



## THE TYRANNY OF DECLINE

### THE ALL-CONSUMING NATURE OF DECLINE

We in the church are stuck and stymied.

Presbyterians – seen decline in churches and membership, dollars, infrastructure, denominational decline. In congregations this has led to an almost singular focus on decline. As visit churches hear about what they don't have: Don't have money and don't have people.

I'm going to say that we end up in the church stuck and stymied by loses.

Not only are we stuck and stymied, but that becomes the focus of life. And we are unable to move from there – it becomes all consuming.

- *Where are those places where you see your church stuck and stymied?*

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- *What are the biggest hurdles for your church?*

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# Vital Worship | Spiritual Depth

A VIBRANT TOGETHER SERIES

## STUCK AND STYMIED

- *How much energy do those stuck and stymied places consume?*

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## PLAYING IT SAFE

I also think that those places where we are stuck become safe places.

We hide there.

There aren't enough people so we cannot...

There isn't enough money so we cannot...

The neighborhood isn't the same so it won't work...

We have tried that...

There is a something safe about hiding in decline.

Valerie: Are there places where you see churches playing it safe? What are the implications of that?

- *Are there places where you see your church playing it safe and what are the implications of that?*

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## THE IMPERATIVE OF INNOVATION

### SHIFT TO INNOVATION

I believe there is an imperative to innovation.  
But before we get there let me say that this is a wilderness time for the church.

It isn't about powering through.  
It also isn't about hiring the right pastor. Or being the right pastor.  
Everything has changed.

We are in that liminal space where it is not what it was—it isn't going back there.  
And it isn't what it will be yet, and we don't know fully what that looks like.

In such a liminal space the Imperative is Innovation.

Our foundation in the Book of Order talk about Openness and Risk  
“The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.”

**How willing a church is to innovate is a foundational base for its openness to what God is doing and its willingness to risk for the sake of the Great Ends of the Church.**

- *To what extent do you see innovation in your church? What might church leadership do to engage, equip, and encourage innovation?*

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### WHEEL OF INNOVATION

Innovation has a way of building on itself.

It is like a wheel in motion, and the more energy that is applied the faster that wheel moves and farther it goes.



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- *How do you see the wheel of momentum in your church?*

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- *What do you think needs to happen to make that wheel move?*

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### TYRANNY AND INNOVATION

Name a place where you might innovate when it comes to:

Building Relationships

Having Spiritual Depth

Being Missional

- *Building Relationships*

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- *Having Spiritual Depth*

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- *Being Missional*

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