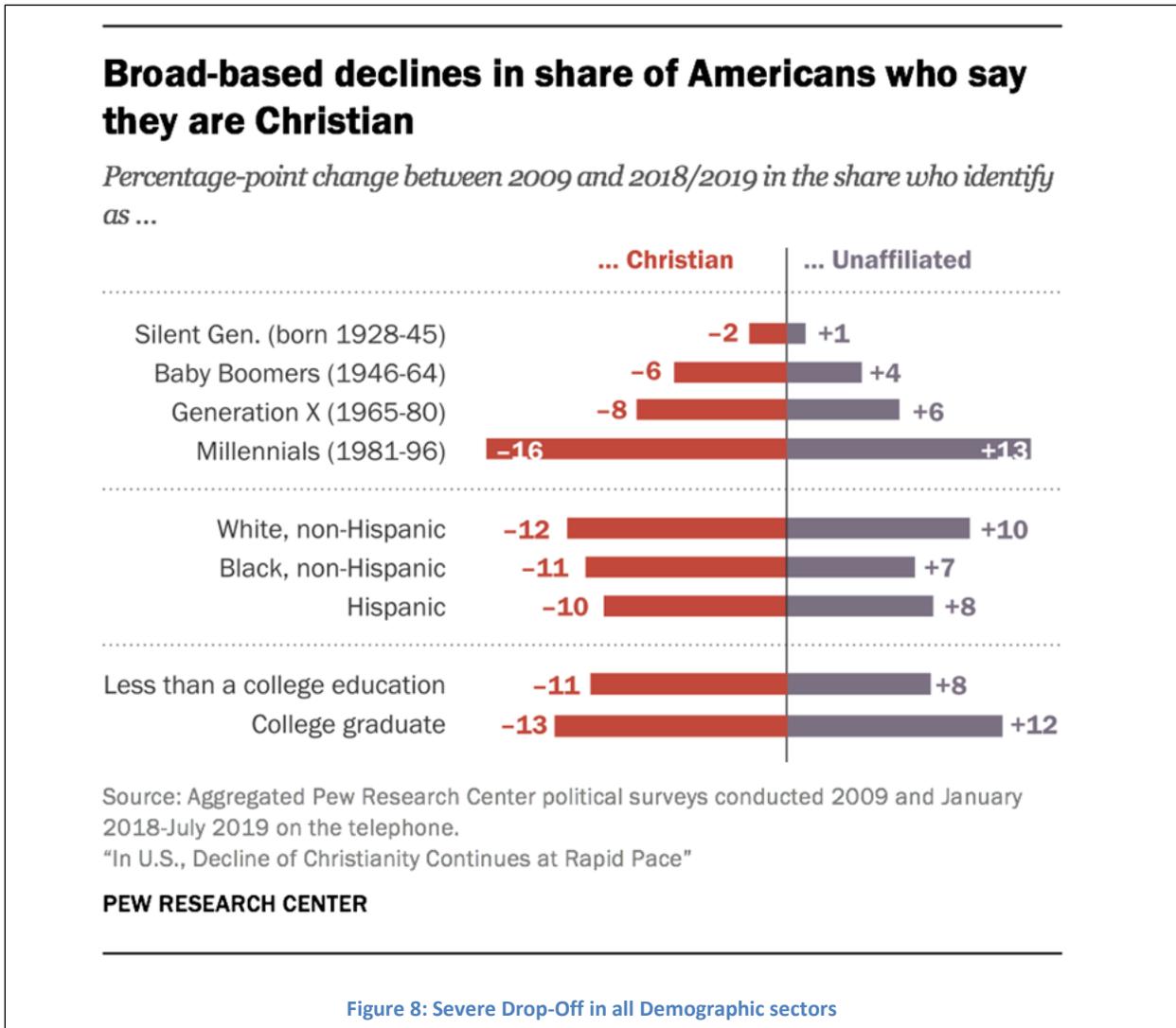
Christianity's very existence is in peril. A Pew Research Center report from October, 2019 cites: "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace". Pew Research has been tracking these numbers for over 45 years (see Figure 6). The problem is severe – a 25% decline in the last forty



years. Meanwhile people who are godless has been steadily climbing. This has major consequences to our faith, our culture, and our civilization itself. The rapid decline in Christianity has implications in every local community, as indicated in Figure 7.



Across America, Catholic and Protestant denominations are suffering this rapid erosion.³ The drop-off is broad-based, cutting across every sector of American Demographics. (Figure 8)



In particular, it should be highlighted from this chart that educated people, notably Millennials (the next generation in line to exert influence in our society) have abandoned the church in the largest numbers. This decline is not limited to America. In Europe, the problem is worse (see Further, this calls for a *transformation* in Christian thinking and theology. This does not negate our past theology, but it does require a new, higher order of understanding to meet the needs of the modern world.

The word for transformation in the Greek versions of the New Testament was “*metanoia*” which means “to shift the heart of the mind to a higher/larger/greater level.”

³ According to Pew Research, the Mormon Church is still holding stable. Speaking to friends who are Mormon, they speak of the level of collaboration, friendships, and sense of community that holds them together.



This can be thought of as the “metanoiaic shift” we are called upon to bring into being.

Appendix One – Dramatic Drop In Church Attendance)

*Along with a renewed embrace of the Holy Spirit, this is — by its very nature --
a Paradigm Shift requiring a new Design Architecture to fuel and sustain it.
We call that Design Architecture: Collaborative Excellence*

Atheism -- the Computer Model⁴

To further highlight the severity of the decline, a team trying to save religion in America has fed the data from Pew Research and numerous other sources⁵ into a computer to model how people might behave if certain variables change. It predicts rough times ahead for God, as “big data meets history.” In commentary in an article in the *Boston Globe*, Michael Fitzgerald wrote about the Pew Research data on Religion and the computer modeling:

It suggests older generations will die off and take their belief with them. Outside the U.S., a WIN/Gallup poll found that more than half of Vietnamese, Koreans, and French people say they are atheists or not affiliated with a religion. For the Japanese and Germans, it’s more than 60 percent, and for the Dutch and British, two-thirds. Certainly, belief in nothing has market momentum....

The Modeling Religion Project got its start when [Boston University philosopher and theologian] Wesley Wildman started asking whether he could replicate proto-civilizations to see ... why religion seems to emerge ... Given the ascent of non-believers in the recent past, what might the Modern Religion Project say about the future of atheism? Will we one day live in a world of nones?

The computers ran the model hundreds of thousands of times with different variables for the various parameters. What typically happened was at a certain point in each simulated society, the town would either coalesce or fail. Those that succeeded almost always had reached the point where religious symbols and behaviors were competing with kin as the driver of social identity and cooperation. Religious beliefs ... [that] connect people with their god or gods, magnified cooperation ... With religion, the transition is more likely to happen. ... Without deities that transcend clan bonds, it’s hard to get people to cooperate with those from other groups.

Further, the emergence of high intensity people and religious rituals “seem to ratchet up the social intensity that gives a community its character,” Wildman says. “Religion doesn’t create the shift ... from nomadic shepherd to town-centered farmer; but [religion] smooths out the transition. It makes early towns more likely to succeed. In part, that’s because

⁴ [Atheism – The Computer Model](#) -- Big data meets history to forecast the rise and fall of religion; by Michael Fitzgerald February 16, 2017 in Boston Globe Magazine

⁵ Including historical trends, anthropological frameworks, and factors such as “existential security” and “free self-expression” to understand why societies abandon belief in a deity.

religion demands unorthodox behaviors, rituals, appearing at worship services. These show who is willing to participate and who is not, which might help eliminate what economists call the ‘free-rider’ problem, people who take the benefits of society without contributing to it. Those who won’t perform the rituals can be cast out, or shunned.” Shared beliefs soften what Wildman calls “the hatred of being watched by strangers.” Religion mattered in how communities formed; we often think of religion as divisive, forgetting it plays an important role in bringing different people together, Wildman says.

This tells us that we need a new paradigm of strategies and leadership that successfully address this challenge. We must open the heart of our minds to turn what will be an inevitable tide should we do nothing. We cannot stand by and watch our world crumble. Christianity has been a fortress against some of the most debasing and terrorizing tendencies in humanity. A collapse of Christianity forebodes dark time ahead, and that darkness is already descending.

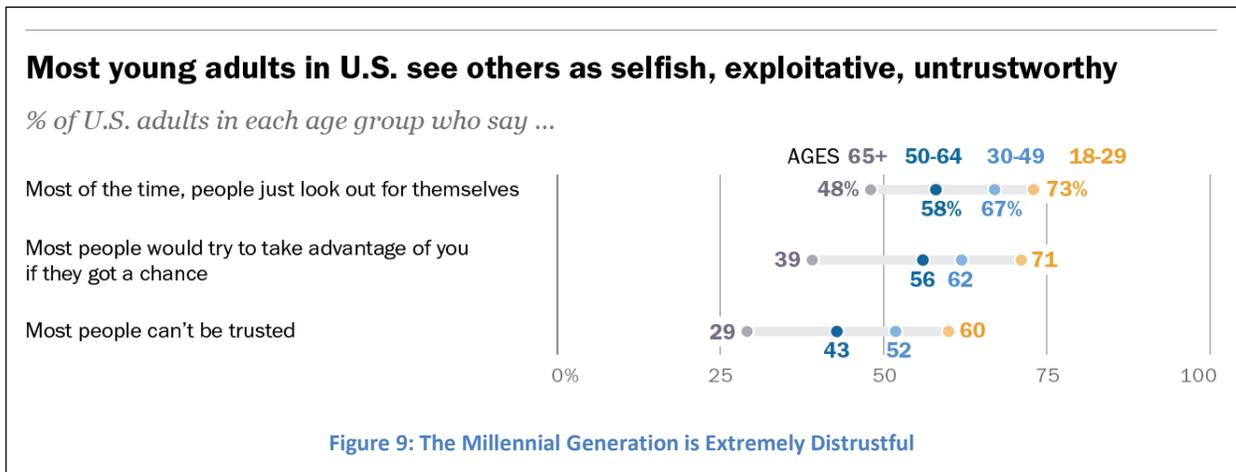
Later, this paper will outline how *collaborative excellence* can both revitalize the Church and revitalize the spirit of those in today’s tumultuous world.

To better design a strategy going forward, let’s examine the nature of the Millennial generation.

3. Millennial Distrust of People

Millennials (ages 18-29) are rapidly becoming a large proportion of our population and workforce.⁶

All is not well. For a generation that proclaims to be so “connected,” their level of distrust is at a traumatic level. Nearly three quarters (73%) of Millennials (see Figure 9), who are rapidly becoming the majority of the workforce, think that *most of the time, people just look out for themselves*, and 71% believe *most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance*. This is a skeptical generation, bordering on cynical; these are called “Distrusters.”



⁶ Source: Pew Research Center [Trust Among Young Americans](#); 2019



People who are distrustful are more likely to become depressed, angry, anti-social, and even corrupt. Moreover, distrustful people create more distrust, make poor teammates, and are likely to see ill-will as the motive for human behavior, thus becoming engrossed in self-interest.

On the other end of the spectrum are older citizens, many still in the workforce, who see others in a totally different light – far more positively and optimistically, with a more reasoned sense of caution.⁷

This bodes poorly for future business leaders and clergy whose careers depend on teamwork, community, and collaborations for achievement of their vision and goals. Their ability to engage in change and innovation will be severely thwarted, filled with conflict and anxiety. Valiant courage and inspirational exhortations will not be enough.

Americans are dying young at alarming rates

In a just released report, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*,⁸ a worsening and still-enigmatic trend was detailed: *the reversal of historical patterns in longevity*. The Washington Post reported:⁹

Despite spending more on health care than any other country, the United States has seen increasing mortality and falling life expectancy for people ages 25 to 64, who should be in the prime of their lives, while other wealthy nations have generally experienced continued progress in extending longevity.

The broad trend detailed in this study cuts across gender, racial and ethnic lines. By age group, the highest relative jump in death rates from 2010 to 2017 — 29 percent — has been among people ages 25 to 34.

“It’s supposed to be going down, as it is in other countries,” said the lead author of the report, Steven H. Woolf, director emeritus of the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University. “The fact that that number is climbing, there’s something terribly wrong.”

The report reveals a broad erosion in health, with no single “smoking gun,” said Ellen Meara, a professor at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice.

“There’s something more fundamental about how people are feeling at some level — whether it’s economic, whether it’s stress, whether it’s deterioration of family,” she said. “People are feeling worse about themselves and their futures, and that’s leading them to do things that are self-destructive and not promoting health.”

⁷ Those with whom I have discussed this chart were either astonished or perplexed. Most would have expected exactly the opposite results: the younger generation would be more trusting and optimistic, while the older generation who’d experienced betrayals and trickery in their lives would be more cynical and pessimistic. For a generation that is so “connected” it’s clear by this chart that connectedness hasn’t produced trustworthiness.

