From Maintenance to Mission: Reimagining Leadership for God's Preferred Future

SIBURT INSTITUTE for Church Ministry

# The World Has Changed: So Must Leadership

Double Challenge

❖ Cultural shifts—including secularity, pluralism, and moral autonomy—are contributing to the decline of Christianity and churches.

❖ More importantly, with the loss of Christendom, churches have lost their way. Churches found their identity in relationship to Christendom.

"What we have to learn . . . is not that the church 'has' a mission, but the very reverse: the mission of Christ creates its own church. Mission does not come from the church; it is from mission and in the light of mission that the church has to be understood." --Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*
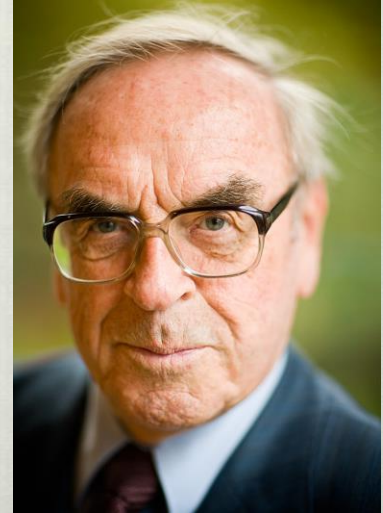
God's Ministry
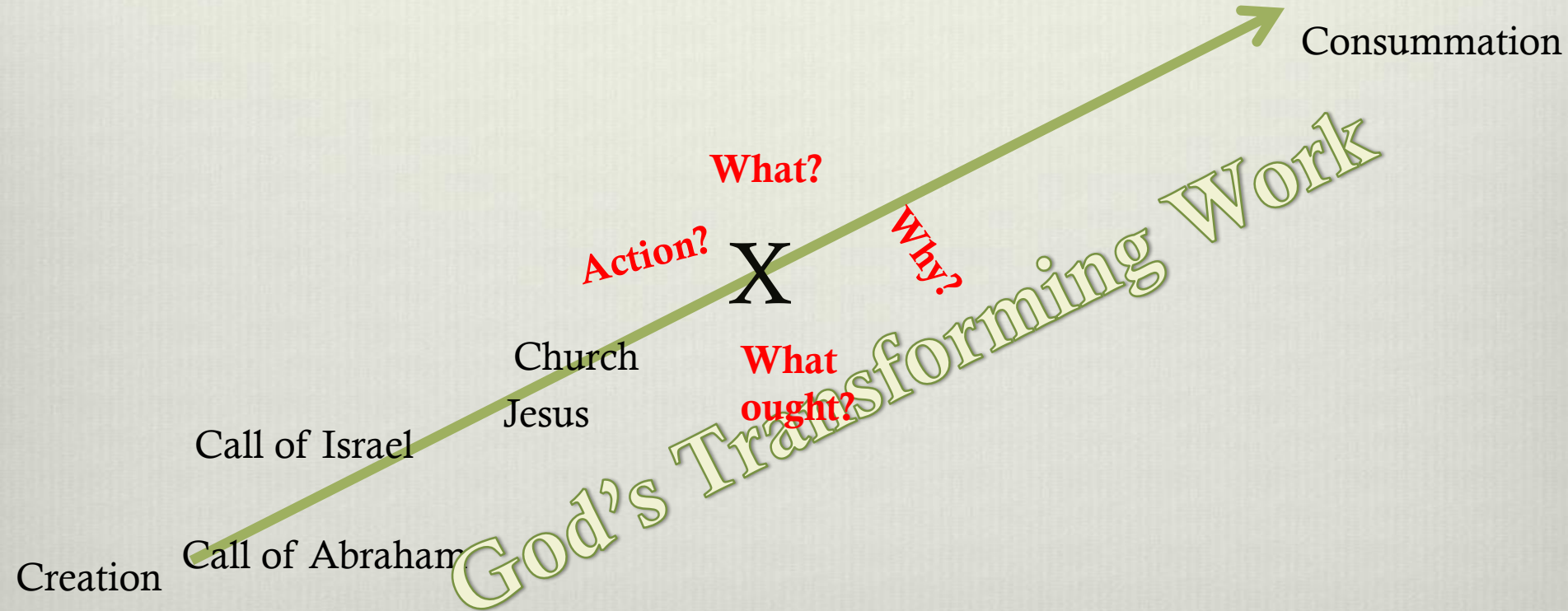
Yet