⁸ [Life Expectancy and Mortality Rates in the United States, 1959-2017](#)

⁹ *There’s something terribly wrong’: Americans are dying young at alarming rates* by Joel Achenbach - The Washington Post - Tuesday, November 26, 2019



*The corollary ideal of “Love thy Neighbor” tells us to
“Create Thy Community (common unity)”*

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Distrust is not a benign tumor; it's a malignant cancer that will poison the carrier who will then transmit it to others. At the crux of the problem are the dark self-fulfilling prophecies: early-stage "Distrusters" treat their world in distrusting ways, thus triggering distrustful responses turning their world continuously inward, ego-centric, bleak, caustic, angry, and even revengeful.

Disillusioned people, with a deep propensity to distrust, experience their world as hard, bitter, and meaningless.

They attract other distrusters, and kill the sense of community and collaboration.

What's more, they make the world around them miserable for others. They are attracted to negative, polarizing media messages, believe in conspiracy theories, and think others are out to take advantage of them. Seeing their world with a jaundiced eye, they treat others accordingly. ([Studies](#) by have shown that distrustful people are attracted to authoritarian leaders, rejecting collaboration as a guide-path for life.)

They are more likely to be depressed, over weight, and die sooner.



To put this into perspective, the Pew report indicated that Seniors are 3½ times more likely to be "High Trusters" than Millennials, committed to building a collaborative world around them. If something dramatic is not done, things will only get worse, as their toxic world-view in turn poisons the next generation of youth who are in school today.

It would be imprudent to condemn Millennials for their presumed faults. We created this generation; they are the offspring of our own inadequacies; and we must assume the responsibility for rebuilding our religion, education, and civilization for them and with them.

Christianity cannot be trapped in thinking the solution will be based solely on the basics of prayer, study of scripture, glorification of God, and saving souls. Telling a depressed population that faith in God will cure their ills and make them happy in heaven is just not enough for a cynical, disillusioned person.

Our solutions must have profound applicability to their daily entanglements: drugs, depression, distrust, suicide, no meaning in life, social rejection, among many others. Finding one's *personal purpose in life as revelation* builds one of the tightest connections to divinity.

***All collaborative enterprise is built on a foundation of trust.
The collapse of national trust imposes a massive impediment
for people trying to solve our most critical problems.***

Churches are Being Seen as Irrelevant

As part of their continued research into religion Pew found that increasingly [Americans don't see Churches solving Social Problems](#)

“Religious leaders and institutions have taken part in efforts to address important social issues throughout American history, from slavery to civil rights to today’s advocacy in areas such as reducing poverty.

“But Americans appear to be growing more skeptical of how much of a difference churches and other houses of worship make in tackling social concerns. A majority of U.S. adults still say religious institutions contribute either “a great deal” (19%) or “some” (38%) to solving important social problems. (see Figure 10) But the combined figure of 58% has fallen significantly in recent years ... About four-in-ten Americans (39%) now say religious institutions make little to no contribution in this area.

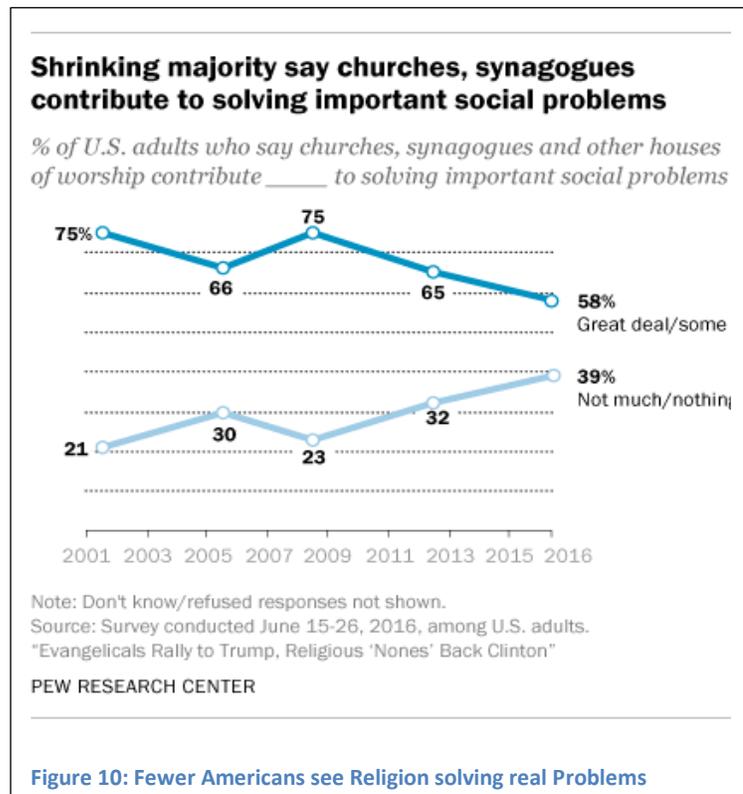
“When the same question was asked in July 2012, roughly two-thirds of respondents (65%) said churches and other houses of worship played at least some role in solving society’s dilemmas. Four years before that, in August 2008, fully three-quarters of Americans (75%) said religious institutions contributed “a great deal” or “some” in this way.

“Not surprisingly, people with no religious affiliation (atheists, agnostics and those who say their religion is “nothing in particular”) are less likely than others to see churches as key problem-solvers in society. A minority of religious “nones” (38%) say religious institutions contribute at least some help to solving social problems, compared with, for example, 65% of Protestants and 63% of Catholics who say the same...

“Even among U.S. adults who do affiliate with a particular religion, the view that churches help solve social problems has become less widespread.”

Stated in another way, the general perception of Religion shows a severe weakening in seeing churches having a value-added contribution to society. At this rate of decline, the majority of Americans will soon view the Church as a non-contributor to the well-being of their community.

This trend must be turned around if Religion is to regain its status as a trusted institution. An institution that is perceived as irrelevant is dying.

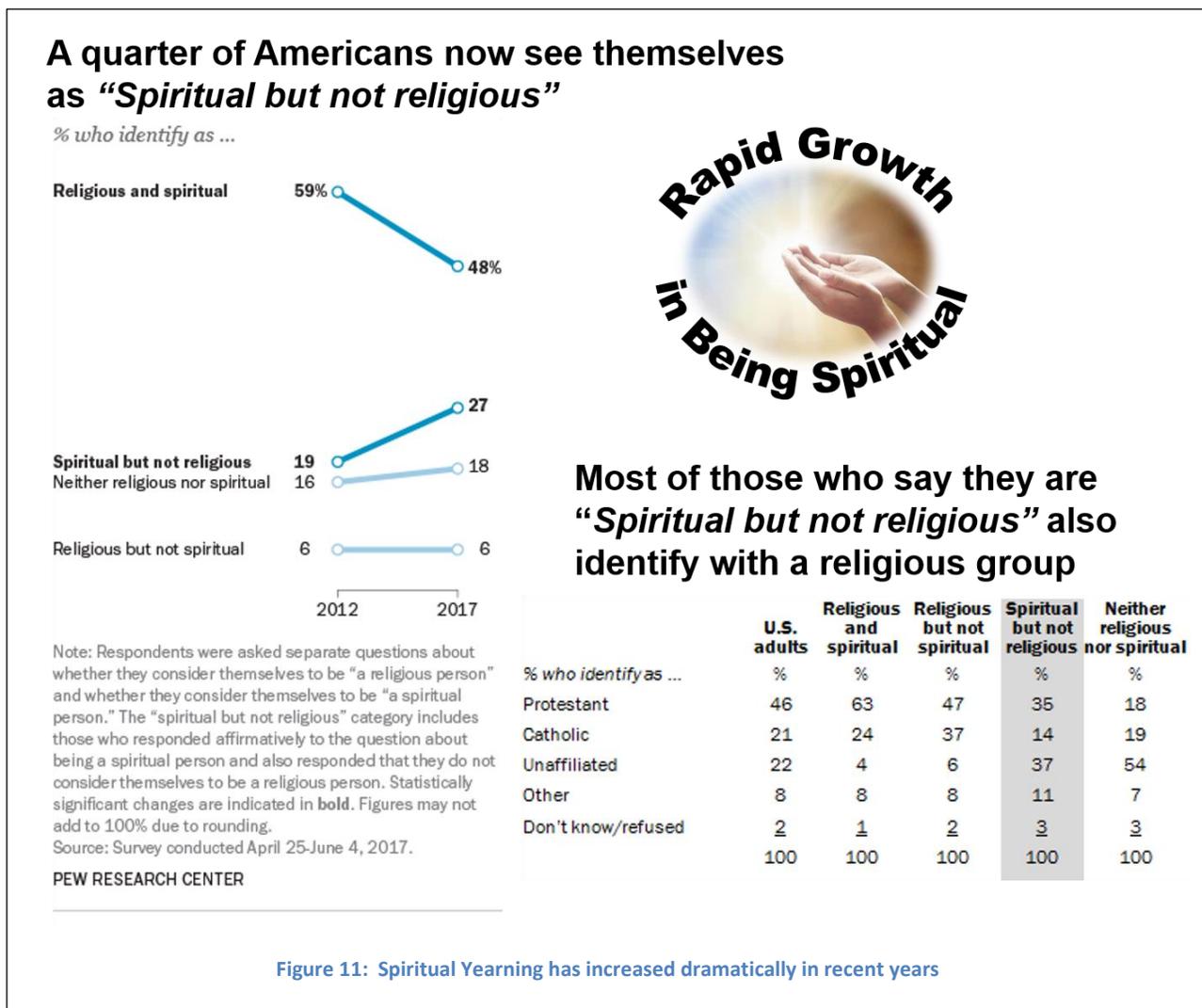


With limited resources from a waning population, churches must think and act ecumenically, in collaboration with each other to do five things:

1. Churches work together and in alliance with other community services to improve local neighborhoods and towns, engaging in urban neighborhood revitalization
2. Produce concrete measurable results, not just promote good feeling
3. Be sure the community knows the results and the purpose-driven strategy
4. Celebrate the spirit of engagement and recognize the contributors to the effort
5. Use the momentum to spur more impactful work and greater visibility

The Spiritual Yearning

A 2017 Pew Research Study – [More Americans Say they are Spiritual but not Religious](#) -- gives us deeper insight into what Americans are seeking. The study stated: (see Figure 11)



“Some people may see the term “spiritual but not religious” as [indecisive and devoid of substance](#). Others embrace it as an [accurate way to describe themselves](#). What is beyond dispute, however, is that the label applies to a growing share of Americans.



“About a quarter of U.S. adults (27%) now say they think of themselves as spiritual but not religious, up 8 percentage points in five years, according to a Pew Research Center survey conducted between April 25 and June 4 of this year. This growth has been broad-based: It has occurred among men and women; whites, blacks and Hispanics; people of many different ages and education levels; and among Republicans and Democrats.”

Seizing the Spiritual Momentum

The spiritual desire has rapidly emerged in America. These two charts (see [Figure 11](#)) demonstrate a tremendous opportunity for Christian churches, *if* the clergy is willing to accept a new (but very traditionally rooted) way of thinking to embrace the doubts most have about God.

First, the idea of “spiritual” opens up a clear avenue to reenergize and spotlight the Holy Spirit’s role in Christianity. For many people, this author included, the existence of the Holy Spirit is much easier to “prove” than the existence of God. You may say that we must have “faith,” and while true for me, it’s insufficient for the non-religious. Yet virtually all those I spoke to who said they were spiritual but not religious had deep spiritual experiences in their lives, but found few avenues to share those deep emotions and tell their story.

Second, as the chart indicates, those who have “spiritual but not religious” still have an affinity to their original religious roots from their childhood (which may not extend to the next generation). These are the 40-60 year olds who believe in God, but have been turned off by standard religion. We must bring them back, but not to the church they abandoned. They want to see, experience, and connect with a renewed church.

Historically the Holy Spirit has been a powerful force in our Greco-Judeo-Christian heritage. In the Old Testament, the Wisdom Books (Proverbs and Psalms) extoll the virtues of the Holy Spirit. The Middle Testament (Apocrypha) contains the Wisdom of Solomon, a series of dialogues where the Holy Spirit consoles and advises Solomon. And in the New Testament, there are a bounty of references to the Holy Spirit representing an untapped abundance of spiritual potential, bringing us joy and wisdom.

Following John 13:34, the stage for a spiritual transformation was set forth in John 14, 15, & 16:

“The Father will give you another Counselor (or Encourager or Advocate), who will never leave you – the Holy Spirit who will lead you to all truth.... The Spirit lives within you ...

....It is best that I go away, because if I don’t the Counselor will not come ... when the Spirit comes, she/he will guide you into all truth...”



The Christian celebration of Pentecost [Acts 2:1-4] was intended to be a celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit seven weeks (~50 days) after the Resurrection. It was once such an important date that the Liturgical calendar still counts the weeks after Pentecost (typically from late spring to the last week in November) – fully half the Christian calendar.

Today most churches have lost the importance of this Spiritual connection of the Pentecostal season.

There is a powerful “Spiritual Yearning” (Figure 11: Spiritual Yearning has increased dramatically in recent years) in the world today that a reemphasis on the Holy Spirit can begin to satisfy.

While the Bible calls for the Holy Spirit to bring us closer to God, many of the references emphasize the linkage of the Holy Spirit as the “thread” that connects all of humanity together with the energies of Divinity. In this sense the Holy Spirit is the source of collaborative community.