Common Blunders

❖ We have technology (or data), so we can fix it. *(False assumption that discipleship and mission are technical—not adaptive—challenges.)*

❖ Leaders need to assert greater control toward preferred outcomes. *(False assumption that generally leads to micro-management and lack of volunteerism.)*

❖ Fix the church and we will fix the world. *(False assumption that contributes being "church-centric" rather than "kingdom-centric.")*

❖ Fire or fix the minister. *(False assumption that clouds the systems-reality of congregations.)*
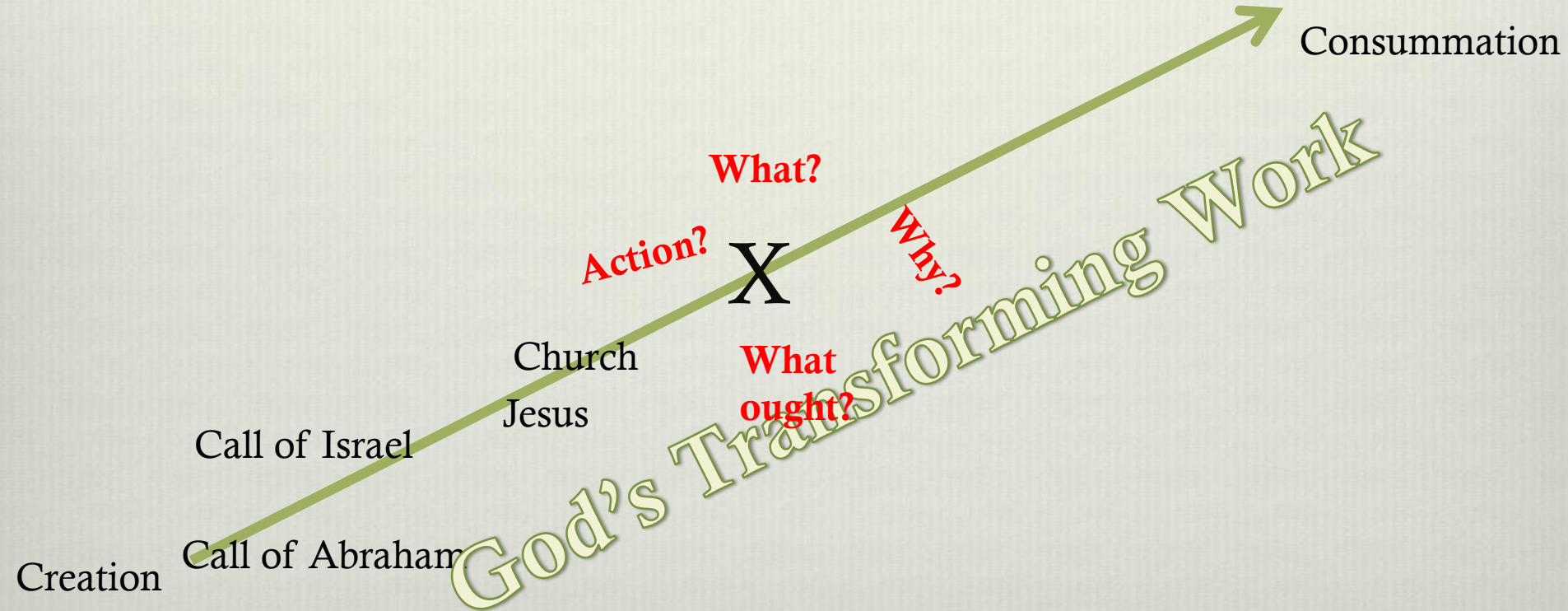
Roadblocks

- ❖ Emotional Barriers—"artificial barriers born of mythology and preserved by anxiety."
- ❖ Imaginative Gridlock—characterized by 1)Try harder, 2) Looking for answers to the same questions rather than reframing questions, and 3)Living with false dichotomies and either/or scenarios.
- ❖ Resistance
- ❖ Denial
- ❖ Despair
- ❖ Desire—for the quick fix!
- ❖ "Get the expert!"
- ❖ Data Fascination
- ❖ Lack of well-differentiated leaders.