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit can play a very important role in daily affairs, but, for the most part, the Holy Spirit is but a vague notion in the lay population. Ask a random cluster of Christians about the Holy Spirit; few will be able to speak more than a handful of statements about this mysterious energy in the Trinity.

The idea of spirituality is an arena where preaching will simply be inadequate; it requires a much richer treatment. We must learn to listen for her quiet voice, we must see the Holy Spirit in others and nurture its manifestation.

We must speak her words of wisdom, amplify her energies of love, joy, and creation, and embrace her direction to create synergies (aligned energy).

Christianity should not overlook this opportunity, we must seize the moment: the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit provides a profound advantage in a world seeking Spirituality beyond Religion.

From a 21st century, younger-generation point of view, Religion looks ossified, filled with strictures and burdened by medieval thinking; while Spirituality seems flexible, open to innovation, dynamic, modern, and malleable.

While some may be revolted by such distinctions, the realities are: if Christianity is to thrive in our times, it must know what to *keep* of our sacred traditions, and what to *add* to make it relevant and exciting. Much of what needs to be *added* is really a reemphasis of what already exists in our early Church roots. We must build a Church that looks forward toward the future, while preserving cherished tradition.

*The Holy Spirit is unique in his/her powers.
She brings both Wisdom and Joy.
Her divine powers are the source of both
love (collaboration) and creation
(innovation) within each of us.
When she is fully present,
we engage in “creationships” with others,
which we experience not as peace, per se,
but as joy!
Together her wisdom and joy are the
energies of “Divine Synergy”
– the deepest yearning of the Soul.*

There is a “systems design architecture” for synergy [from the Greek meaning *aligned energy*] and it manifests primarily in Collaborate Systems.

There are four fundamental synergies:

1. Synergy with God
2. Synergy with Self
3. Synergy with Others
4. Synergy with Nature

*Christ is the Prince of Peace,
The Holy Spirit is the Princess of Synergy*

Collaborative Excellence

People would choose to be *collaborative* over *independent* or *adversarial* action to solve problems: 71% embrace collaboration according to Pew Research’s recent study of [Trust and Distrust in America](#) (Figure 12) indicating most want to enjoy their religious experience with friendship and fellowship – the path of the Holy Spirit. Inherently people know it’s better to work together.



Figure 12: Americans Yearn for Collaboration

This is directly related to innovation, for without collaboration in the innovative process, it is both harder to generate and embrace new ideas, and engage people affected by the innovation in its adoption by lowering resistance to change.

Today highly educated people want to be able to *use spirituality* in a way that enables them to be *more collaborative* their fear, uncertainty, doubt, and distrust (FUDD) that gnaws at their souls.

They want deep insights, powerful mindsets, clear design principles, and useful applications.

We call this “*collaborative excellence*” – it’s the *confluence of Wisdom, Spirit, Divinity, Christian Principles, Moral Character Development, Human Behavior, Leadership and Community Building*.

(see [Appendix Three – Collaborative Excellence](#) for more detail about the inner design Architecture of Collaboration)

It enables the formation and definition of personal identity, providing an architecture through which people can better relate to God and other people in the world around them. It's not taught in seminaries, but ought to be, for the stakes are high.

The Collaborative Commandment

Christ gives us the 11th commandment [John 13:34] to *Love one another*. We should consider this the “Collaborative Commandment” to work together, to create together, to care for one another, to progress together, to build community (common unity).

This Collaborative Commandment has a Corollary: *Create thy Community [family, team, alliance, bridges across differences, etc.]*

As a civilization, we know far more about being *adversarial* and *transactional* than being *collaborative*. This must change. The Christian Church should be leading the way forward.

Christianity is steeped in tradition, which creates a glorious foundation for the future.

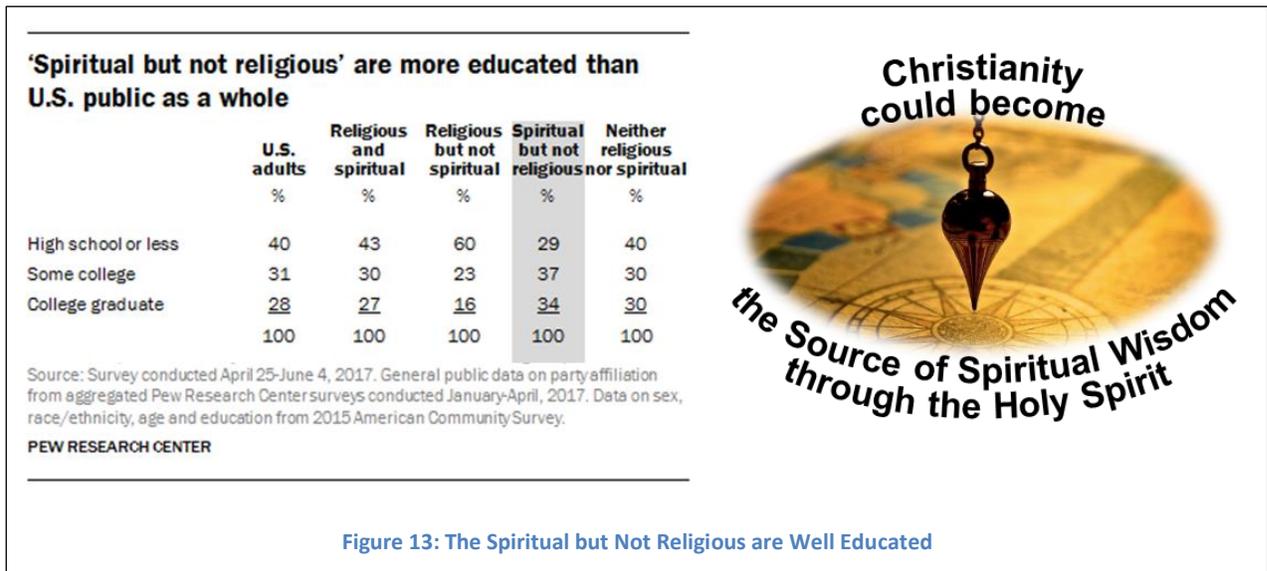
It is the rock upon which God has helped us build a bond with the divine.

Yet many of our traditions and teachings were formulated when people were less educated, less curious, and less interested in the meaning and purpose of life.

Today we must rethink our future or suffer further decline. People must come to see Christianity as “community,” not doctrine or dogma.

Challenges and Opportunities for a Renewed Clergy

Those entering the clergy, and those already in churches need to be far better leaders skilled in collaboration to build Christian communities than we see today. Educated people need a



special spiritual emphasis (see Figure 13) that provides a better balance between intimate, engaging, soulful meaning and traditional ritual. Christianity must become more revelational and connected to everyday reality, and less doctrinal and abstract from day to day stresses and challenges.



Christian Identity

The reality is that our identity as Christians has been clouded by *uncertainty* and hijacked by *politics*. People don't link their personal identity and inherent character with unique Christian qualities. We are suffering dire consequences for this vacuum, as the statistics cited earlier reflect.

These were fundamental to building a "character-based identity" that gave people strength in the face of adversity and clarity about who they are as people. It is no coincidence that these Key Factors for Success also create happier, healthier people who live 15% longer.

- This is a Powerful Value Proposition we as Christian Leaders are not capitalizing upon strategically -- something that should be a core element of verifiable Christian outcomes.

Christian Leaders are overlooking a *Powerful Value Proposition* that could dramatically help reverse this trend. Here's what we know: (see: [Wisdom Project](#) for more detail)

Well adjusted Christians (not necessarily devout) who have *three things in their lives* are likely to live 15% longer (approximately 7.5 years or more)¹⁰:

1. **A Strong Belief in God's Presence in Our Lives** (Father, Son, & Holy Spirit – don't forget the last of the Trinity which gives people a Healthy Spirit)
2. **A Purpose Driven Life** – this gives meaning and mission to what people do and something to live for (people without meaning and purpose are more likely to be depressed, eat poorly, and get sick more often) This fills a massive "meaning of life void."
3. **Strong, Trustworthy Relationships** – social relationships prevent the loneliness void even among "connected Millennials." Studies have shown loneliness can reduce life expectancy by eight years.

People who have these three "Key Factors for Success" (KFS) live longer because they have something to live for, for today and for eternity. *Their minds, bodies, souls and spirits are activated fully.* They are happier and have a strong sense of well-being. They have a *healthier and happier attitude toward life itself.*¹¹ These KFSs become the foundation of a *Character-Based Identity* that should distinguish and differentiate Christians from others in a very positive and energizing manner.

See [Appendix Seven – Character-Based Identity -- Who am I?](#) for more ideas and approaches.

¹⁰ *Changes In Lifestyle And Outlook Can Affect Longevity* by Jo Ann Jenkins, CEO, AARP Magazine, June 2018

¹¹ As a long-time member of Saddleback Church, I watched how Rick Warren built a Christian Identity around these three key elements (Key Factors for Success):

Short Window of Opportunity

One of the strategic targets for rebuilding the Church must be those people (see Figure 11: Spiritual Yearning has increased dramatically in recent years) who are Spiritual but Not Religious who still harbor a strong affiliation to the Church of their parents. They have not yet lost the memory of their forbearers.

- However, this window of opportunity will not last long as their offspring (Generation Z) become farther distant from their affiliative heritage.
- This means providing parishioners with strategies for life, with skills and tools, with both inspiration and capabilities to link faith with deeds that produce prosperity and well-being with clear linkage between faith, deeds, and great results along with meaning and purpose, cures for loneliness, building great friendships, nurturing functional family relationships.
- Every visit to church should result in some useful “take away” that makes a difference, however small or large.
- Churches must provide value-added guidance to attendees if they are to be relevant in the real world.
- Too many churches have a *transactional* culture that don’t make visitors feel like welcome members of a family that embraces Millennials who are struggling, distrustful, and skeptical yearning to find meaning and direction in their lives.

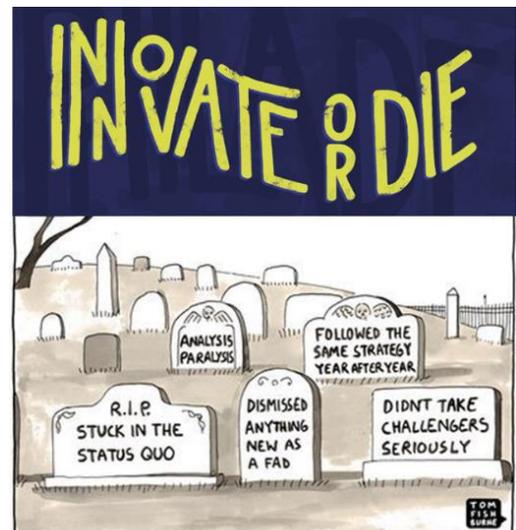
Where Do We start?

For two millennia, Christianity has been intimately woven into the fabric of Western Civilization.

We have assumed it would survive forever as long as we attended Church.

Now we must face the Christianity Crisis head-on. The trends at the Crossroads (Fig. 1) are ominous.

We now live in a world that is changing faster than at any prior age. (See





Appendix Four – Reexamining our Teachings

The Angst of our Civilization

Something's wrong; very wrong.

We all know it. The angst is everywhere – people are angry, unsettled, confused, overwhelmed, buried, polarized, feeling impotent and victimized, like life is meaningless.

One commentator, describing the socio-economic conditions in the Middle East observed:

People are cynical and don't seem to care. They wash their sorrows in booze and sex. Our leaders are oppressive, padding their own pockets, and corruption seems to get worse and worse. The leaders act like demagogues, deifying themselves. The power of the police and military is used for oppression.

The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer, enslaved by debt and low wages. People fight in the streets. Our moral imperative is gone. Now it's everyone for themselves as material wealth and personal pleasure have buried any sense of responsibility for our community as a whole. The economic injustices are perpetrated by those with wealth and power, keeping poor people enslaved by syphoning off their savings with more and more debt. People are threatened with violence and civil war if they don't act subserviently. Money and power reign over justice and unity.

This problem cannot endure forever. The violence and oppression in our nation will be brought down, but with the aftermath of a never-ending cycle of revenge, rising and falling again, never finding justice or peace or prosperity.

Most people, when reading this, will assume it's a commentary about our world today.

Sadly it was written 26 centuries ago about the state of affairs in Babylon.

Why, over the last 3,000 years has humanity been stuck? All the religious teaching, all the philosophy, all the professors, all the books over the last three millennia don't seemed to have made a dent.

Why have people not learned the way out of this morass?

What are we missing? What shifts in thinking do we need?

Why are we stuck in this endless cycle of creation and destruction?

What can we learn from history? How do we take a quantum leap forward?

Humans are noted for their ability to *learn*. So why have we not learned to stop the bloodshed? Perhaps we are not learning because we are teaching the same things the same old way, or the wrong things, expecting a different result.



Following WWI, William Butler Yeats observed that “*Civilization is an exercise in self-restraint.*”

To watch leaders today, they seem to have lost their sense of self-restraint, unleashing senseless viperous [vituperous] tongue lashings --vociferous about the wrong things, yet deadly silent about what Margaret Thatcher referred to as our “moral impulse.”

Yeats went on to plead his lament after the Great War in a prophetic poem:

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,
And everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction,
While the worst are full of passionate intensity.*

That was one hundred years ago. Modern commentators today cite this poem frequently in our troubled world, but none seem to have much of a clue finding the “centre that will hold.”

Often we hear a call for religion to fill the gap, or a greater emphasis on moral character development, but those have been tried, with good, but not great, results.

Both religion and education are stuck and must transform the hearts and minds to solve today’s wrenching anxieties. (Later we will address how both religion and education can regain their positions as the “lead arrows” of our culture.)

Now we are so far afield from finding Yeats’ “centre” that we don’t seem to know where to search, nor do we seem to have an idea in our mind of what it would look like if we found it.

It a sense, it’s like searching for the Holy Grail; most people envision it to be some form of a golden chalice. I submit that the Architecture of Collaborative Excellence will open the path into shifting our understanding and begin to transform humanity.



Appendix Five – Beware the Red Queen)

Religion (not just Christianity) has been slow to adapt and innovate at the same rate of the change around it.

If we don't innovate and adapt we face dire consequences.

We either become more *collaborative, interwoven into the fabric of modern society, or wither into oblivion*. We have to realize the “cure” will take new thinking, new strategies, new paradigms, and new conceptions.

We need to address critical questions:

- What's needed to spur a *revitalization*?
- What can be done *now* to begin to turn the tide?
- What *shifts in thinking* are required?
- What is the *new paradigm* for the future?

Our future does not mean we abandon our Christian roots, but we should reenergize our deepest devotions to tap into the power and joy of the Holy Spirit as our daily partner.

The Power of Paradigm Shifts

As Christians we must not get caught in the paradigm trap – doing the same things over and over again, expecting a different result. The new era of Christianity should consider how it leads civilization into a new, more enlightened era.

We must recognize that what's required is not just a little tweaking and peaking here and there – rather it is a “*Paradigm Shift*,” referred to in the original Greek Bible as “*Metanoia*” – to shift the “heart of the mind” to a higher level.

- Most Religious Leaders were never equipped for this shift.
- Neither Seminaries nor Divinity Schools are providing these new levels of thinking.

Thus leaders can easily remain trapped in an old paradigm, unable to cope with a new world requiring in new dimensions of thinking and rules of engagement.



Clergy and Lay Leaders must learn new rules, new ideas, and new collaborative ways of leading, beyond the old standards of preaching and ministering.

Paradigm Shifts are not just about “doing things differently”

*it’s thinking differently,
envisioning differently,
discerning differently,
measuring differently,
designing differently,
speaking differently,
acting differently,
valuing differently,
treating people differently,
asking questions differently,
experiencing your world differently.*

A bold new approach is essential.

These profound differences require a fundamentally different “Systems Design Architecture”, not merely tweaking old stuff designed for a legacy paradigm.

The Collaborative Challenge of the 21st Century

The 21st century presents a myriad of new and tragic social problems – depression, fragmentation, collapsed family structures, unwed mothers, drugs – the list goes on.

While Christian Churches should never abandon their joint aim of *salvation of souls* and *glorification of God*, contemporary society wants answers and practical applications to the “here and now” – pressing problems that wrench people’s hearts every day. We must seek to elevate the divinity of the human soul, building collaboratively excellent communities based on Christian Principles that liberate humanity from its most destructive instincts.

To be relevant Christianity must become a ***central solution*** to ***today’s problems***, not just a ***peripheral alternative***. The Churches that are growing have begun to recognize this essential shift. It’s something that should *catalyze a concordance* among and within denominations to develop frameworks for a more unified vision and purpose.



Within the concordance, best practices should be shared and promulgated.
Successful Churches should lend a hand to help struggling ones.
Lay leaders with collaborative organizational experience should become engaged.

When more and more strenuous efforts yield less and less return, it's a sign that the current paradigm has confronted the principles of diminishing returns.

A new order of thinking is required to shake our foundations and spur sustainable collaborative transformations.

Our Spiritual Essence

Embracing our Spiritual roots means developing our creative and collaborative qualities that originate in the soul – qualities that seek peace and far beyond: synergies with God, with self, and with others. Many of our foundational pillars are derived from our Greco-Christian roots which were collaborative in nature and can help us adapt to the social ills that plague us today.

The spiritual quest of Millennials harkens for the Holy Spirit – the soft voice of wisdom within that speaks to the oneness of all, directing us to multiply God’s impact a thousand times unto the souls upon this earth.

Creating Value in the Moment

Every action, every mindset, and even traditions should be examined through the lens of the Holy Spirit to assess if we are meeting this century’s requirements of the “Collaborative Commandment.”

It doesn’t mean abandoning what we do well, nor forsaking honored traditions; it means *reframing how we do these things – how we maximize value creation in every encounter and interaction.* People flock to churches that help people in the moment.¹²

“The idolatry of individualism in American culture has influenced even the way we think about spiritual growth. Most spiritual formation teaching tends to be self-centered and self-focused without any reference to our relationship to other Christians... The truth is this: *Christians need relationships to grow.*

Hebrews 10:24-25 says ‘Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.’

“God intends for us to grow up in family... Relationships are the “glue” that keeps people connected to your church.

“Spiritual Maturity is demonstrated more by *behavior* than by beliefs.”

– Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church.*

¹² Saddleback Church is a good example this author is personally very familiar with.

Rebuilding Trust

We must also rebuild Trust in Religion. It's not just about what the "bad guys of religion have done," (such as priests molesting altar boys, or hypocritical evangelists chasing prostitutes, or using fear of God to trigger bigger donations). We must rebuild trust in Churches by being a

relevant contributor to our communities, by joining forces with other churches and community institutions to innovate, solve problems, and providing solid benefits parishioners seek. (see Appendix Six – Ladder of Trust for a framework that helps build trust effectively)

A trusted Church will focus on meeting the needs of its parishioners as well as delivering value that fills the craving for a sense of family in young folk who have come from broken parents – either by divorce or poor parenting -- school dropouts, domestic violence, fatherless homes, or unwed mothers ill-prepared for parenting (that now exceeds 40% of all births).

We must reconnect with those who are *Spiritual but not Religious* with experiences that touch their souls and enliven their spirit, while they still have an affiliative connection to their ancestral religion.

Power of Leadership and Culture

Most people don't understand that it is culture, not personality, that is the number one (#1) determinant of human behavior, and leaders are the most impactful determinant of culture. Clergy must become leaders creating collaborative cultures and collaborative learning experiences. There are three basic cultures in our society, which we call "archetypal." (Figure 14)

*Love and Trust are intimately linked.
The brain chemical (Neuro-transmitter
Oxytocin) triggers both love and trust.*

*This is why it's so hard to love
someone you don't trust.*



The Power of the Tri-Archetypal Framework

Why is this so important to the field of Spiritual Education?

What's important about this tri-archetypal approach is that it tends to have a *universal* validity and applicability across numerous industries, professions, situations, and regional cultures. It



helps explain why nations have risen, why history has taken certain courses, and how value and competitive advantage is created.

A Tri-Archetypical Analysis enables us to isolate the *Collaborative Systems Architecture*, including the leadership modeling, the value creation principles, analytic methodology, and predicative assessments. A priest or minister must embrace their responsibility from a holistic *systems perspective* – unscrambling the intermingling of the archetypes in most organizations to build productive cultures and reduce the drain of non-collaborative practices. In business this creates a real competitive edge, in sports winning teams, and in both education & religion a more wholesome learning framework for personal, spiritual and organizational success.

Faith, Trust & Deeds

For people whose world is devoid of trust, while filled with an overload of disruption, disorder, injustice, and trickery, faith is a leap beyond normal conception. To stimulate faith, we need to consider starting with trust -- who, what, and how¹³ and deeds.

The value of churches encouraging good deeds linked to meaning and purpose can't be overstated, for deeds reinforce faith and trust, which, in turn, reinforces positive action.

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”
– Hebrews 10:24

People revel in the seeing their work materialize into something tangible that makes a difference – it gives them meaning, they learn to trust others, which multiplies into further good works, helping restore faith in fellow humans and Godly spirit.

Clergy need to stay focused on a renewed sense of their church’s purpose, the needs in their community, building groups that can link faith and good deeds, and welcoming every visitor in friendship and fellowship.¹⁴

¹³ At the Collaborative Leadership Institute we have created [a series of programs](#) to address these needs. [Those who have used our methods](#) of trust-building have had lasting impact. However, this is just a start; much more work needs to be done in an ecumenical manner to build a holistic system of collaborative excellence for churches.

¹⁴ One important book that addresses this renewal of Church Purpose is “The Purpose Driven Church – Growth without compromising your Message & Mission, by Rick Warren (Zondervan, 1995)

Religion also “smooths out transitions” by focusing people on a unifying higher order (God) of value and importance, building communities (common unities), and providing a haven of understanding for the congregation as well as new members just entering the community. Like government, religion provides meditative rules of order, while adding peace, a higher order of guidance than human ambition (which provides some deterrence against demagogues¹⁵), and compassion in times of stress and change.

Sociologists and evolutionary biologists refer to “smoothing at difficult times” with the term “adaptive mechanisms for major transitions.”

Religion is currently losing in the competition for “mind share” among Americans.

Christian leaders are not thinking in terms that capture the high ground to meet their customer’s *needs* and *wants*.¹⁶ If nothing changes, the consequences will be



The **COLLABORATIVE LEADER** seeks to:

- **unite not divide**
- **inspire not open fire**
- **elevate not denigrate**
- **embrace not disgrace**
- **enlighten not frighten**
- **enthuse not confuse**
- **engage not enrage**
- **align not malign**
- **integrate not segregate**
- **lift not rift**
- **use diversity & differences to trigger innovation**
- **place mutual interest above self interest**

¹⁵ There has, however, been one major vulnerability to this deterrence, as evidenced by the 3,000 years of fighting in the Middle East – the cradle of three major religions. For millennia the “prophets” and theologians tell their flocks to “Have faith in God” that a great leader will save us. More often than not (according to the history recorded in the Bible and the centuries of continuous fighting after the Biblical accounts), a bad leader came to the fore. These were most often from the “[Dark Triad](#)” (Machiavellians, Narcissists, and Sociopaths) – the same character types of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Kim Jun Un, Putin, and others who destroy the modern world. The people were bilked when the bad leader proclaimed “they were send from God” and all the flock were attracted like moths to a flame. Believers in God seemingly have never come to the conclusion that they should modify their belief to something more realistic and discriminating, like: “Trust only enlightened leaders who embody God’s spirit, character, and conscience.” In other words: “Trust but verify” by their actions, not just their words. Typically bad leaders seek glory for their narcissistic egos and have no interest in glorifying God or enabling spiritual growth for their minions..

¹⁶ For example, many current clergy rail against what is termed “Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, (MTD)” which is a term that refers to what teenager adhere to today, holding five basic tenets:

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on Earth
2. God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

Rather than find a way to capture the spiritual high ground and find a way to be more attractive to people holding this point of view, many theologians deride the tepid values. One decried MTD as the work of Satan and called for a counter-cultural response that harkened the days of forming an isolated monastic order, proclaiming that finding “happiness” was not in the Lord’s order of things. This is the wrong response, doomed to failure. The answer is to dig more deeply into the stressful conditions of the American Teen and find ways for a Spiritual Christianity to help address their needs. The issue of finding “happiness” is built into the American culture, stated powerfully in the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson with the phrase: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Why would theologians decry such a compelling right provide by what Jefferson understood as God’s “Natural Law?” To lambast MTD is an example of a “violin string wound too tight,” causing the critics to overlook people’s inner desire to be loved, to be successful, and to be happy. We have all been told that “Love will make us Happy.” Why should we forsake this yearning? If we can’t say that Christians are happier



tumultuous. It is quite possible that another institution will be formed to perform critical unifying task, but, because of the complexity of the task, this won't happen in time to save our planet and our people.

Start Locally

By mobilizing collaborative excellence into our churches, we begin to stem the decline by making churches more relevant to solving society's real problems and heartfelt yearnings. Find ways to provide what people *want*, not just what you think they *need*.

The decline in Christianity has been on-going for several generations. An instant change cannot be expected, but a long period of analysis before acting is foolhardy.

Local parishes must start their own grass roots programs -- in each local church. Moreover, in the larger picture, Christian Churches must form strong strategic alliances with other churches and community service organizations to start engaging new people, reenlisting those who have dropped by the wayside, while *creating results* that attract attention and new members.

Conclusions

Christianity at the Crossroads is in crisis. But the future is not predetermined, despite computer projections. The situation is dire, but there is opportunity imbedded in every problem, if we choose to see it and change our paradigms (metanoia). Institutions must evolve over time. If we don't adapt, we will be "marginalized." This is time for an evangelical crusade.

At the very time the world is slipping into a "dark age" far more dangerous than the one a millennia ago, Christianity's message of sensibility and caring is being allowed to drown.

We must use the principles of *Leverage* and *Multiplication* to build powerful alliances with a cadre of churches, disciples, local missionaries, and enthused champions who can engage, teach/facilitate, and implement, equipping them with an inspired vision, purpose, tools, and pathways of a revitalized Church.