Path Forward
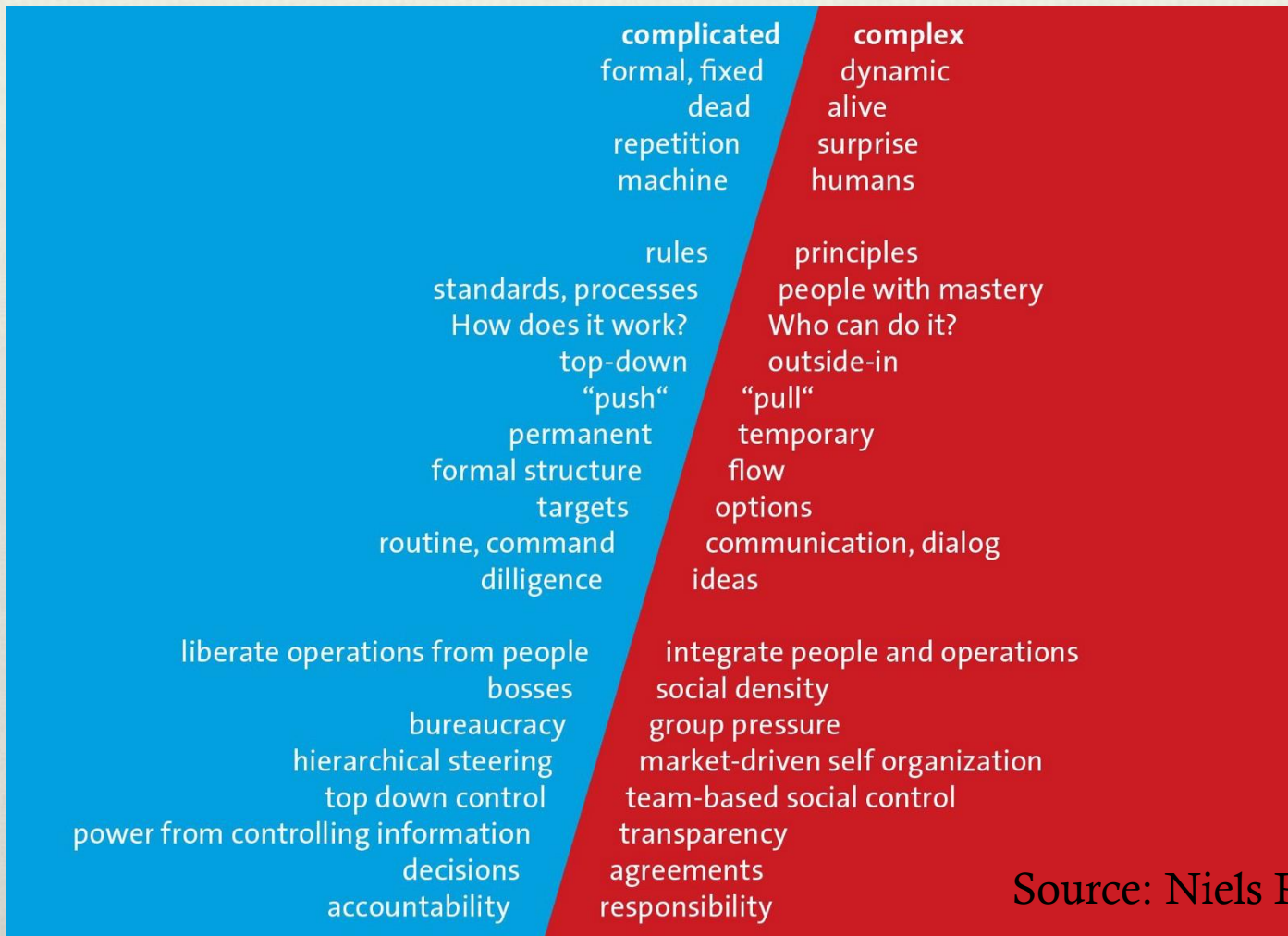
❖ Missional Foundation

❖ Theological Imagination—hope is our currency

❖ Disciple before Leader (*Self-Differentiation*)