We must revitalize our own spiritual foundations by engaging the Holy Spirit as every human's *partner in our lives, in our families, and in all our relationships*.

As Christians, we must put our faith to work in collaborative action and make *collaborative excellence* a core quality by which Christians are known.

The Crisis at the Crossroads presents an opportunity to heal the old divisions within Christianity, by focusing on a common enemy – atheism, which is a much bigger threat than internecine theological debates that have little impact on the large populous that craves spiritual revitalization.

Time is of the essence. Every day we delay makes it more difficult to turn the tide.

than non-believers, then something's wrong with our religion. We know that people who believe in God, have mission and purpose in their lives, and have trusting relationships live 15% longer. Why not shout it out?



Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different result

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but no deeds?
Can such faith save him? ...”

“So you see, it isn’t enough just to have Faith, for Faith without good deeds is no faith at all – it is dry, dead, and useless. Faith and actions, working together, makes a complete whole.”

“Let us show our wisdom by leading a good life, by deeds done in humility... Wisdom that comes from heaven (the Holy Spirit) is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, humble, full of mercy and bearing good fruit....” – excerpts from James 2

The “Collaborative Commandment¹⁷” has never been fully developed by Christianity.

Along with a renewed embrace of the Holy Spirit, this is — by its very nature -- a Paradigm Shift requiring a new Design Architecture to fuel and sustain it. We call that Design Architecture: Collaborative Excellence.¹⁸ This is based on the fundamental idea that it is our duty as Christians in fulfilling Christ’s guidance “These things that I do, you too shall do, and greater than I.¹⁹”

The duty we have to fulfill the Collaborative Commandment is first to discern the multi-faceted nature of love (see **Appendix Two – Splendored Love**) and second to discover the Architecture of Collaboration ((see **Appendix Three – Collaborative Excellence**), and reexamine and readdress what humans must learn based on our failings to teach in a manner that people can learn a fundamentally new way of thinking²⁰ (see **Appendix Four – Reexamining our Teachings**).

Further, this calls for a *transformation* in Christian thinking and theology. This does not negate our past theology, but it does require a new, higher order of understanding to meet the needs of the modern world.

The word for transformation in the Greek versions of the New Testament was “metanoia” which means “to shift the heart of the mind to a higher/larger/greater level.”

This can be thought of as the “metanoiaic shift” we are called upon to bring into being.

¹⁷ There are many “Collaborative Commandment Corollaries” such as 1) Create thy community, 2) Revitalize thy neighborhood, 3) Build thy Trusted Team, 4) Honorably outperform thy competition by Faith & Spirit using Synergy, 5) Attract others to thy community by thy Commitment, Devotion, and Value Created, 6) Against evil, unite under God, defend thy neighbor, and deflect the enemy into oblivion (dolphin defense strategy), etc. etc

¹⁸ See Appendix Three – Collaborative Excellence for a brief overview

¹⁹ John 14:12

²⁰ This will not be easy because it means acknowledging our theology has missed its mark (*harmatia*) and adjusting our aim to focus on both our *sin* and our *failings*.

Appendix One – Dramatic Drop In Church Attendance

Just one example (Source: BBC News) from around the world:

Dramatic drop in church attendance in Scotland

The number of people who regularly attend church services in Scotland has fallen by more than half over the last 30 years, according to a new survey. -- 16 April 2017



A census of Scottish Christians found that there are around 390,000 regular churchgoers north of the border, down from 854,000 in 1984.

The statistics were revealed in the results of 2016 Scottish Church Census, which was recently published by Brierley Consultancy.

Key findings include:

- The research also revealed that 42% of churchgoers were aged over 65.
- 7.2% of Scotland's population regularly attend church, down from 17% in 1984;
- The number of congregations dropped from 4,100 in 1984 to 3,700 in 2016;
- 40% of churchgoers are male;
- Four-fifths of church leaders (79%) are male, with an average age of 57;
- 43% of leaders are responsible for more than one church.

One leading cleric said the findings presented a "crisis and an opportunity" for Christians in Scotland.

Lead researcher Dr. Peter Brierley said the figures indicated a crisis in Christianity across Scotland.

"We are living in the 21st century and one of the features of the 21st century is that people's allegiance to particular faiths is no longer as strong as it used to be," he said.

He said the main reason for the decline in church attendance was the deaths of elderly churchgoers. "Part of the problem is the proportion of people in the church who are elderly is much greater than in the population of Scotland as a whole," he said.

"So, you have a great number of churchgoers dying. The rate of replacement is not as many. That's the basic reason for decline.

"It's not that people are moving away from the faith, although I'm sure some are, but in general terms that is not the case. There are also quite a lot of invisible Christians who used to go to church, still believe in God, but they have moved house, perhaps to a rural area, and simply haven't found a church to go to."

'Messy Churches'

The census also revealed growth among some denominations in some parts of Scotland.

- Attendance among the Pentecostals has doubled since 2002 and now stands at 19,000, making up 5% of all churchgoers in Scotland.
- The census also revealed a growth in new churches - 12,000 people regularly attend around 300 new churches started since 2002.



- Researchers said many immigrant churches and so-called "Messy Churches", which are more informal gatherings, account for much of the new growth.
- They credit a 2% growth in church attendance in Aberdeenshire to the influx of a large number of Polish migrants, mostly Roman Catholic, to the oil industry.

'Opportunity and challenge'

The Reverend Dr. David Pickering, Moderator of the United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland, said the census did not make "terribly happy reading. "It's a crisis and an opportunity. Both present themselves. The Scottish Church Census doesn't make terribly happy reading. But it also presents a new opportunity for the church to portray the love of God and the good news of Jesus in a new way for a new generation. That's an opportunity and a challenge for us. Although I wish it were different, I think we must acknowledge that most congregations have more older people than younger, and most young people simply do not see the relevance of God, of Jesus, of the church, to their lives. And, of course, there are now more things to do on Sundays than there were even a generation ago. I think if the church doesn't respond [to the decline in numbers], it is a crisis. If it does respond and it embraces the situation, that's positive."

The Bishop of Paisley, John Kennan, admitted he loses sleep over church attendance figures. "The real crisis that's going on is not that people aren't coming to us, it's that we've stopped going to them. It's a geographical and a human reality. Essentially, we've stopped being part of the homes and lives of ordinary people. To be honest with you, I lose sleep over the declining numbers. If the numbers are declining because there's something we could be doing that we're not doing then that's something we should lose sleep over. "There's a sense that we could do this better if we thought about this, came together, and had some kind of a plan."



The Quest for Synergy

Synergy has always been humankind's most energizing spiritual dream. But it has been elusive. Why? What's been missing? What has caused us to miss the mark? What mind-traps have we been caught in? Why has Synergy been struggling to get out of the starting gate?

The problem is first in the conception – Synergy emerges by linking people who are different in a spiritual engagement which relies on people having trust in one another. It's a phenomenon called [dynamic differential energy](#) which requires a paradigm-shifting, unifying systems architecture.

Synergy manifests in Collaborative Systems – Synergy is a natural outcome of *collaborative* design architectures, both in nature and human interactions & organizations. However, synergy will seldom manifest without trust between the components in the system. That's why *transactional* and *adversarial* systems seldom manifest synergy.

The Holy Spirit Leads Us to the Synergy Source

Appendix Two – Splendored Love

The “Collaborative Commandment” [John 13:34] urges us to “love one another.”

Unfortunately our 21st century English language has never been as precise as the Greek when it comes to the idea of “love.” Today we lack the enlightened distinctions and refinements that were well known to the ancients.

Thus the word “love” has actually become confounding and confusing.

The reason is because English converged the meaning of at least a half dozen words from the Greek into one word.

It’s like mixing many vibrant colors of paint into a bucket – the result is a muddy brown.

In the 21st century, love seems to focus typically on a single form of *romantic* relationship, which

makes love difficult to understand, attain and sustain.

This makes it arduous to make the leap from “love” to practical applications that can make a deep spiritual difference in our lives.

The Greeks had numerous words that can be translated in many different ways,²¹ which made it easier for the Ancients to grasp the real richness of love.

Rather than try to resurrect the ancient Greek words²²

which have little meaning for us in our modern, digital age, I have referred to more contemporary expressions to illustrate the multi-dimensional facets of “splendored love.”

By refining our desire to experience the diverse richness of the six loves, by building a strong multi-dimensional construct for “splendored love,” we have a heightened chance of attaining the spiritual glory and wonders of the “Collaborative Commandment.”

²¹ Several of these words were *Agape* (Spiritual Love of God), *Storge* (Parental Love), *Philia* (Brotherly/Sisterly Love), *Eros* (Romantic Love), *Philotimo* (Honorable Love), *Koinonia* (Partnering Love), *Philosophia* (Love of Wisdom)

²² For more detailed understanding of the 6- dimensions of love, see [The Six Splendored Loves](#) by Robert Porter Lynch



Appendix Three – Collaborative Excellence

THREE BASIC ARCHETYPES OF CULTURE, LEADERSHIP & ECONOMICS



- Always Take Advantage
- Manipulation, Distrust
- Win-Lose, Dog Eat Dog
- Survival of Fittest
- Might makes Right
- My Way or the Highway
- He who has the gold, RULES!
- ECONOMIC STRATEGY: Take from Others
What's Mine is MINE,
What's Yours is Negotiable



- Everything's a "Deal"
- Hierarchical Power
- Buy Low - Sell High
- Almighty Self Interest
- Tactical Transactions
- Price Price Price
- Positional Power
- Win-win is okay if both sides bargain very hard
- ECONOMIC STRATEGY: Quid Pro Quo, Trade



- Teamwork & Trust
- Synergy – Strategic Alignment & Integration
- Work Ethic, Integrity
- Long-Term, Strategic View
- Value is more than Price
- Cherish Differences as innovation engine
- Mutual Benefit
- Vision & Values Driven
- ECONOMIC STRATEGY: Share Fairly, Create Anew

Figure 15: Beliefs & Rules of Engagement: Three Archetypical Forms of Culture, Leadership, & Economics

Please note: The Three Archetypical frameworks are like “primary colors” (Red, Blue, Yellow) Most organizations *muddled* -- some mixture of the three archetypes. For example, a “congenial” culture would be substantially a mix of *Transactional* and *Collaborative*, with a tint of *Adversarial* (mainly in the form of competitive rivalries and passive aggressive behavior).

Many universities are *muddled* – a conglomeration of all three archetypes together at the same time. In one example, the university president was *Collaborative*, the Dean of the Business School was *Transactional*, and several of his professors were ardently *Adversarial*, teaching that human and economic behavior followed a *survival of the fittest* line of thinking. This revolted a number of the other professors who were repulsed by the “might makes right” approach. They responded by added courses and professors to the curriculum to counterbalance the adversarial teachings. Now the school became totally muddled.

Similarly, many religious institutions are *muddled*. Much good occurs when churches reach out and help the poor and needy and work together *collaboratively* to create community. But there is a lot of *adversarial* interaction which is often not obvious, because institutions like health care, religion, and education are presumably “congenial and polite” cultures.

Thus they cleverly disguise their *adversarial* demeanor using passive-aggressive tactics such as: “sowing FUDD” (fear, uncertainty, doubt & distrust), hidden agendas, mental manipulation, half-truths, gossip, side-stepping issues, intentional mistakes, cynical attitudes, complaining with no solutions, indirectly demeaning other denominations, snide remarks, and so forth.

Adversarial approaches are often the norm because they more clearly map to highly competitive situations, driven by the simplistic short-term view “*if you lose, then I win.*”

Of course, this might work in one-time transactions (such as between buyer and seller -- e.g. buying a home, car, eBay, etc.) but it does NOT work in situations with repetitive interchange where the *history* of the relationship influences the *current* relationship.

In addition leaders under pressure look for more control over the situation while collaboration seemingly provides less control, because it requires cooperative not unilateral decision making. Because the short-term is more visible, while the long-term is much more uncertain, a win today feels better than something that is more ephemeral in the future. This is why a powerful trust framework is so essential to bridge the short and long term.

Finally adversarial approaches are more familiar and so leaders find them more comfortable, especially when rivalries drive decisions.

Using the Adversarial-Transactional-Collaborative Archetypic Framework enables a leader to diagnose the culture of an organization in just a few minutes listening to language and observing behavior.

Breaking Through the Clutter

The breakthrough in thinking is to see underneath the surface and *sturm und drang* (storm and chaos) that creates fear and anxiety, and perceive three dimensionally through the lens of cultural archetypes, as illustrated in Figure 15; then, like a Polaroid lens, screen out the clutter and chaff, knowing what’s wrong, askew, discordant, and then take corrective action.

The “Collaborative Commandment” [John 13:34] compels us to love one another (see six splended loves above), which means, as Christians, we should develop “collaborative excellence” as a belief system, mind-set, skill-set, and use language and tools that expand the possibilities of collaboration.

Moreover, one primary source of collaborative excellence is *wisdom*, biblically attributed to the Holy Spirit [promised to deliver power and joy by Christ in John 14, 15, 16 & Acts 2, also described in Proverbs]

Six Master Levers to Empower Collaborative Leadership Excellence “Core”

How should church leaders embrace and energize people around the *Core of Collaborative Excellence*? What new amalgam of mind-sets, insights, and skill-sets are needed to navigate the unique waters of the 21st century? What can we learn from others who have mastered its practical capacities in the secular world?

Based on years of experience, studies of successes and failures, and the needs of complex organizations, we have identified six fundamental “levers” a collaborative person must develop and must use regularly. Think of these “levers” as “core architectures” that enable effective teamwork, trust, and esprit de corps:



1. **Human Behavior & Trust Architecture**
2. **Spiritual Identity & Value Creation**
3. **Wisdom & Collaborative Culture**
4. **Friendship & Fellowship**
5. **Creationships & Leadership**
5. **Complexity & Synergy Architecture**

Collaborative Excellence picks up on John 13:34 and 1 Corinthians 12 – moving toward *synergy* – the deepest yearning of the soul.

The good news is that all six architectures are actually build into the DNA of normal humans (also known as the Holy Spirit) – it’s already in our “source code” – we must unlock it. People want it (Figure 1).

Gaining a mastery over these critical elements will enable leaders to work both inside and outside their own organization to harness human energies, align functions, balance forces, integrate across boundaries, and manage complexity.

These are already available to any leader (see [Collaborative Excellence Programs](#)), in the long run this should be reframed specifically for a Christian audience with theological input).



Learning and Embracing the Collaborative Systems Architecture

It’s one thing to understand something *intellectually*, and completely another to be able to *act wisely implementing ideas*. To enable the *Collaborative Excellence Paradigm Shift*, leaders must *learn to think and act* to align the essentials of the *collaborative systems architecture* (God’s inner “design” for humanity).

Two parallel courses need to be developed – each with the basic same architecture: a Christian version (with Biblical references) available for the Christian Community, and a non-secular version (with Scientific references) available to enter schools, government, and businesses (the bulk of this work is already done).

While some elements can be taught using books, videos, and webinars, grasping the magnitude and power of the *Shift* requires a *critical mass* of church leaders to engage in *immersive team learning and action-planning* to embody the right attitudes, insights, mind sets, skill sets, and tool sets with a cadre of trainers who can spread the “good word” throughout the land as disciples and evangelizing missionaries.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Collegial/Congenial does not mean Collaborative

<p>Congenial/Collegial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superficial friendliness –be “nice” • Looks pleasant on the surface – socially acceptable & politically correct. • Hidden Agendas & many sub-rosa issues for fear that if an issue is unsettling, it will create permanent and irreconcilable rifts. • Transactional (minimal) Trust • Culture is Often Passive Aggressive • People demonstrate superficial relationships and politeness • Bury frustrations – “time heals all wounds” • Don’t Challenge the Norm • Focus on Ethics, Codes of Conduct, and maintaining Requirements of Accrediting Bodies • Standards reflect the “common denominator” • Excellence is a Goal • Few “Breakdowns,” Few Breakthroughs • Play it Safe, Don’t try new things for fear of failure and adverse ramifications • Low Risk, blame those who are deviant <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy is infrequent and happens by chance 	<p>Collaborative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough Love, All for One – One for All. • Can look paradoxically confrontive and playful, sometimes rough around the edges, even gruff • Agendas are transparent, and open for healthy challenge, discussion, debate and innovative new solutions • Trust is strong & honourable • Culture is one of Partnerships & Creationships, Stretching to higher performance • People display genuine affection and caring. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of excellence, ethics & value creation are high and vital to the culture of collaboration • Embrace Ethics and Codes of Conduct, but strive for higher standards • Excellence is first a Journey with goals • Confrontive with the expectation that all will innovate based on new perspectives. • Frequent breakdowns as teams push the limits, turning breakdowns into breakthroughs, continuous sharing and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy occurs often and can be designed
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Appendix Four – Reexamining our Teachings

The Angst of our Civilization

Something's wrong; very wrong.

We all know it. The angst is everywhere – people are angry, unsettled, confused, overwhelmed, buried, polarized, feeling impotent and victimized, like life is meaningless.

One commentator, describing the socio-economic conditions in the Middle East observed:

People are cynical and don't seem to care. They wash their sorrows in booze and sex. Our leaders are oppressive, padding their own pockets, and corruption seems to get worse and worse. The leaders act like demagogues, deifying themselves. The power of the police and military is used for oppression.

The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer, enslaved by debt and low wages. People fight in the streets. Our moral imperative is gone. Now it's everyone for themselves as material wealth and personal pleasure have buried any sense of responsibility for our community as a whole. The economic injustices are perpetrated by those with wealth and power, keeping poor people enslaved by syphoning off their savings with more and more debt. People are threatened with violence and civil war if they don't act subserviently. Money and power reign over justice and unity.

This problem cannot endure forever. The violence and oppression in our nation will be brought down, but with the aftermath of a never-ending cycle of revenge, rising and falling again, never finding justice or peace or prosperity.²³

Most people, when reading this, will assume it's a commentary about our world today.

Sadly it was written 26 centuries ago about the state of affairs in Babylon.

Why, over the last 3,000 years has humanity been stuck? All the religious teaching, all the philosophy, all the professors, all the books over the last three millennia don't seemed to have made a dent.

Why have people not learned the way out of this morass?

What are we missing? What shifts in thinking do we need?

Why are we stuck in this endless cycle of creation and destruction?

What can we learn from history? How do we take a quantum leap forward?

²³ *The Bible Project, Habakkuk*; YouTube Video, 2016. One could similarly read Isaiah ~ 750-500 BC from an historical perspective and garner how the Middle East has changed so little – the same fighting, strife, betrayal, and conflicts. Nothing has changed!



Humans are noted for their ability to *learn*. So why have we not learned to stop the bloodshed?²⁴ Perhaps we are not learning because we are teaching the same things the same old way, or the wrong things, expecting a different result.

Following WWI, William Butler Yeats observed that “*Civilization is an exercise in self-restraint.*”²⁵

To watch leaders today, they seem to have lost their sense of self-restraint, unleashing senseless viperous [vituperous] tongue lashings --vociferous about the wrong things, yet deadly silent about what Margaret Thatcher referred to as our “moral impulse.”

The central focus of the “Architecture of Collaborative Excellence” is to understand God’s “inner design” for the Collaborative Commandment, to break the morass that has caused people to learn the wrong things about human nature and make the same mistakes generation after generation.

Yeats went on to plead his lament after the Great War in a prophetic poem:

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed,
And everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction,
While the worst are full of passionate intensity.*²⁶

That was one hundred years ago. Modern commentators today cite this poem frequently in our troubled world, but none seem to have much of a clue finding the “centre that will hold.”

Often we hear a call for religion to fill the gap, or a greater emphasis on moral character development, but those have been tried, with good, but not great, results.

Both religion and education are stuck and must transform the hearts and minds to solve today’s wrenching anxieties. (Later we will address how both religion and education can regain their positions as the “lead arrows” of our culture.)

Now we are so far afield from finding Yeats’ “centre” that we don’t seem to know where to search, nor do we seem to have an idea in our mind of what it would look like if we found it.

It a sense, it’s like searching for the Holy Grail; most people envision it to be some form of a golden chalice. I submit that the Architecture of Collaborative Excellence will open the path into shifting our understanding and begin to transform humanity.

²⁴ I asked myself this same question nearly fifty years ago upon returning from Vietnam. This idea is a step in the direction of learning some new things in a new light.

²⁵ Quoted in *Wit and Wisdom of the 20th Century*, ed. Frank S. Pepper (Peter Bedrick Books 1987) p 74

²⁶ Cited in Clark, Kenneth; *Civilization*, Harper & Row, 1969, p 347

Appendix Five – Beware the Red Queen

A Time of Phenomenal Change

The level of change over the last fifty years is unprecedented in history (except in times of war or massive natural disaster). During our many workshops on alliance building and collaborative leadership, we asked over 10,000 senior executives (working in teams) to draw the Rate of Change and Speed they've experienced during their time in the workplace.

Fully 90% of those who'd entered the workforce in the 1970s & '80s drew an exponential curve (see Figure 17).

The Red Queen Intervenes

Those who study change and evolution give this type of curve (Figure 18) a name: "The Red Queen," a term derived from *Alice in Wonderland*; she sets the world on its head. She symbolizes the unrelenting forces in nature and business where competing interests vie for resources. The winner forces out the losers, often reproducing faster and more prolifically than the older version.

During the Red Queen's influence, things change rapidly, old ideas and traditions fall by the wayside if they don't produce value, and paradigms shift dramatically.

Usually this happens somewhat gradually in society and there are times of adjustment.

This has happened in America many times, such as the shift from the agrarian economy to an industrial economy. Machines displaced workers, while creating more productivity, which, in turn drove economic growth, requiring more workers who