❖ Polarity or Problem

❖ What kind of problem?—simple, complicated, complex, or chaos?

God's Ministry

Consummation

What?

Action? X **Why?**

Church
Jesus

What ought?

Call of Israel
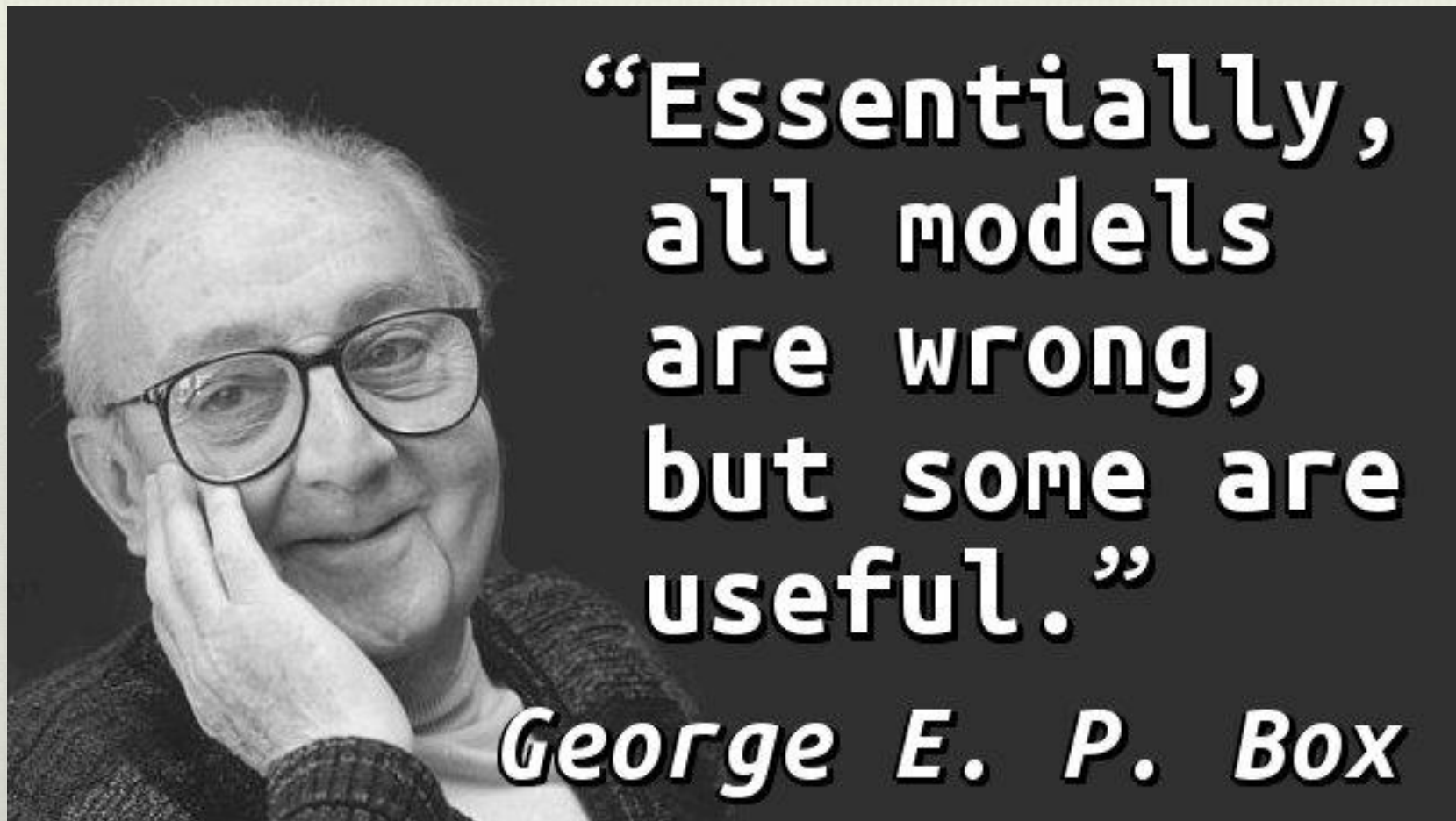
Call of Abraham

Creation

God's Transforming Work

Complicated or Complex?

❖ Is it a technical, obvious, or quick fix?

❖ Can the problem be completely disassembled into its smallest discrete parts?

❖ Is the system repeatable and predictable?

❖ Can you fully model and understand all facets of the issue?

complicated	complex
formal, fixed	dynamic
dead	alive
repetition	surprise
machine	humans
rules	principles
standards, processes	people with mastery
How does it work?	Who can do it?
top-down	outside-in
"push"	"pull"
permanent	temporary
formal structure	flow
targets	options
routine, command	communication, dialog
dilligence	ideas
liberate operations from people	integrate people and operations
bosses	social density
bureaucracy	group pressure