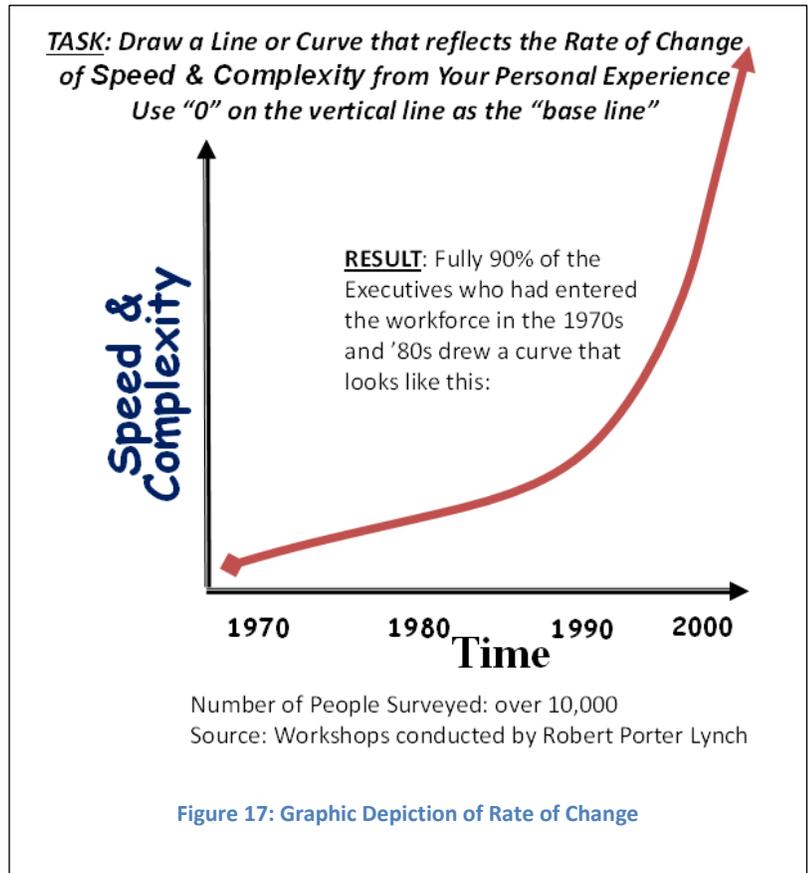


Figure 17: Graphic Depiction of Rate of Change

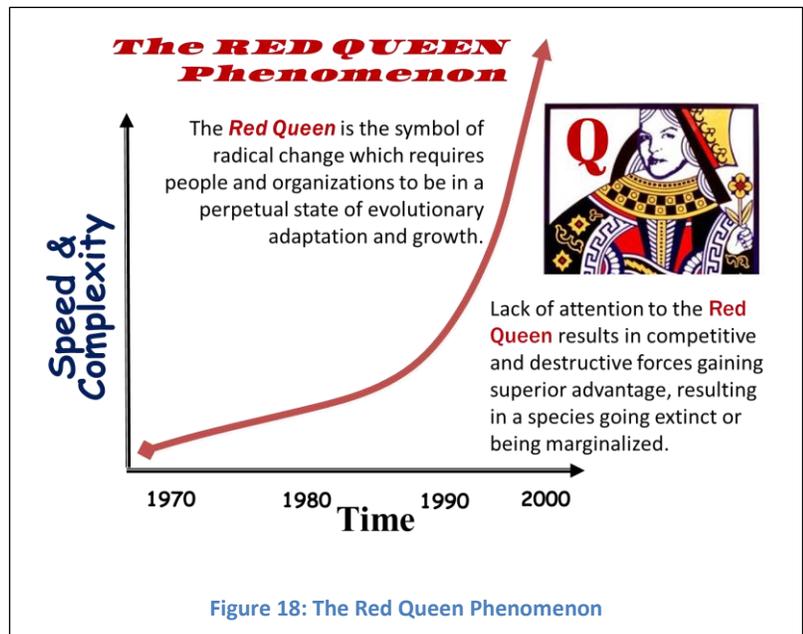
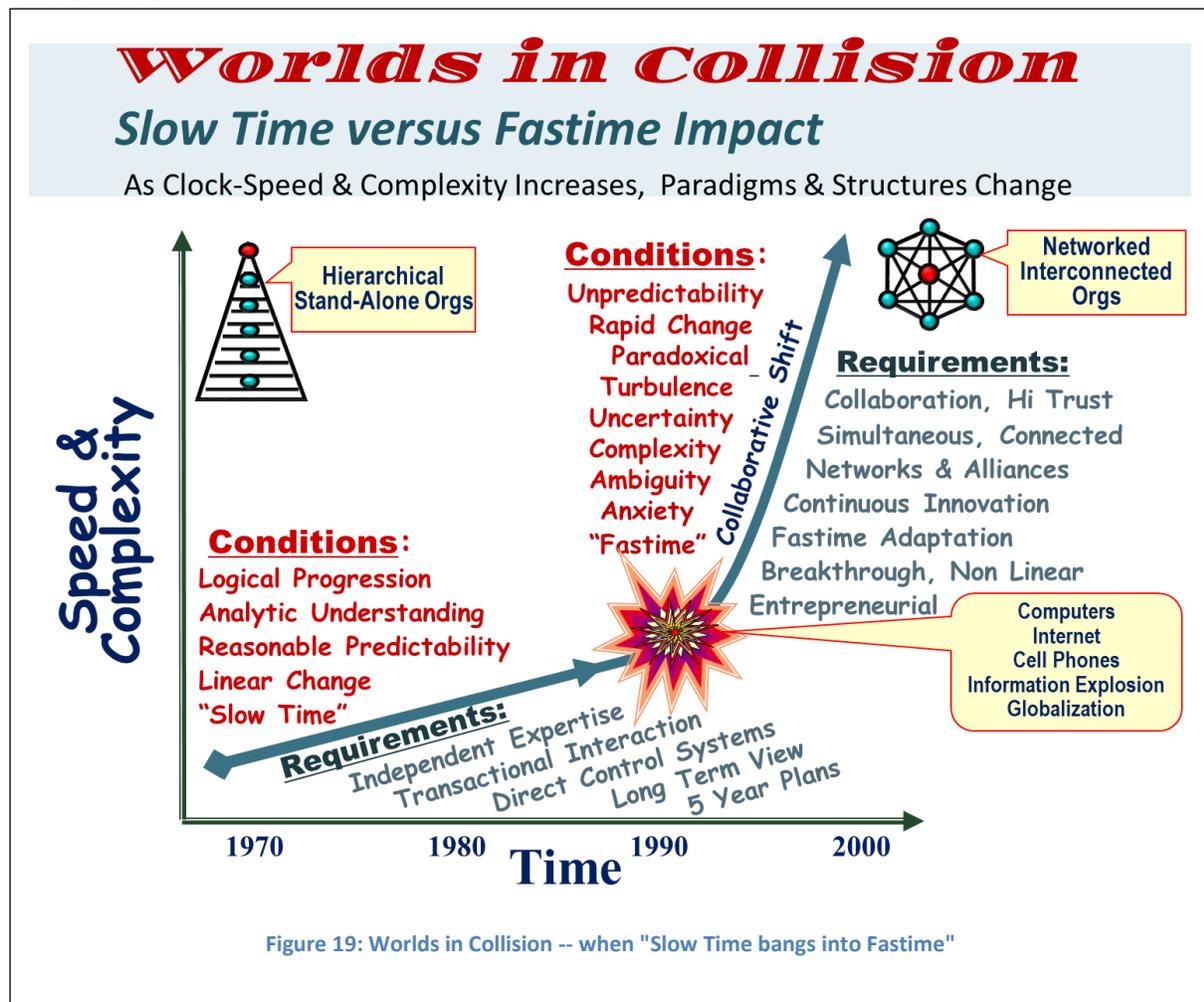


Figure 18: The Red Queen Phenomenon

emigrated from foreign lands looking for opportunity. They began to flood cities, changing urban demeanor forever. More economic growth drove the need to move food and goods across longer distances, resulting in railroads networking cities across the land.

Understanding how the force of the Red Queen can impact the future is very important. In Figure 19 we can begin to understand the implications of the Red Queen Shift. When executives commented on the dramatic change, most pointed to a point of inflection in the late 1980s or early 1990s. This was largely attributed to the impact of computers on every desk, cell phones in every pocket, the internet moving information everywhere, and the concurrent globalization of business.



What's equally important is to understand the conditions and requirements that preceded the explosive collision. Managers in the 1970s and '80s (and decades before) were used to a different set of conditions in what we might term the "slow time world" (believe me, it didn't feel slow and plodding then, but, in comparison to current times, it was relatively slow). This was a different era: we actually created five year plans, calculated spread sheets by hand, made reasonable projections about what would happen in the next year, and companies were stand-alone entities that had only transactional relationships with its suppliers and most customers.

Companies and employees had a semblance of loyalty to each other, and they in turn were connected to their local communities, sponsoring sports teams, and often donating to community non-profits.

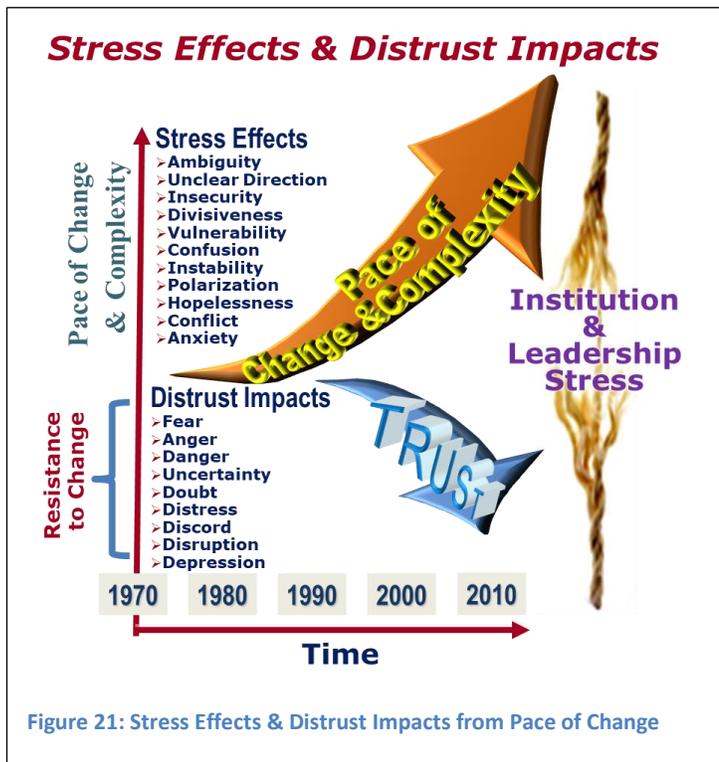
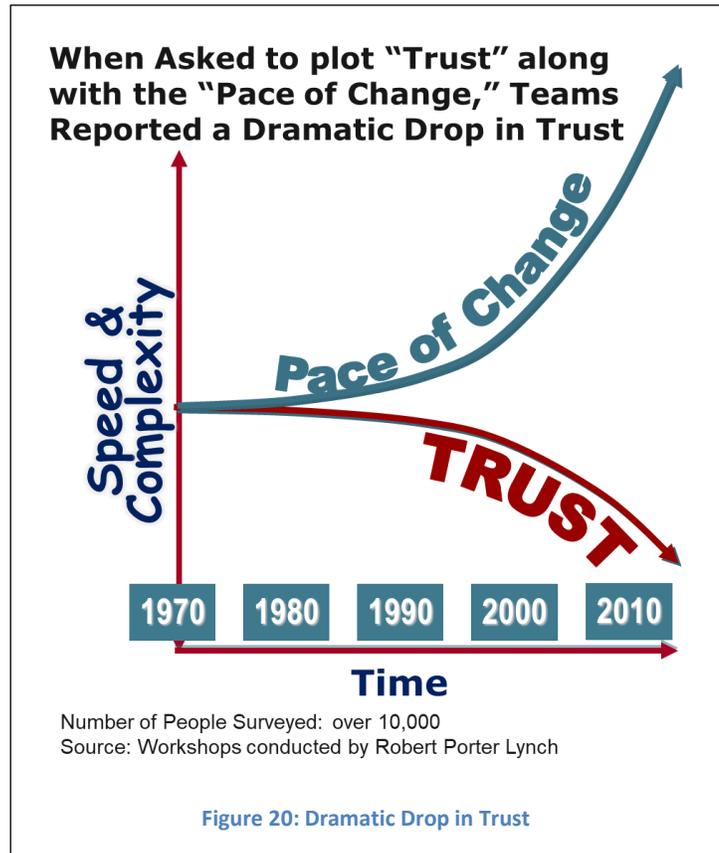
With the advent of the “fastime” age, a totally different set of conditions now prevail: filled with unpredictability, rapid change, many enigmatic paradoxes, turbulence in what used to be stable relationships, fuzzy uncertainty, confounding complexity, and elevated levels of anxiety.

In a low trust environment, these conditions are worsened as people try to protect their self-interest.

When we asked people to plot the level of trust over the same time period, invariably the teams plotted a curve as represented in Figure 20, which demonstrates the instability of social conditions just at a time when people need to coalesce, support each other, and work together to adapt effectively.

The implications of these opposing curves are enormous (see Figure 21) begins to explain a great deal of the stress and anxiety on our society today.

The Stress Effects are observable everywhere in society, just watch the news. The drop in trust carries along Severe Impacts that cause humans to react emotionally, which is usually displayed in anger, blame, desperation, frustration, and accusations. These emotions are not fertile ground for innovation, problem solving and compassion.



Appendix Six – Ladder of Trust

(Note: this is just one tool of the many element in our “Architecture of Trust”)

I often get asked the question: What is your definition of "Trust?"

I have read dozens of definitions, and always feel empty, (or even upset) about those definitions because they are usually only part-right, and thus part-wrong or very inadequate. For example:

Some people define Trust as "*safety*." True, but only part-true.

Others define it as "*reciprocity*." Part-true; but an "eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" is reciprocity, and revenge is certainly is not trust. The list of poor definitions goes on ad infinitum, so it's not worth critiquing their credence.

Virtually all definitions of trust lack any real foundation in either the *principal drivers of human behavior* or *neuro-science* or *empirical evidence*. I have tried to correct that.

Because *trust involves the interplay of numerous neural (brain) perceptions and responses*, a simple definition of trust is totally inadequate; trust is a *multi-dimensional process* requiring a more thoughtful definition. We handle this in two ways

1. Ladder of Trust (see below) which represents trust as a set of distinct differentiations, (in gradations from High to Low -- from Glorious to Ghastly)
 2. Principles of Trust (see below -- there are Eight, which represent the two-part process the brain undertakes to determine whether one should trust or not)
1. The Ladder of Trust is the most requested representation I have ever created in my career. (see [Figure 22: Ladder of Trust](#)) The Ladder is based on the foundation of Paul Lawrence's 4-Drive Model of Human Behavior. (all humans have the drives to *Acquire*, *Bond*, *Create*, and *Defend*). It's important to note that trust is not an “on & off” switch, but occurs in matters of degrees of intensity, more like a thermostat, which the Ladder represents.

One recent workshop attendee -- a 42 year old woman originally from East Los Angeles (tough, rough neighborhood), who is a senior procurement officer for a very large aerospace company – upon seeing the Ladder of Trust, burst into tears, exclaiming:

"In that one slide, you have displayed the Good, the Glorious, the Bad, and the Ugly of my entire life!!"

The attendees of virtually every Trust Workshop I do around the world request a software copy of the Ladder of Trust to post on their walls and discuss with their management teams.



The top rung on the Ladder is there the energies of Love & Creation (Divine Energy of the Holy Spirit) unite to generate a splended level of trust we've called "creationships."

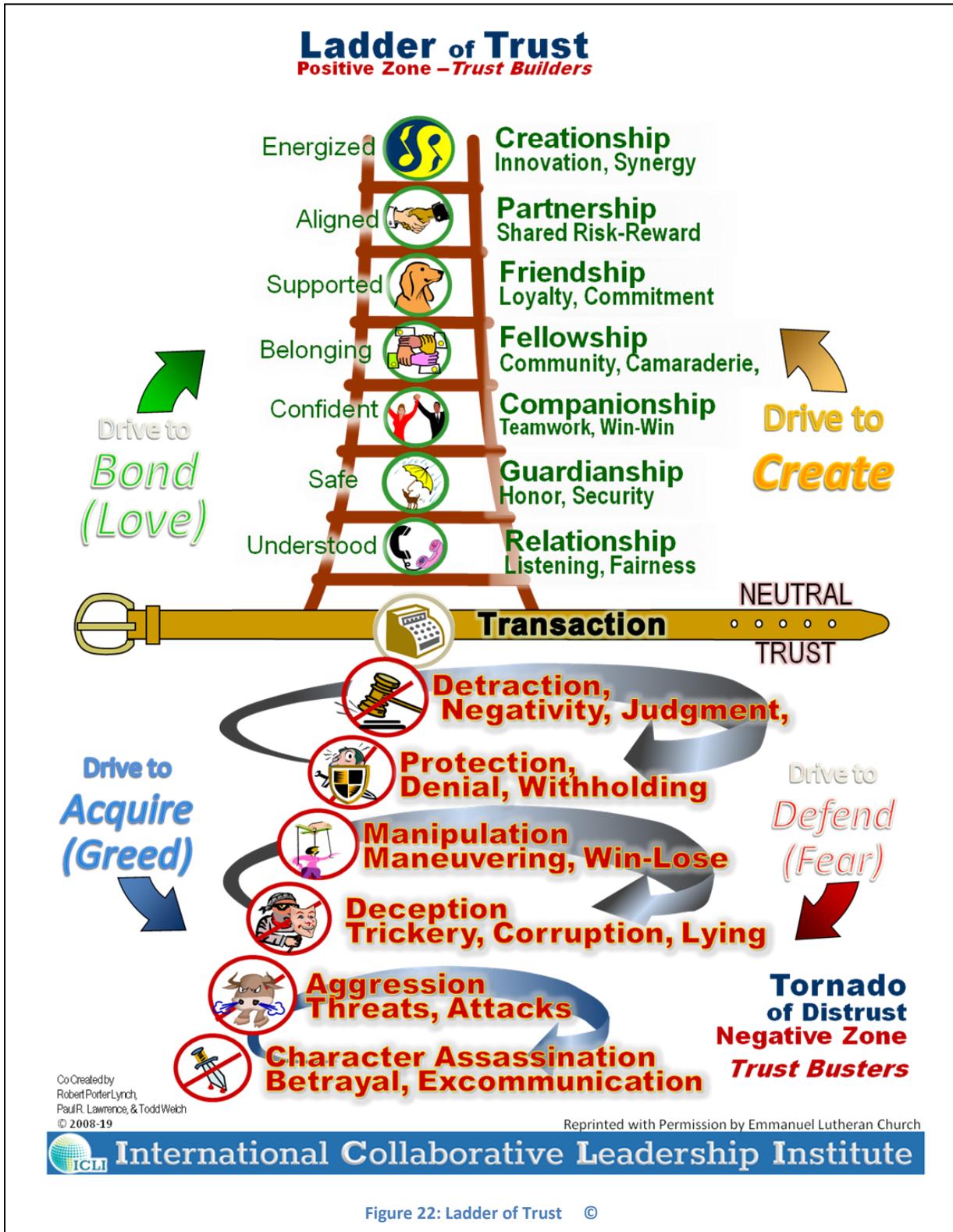


Figure 22: Ladder of Trust ©

The Ladder represents the different levels of *Collaboration*, the “Belt” represents *Transactional* interactions, and “Below the Belt” is the area of Adversarial culture (see Figure 14: Three Archetypical Modes of Thinking).

The Ladder is both a descriptive, diagnostic, and prescriptive tool that can be used in any circumstance to generate a valuable and insightful discussion about where we are and where we want to be.

2. Eight Principles (Pillars) of Trust:

Because the brain engages in a two-step process to determine trust, we must understand trust almost as a "checklist" of factors/assessments that the brain makes to determine first, whether one can trust, and second, to what degree. It's important to understand there are two main circuits in the brain:

- the "fast" circuit does a rapid *pattern recognition* and *predicted outcomes* test to determine if it is okay to proceed (this takes only a few seconds at most) , and then.....
- the "slow" circuit in the brain does *logical, rational assessments* (if the "fast" circuit says it's okay or not sure, then a slower, more analytic assessment takes place to verify the fast test).

Let's look first at the brain's "Fast Circuit," which does a *pattern recognition* test on the circumstances at hand, and makes a *prediction about the outcomes* from engagement with this person.



Figure 23: Eight Trust Principles ©

1. Safety & Security: Will I be safe and secure in this person's presence? How risky is this person/situation? (drive to *Defend* is tested)
2. Transparency & Openness: Are there any Hidden Agenda's, Deceptions, Manipulations intended to damage me? (drives to *Bond, Create & Defend* are tested)
3. Truthfulness: Is what I am hearing the full truth, a half-truth, or a lie? (drives to *Acquire, Create, & Defend* are tested)
4. Fairness: Am I going to get my "fair share?" Am I receiving "favorable treatment?" or am I "going to get 'gypped'?" (drives to *Acquire & Bond* are tested)



At this point, the brain has compared it's *perceptions* with the *patterns of past experience* and made a quick determination as to basic options: whether one should *proceed*; be *afraid*; *skeptical*; be *cynical*; be *aggressive*; or *escape*. All this may happen as rapidly as only 1/4 second per step, totaling as fast as only one second for some people. The "fast" circuit test acts like an "on-off" switch: either "yes" I trust or "no" I don't trust or "not sure" test more.

Then the "slow" circuit of the brain's Prefrontal region kicks in doing a rational, logical assessment of the circumstances to test the "fast" circuit's validity. This is also a four-step process, which can take minutes, hours, or even days, depending upon the person and complexity/ambiguity of the circumstances.

5. Respect: Does the other person truly respect me. Do they have any compassion or empathy for my circumstances/situation? Is this respect and empathy real or contrived? (drives to *Acquire & Bond* are tested)
6. Honorable Purpose: Is the situation we are engaged in have, at its core, a meaningful and honorable purpose, or is this a "shady or corrupt" deal? (drives to *Acquire, Bond, & Create* are tested as the human "conscience" does its analysis)
7. Accountability & Integrity: Does the person with whom I am dealing have a strong inner sense of integrity and will they stand accountable for what they say? (all four drives are tested on this one -- a person with "integrity" has "integrated" the drives to *Acquire, Bond, Create, & Defend*)
8. Ethics & Excellence of Standards: Will this person do what's "right?" Is this person or venture a "class act?" By engaging with this person or venture, will I/we produce outstanding results? Be successful? Be mediocre? Or fail? (*all four drives* are tested)

Obviously these eight steps must be a *holistic* process -- each of the factors must come up positive to create the highest levels of trust. If only a few of the positive factors prevail (and the fear factors are absent), trust will only be partially achieved – the middle levels on the Ladder of Trust.

This must sound like a long-winded answer to what people want in a short definition. But think of it like a skier ready to traverse a mountain as they look out at the snow before them. The inexperienced skier sees "snow" as an undifferentiated substance -- cold and white. The experienced skier sees a wide differentiation in "snow" – fresh powder, packed powder, boilerplate, boilerplate under fresh powder, corn snow, sun-shadow snow – then adjusts their movements accordingly. So too with Trust.

Trust Definition

Trust is the sense of well-being in a relationship expressed (and enhanced) by the consistent presence of *fairness, reciprocity, respect, truthfulness, empathy, personal integrity, honor, commitment, ethics, loyalty, security, and openness*.

Trust is diminished (or destroyed) by the presence of "fear factors" such as *suspicion, detraction, protection, manipulation, deception, or aggression*.

Appendix Seven – Character-Based Identity -- Who am I?

Has your character become ingrained into your identity? If not, a person becomes detached from their inner guiding forces, resulting in a tangled external façade reflects the inner turmoil that's tearing around inside.

Identity and Experience

Answering the question: “WHO AM I?” is one of the core-questions of one’s very existence because one’s identity has massive impacts on one’s fate. This question is central to the formation of one’s identity and one’s perception of self-worth in their world. (And while vital and pivotal to human existence, it is not addressed adequately by our educational system) The answers follow four typical paths based deeply on how each individual answers the question: WHO AM I?

1. **MY DESTINY:**

- I aim at becoming the highest and best vision of my Soul that reflects my personal purpose, mission, and vision for creating a better world.
- My Ego supports and aligns with the guidance of the Soul.
- **I am the future vision of my highest possibility** and I am the values that support that vision.

2. **MY STRUGGLE:**

- I am the inner struggle between my Soul and Ego.
- Inherent conflict between the four drives compels me to endure an inner battle, which is the source and the angst I reflect in my life.
- **I am my angst, my pain;** my inner turmoil is what matters most.

3. **MY WANDERINGS:**

- I am my meaninglessness;
- I am pulled in many directions, confused, conflicted, unsure, often taking the safe route to reduce pain and ameliorate fear, thus I am everything and nothing;
- **I am a jumbled confusion** masked in material meanings of life.
(in other words, I really don’t know who I am and really don’t care or I have given up caring or caring was so painful that I just don’t want to face that hurt any more.)

4. **MY EXPERIENCE:**

- I am what I have experienced in life – good or bad. Whatever has been my history is the permanent map for my future – my past gloom will be my future doom.
- Thus my past will mean I become victimized by whatever past pain, hurt, guilt, and disappointment has brought me.
- **I am a projection of my Ego’s interpretation of the past;** success, failure, incompetent, powerful, etc are all the words of the Ego defining my dealing with the challenges I have faced.

5. **MY SEXUALITY:**

- I am defined by my sexual preference, my passions, my partners, my plumbing.
- My sexual identity will define how I think, feel, and relate to others

6. **MY SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:**

- My social media “friends” define who I am and what I should be to be “liked.”
- The people I surround myself with define and guide my thinking, my deepest beliefs, my responses to the world around me, and the things I value most.
- Without my “friends” I would be isolated and rejected.



Let's look at the typical answers to the question WHO AM I? (try this at a social gathering and see what you get for answers) when one defines their essence from the perspective of my "Experience":

- Experience – 40 years solving computer problems....
- History – come from family migrating from Poland....
- Success – started 3 highly profitable businesses....
- Affiliation – member of black knights gang in
- Highlight Event – survivor of concentration camp....
- Education – graduated cum laude from....
- Military – served 20 years in Marine Corps....
- Neighborhood, City, State – Floridian from Miami....
- Profession – doctor, lawyer, hairdresser....
- Survival – cancer survivor of 5 years....
- Age – 72 years old and retired....
- Role or Profession – mother, doctor, plumber....
- Religion – Christian, Jew, Atheist
- Status – homeowner with condo in....
- Sex – male, female, hetero/homo....
- Physical – weightlifter, sexy....
- Sensitivity – tough, gentle....
- Interests – car collector, skier....
- Marital Status – married, single, divorced....
- Nationality or Ethnicity – African-American...
- Employment Status – employed, between jobs...
- Financial condition – rich, poor, up-and-coming....
- Pride – inducted into the Hall of Fame....
- Goals – to become a millionaire by the age of.....
- Social Status – leader of my team, community
- Illusion – successfully accomplished
- Victimization – my father raped me when I was
- Struggle – I've never been able to...etc, etc...

What's notable about these common responses is they have nothing to do at all with the most important trait of personal identity – CHARACTER.

Most of these answers come from the one's *ego*, which needs to impress and protect. (BTW, I don't think the ego is bad or demonic, especially when guided by one's soul).

When Identity and Experience become intertwined, one can never separate what's happening in their daily life with who they believe they actually are. Thus, if their experience is happy or positive, it is reflected in their attitude (which is okay if everything is going well). But the consequences are severe should they experience a "bad" day, which results in a "bad" attitude,



which in turn creates more bad experiences, and ultimately a depressed or morose or angry identity.

The resilient person does not attach an adversity experience to their identity. This detachment enables them to bounce back, not weighed down by historic baggage of past experience.

The real potential is not just to bounce, but to use the adversity experience as propulsion to a higher level.

In other words, let the adversity become a transformational experience
-- to be born again at a higher level.

Knowing the answer to “Who am I?” is essential if you are to trust yourself, and to be trusted by others. A strong, integrated character is more important than intelligence and smartness, for character is the foundation of wisdom and the path to the soul.

In the larger view, I really don’t much care for people who are intelligent but lack character, for they can never be wise nor soulful, which means they lack a well-developed conscience, and thus cannot be in my inner circle of friends.

“You'll never decide what you want until you've decided who you are.” - Noel Coward

“As Soon As You Trust Yourself, You Will Know How To Live.” - Johann Von Goethe

Trusting oneself means alignment of personal values into an integral whole – otherwise known as “integrity,” with clarity of direction – otherwise known as “mission & purpose.”

Character-Based Identity

How do people who’ve had that kind of transformational experience view the world? Every once in a while you meet a totally unique person who answers the question, “WHO AM I?” very soulfully. They define themselves from a different place, from which character has defined and developed their identity. Typically these people will be disarmingly humble (soulful) in answering the question:

- Vision – the possibility that....
- Values – the most important values are....
- Destiny – God put me on this earth to....
- Purpose – devotion to this noble cause....
- Commitment – dedication to solving....
- Learning – from my failures I now see....
- Quest – seeking the understanding of....
- Giving – serving those who....
- Impact – making a measurable difference by....
- Integrity – dedication to walking the talk....
- Conscience – it’s just the right thing to do
- Relationships – aim to be the best friend anyone....

These people’s character is sourced *not from their ego, but from their soul*. It is in this shift from ego and self-interest to soul and embracing the greater good, that character is formed.



Thus the formation of character involves an “identity shift,” without which a human being is merely a pawn in the hands of a crafty and potentially omnipotent culture.

“Character becomes Destiny”

– Heraclitus, Greek ~500BC

The ideal of character should never be diminished or dismissed.

It is the hallowed core of humanity, of dignity, of reason, of purpose,
and of a trusted life lived to its fullest.

Martin Luther King’s 1963 speech is one of the most moving and energizing pieces of literature ever delivered to an audience that was hanging on his every word:

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by **the content of their character**.*

I have a dream that ...when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, “Free at last! free at last!”

* I fear that this last point about *character* has been lost, and has little meaning to our society today. Of all the MLK’s points, this one makes the biggest difference for future generation