hierarchical steering	market-driven self organization
top down control	team-based social control
power from controlling information	transparency
decisions	agreements
accountability	responsibility

Source: Niels Pflaeging

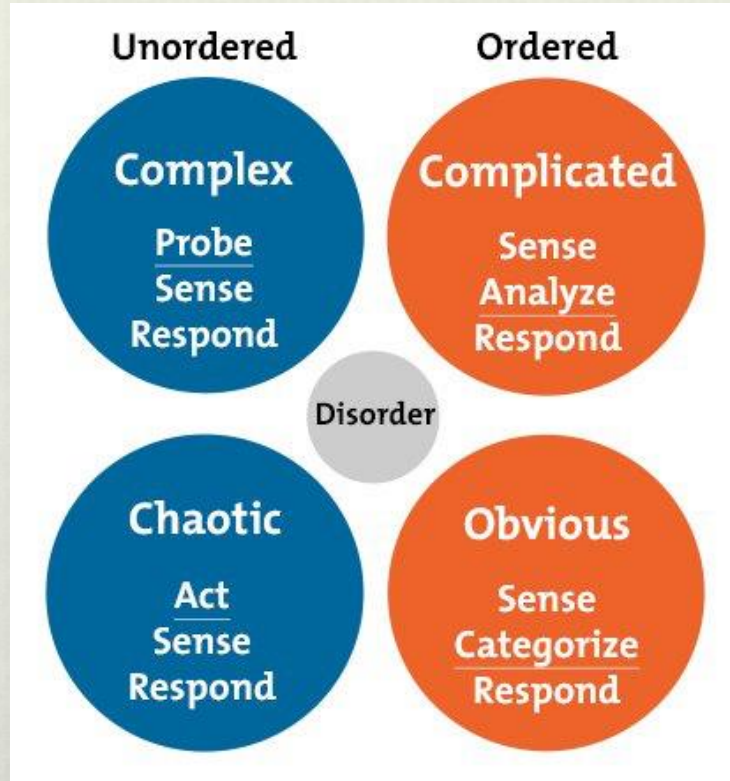"Essentially, all models are wrong, but some are useful."

George E. P. Box

What sort of context?

Cynefin Framework

Adaptive Leadership—adapted*!*

❖ Be where you are—Context (Interpretive)

❖ Get on the balcony (Interpretive)

❖ Pay attention to God (Interpretive)

❖ Foster the right temperature in your context. (Relational)

❖ Experiment! (Implemental)

❖ Structure follows ministry (Implemental)

Sources:

❖ Alan Roxburgh. *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World*.

❖ Andrew Root. *Christopraxis: A Practical Theology of the Cross.*

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❖ Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky. *Adaptive Leadership*.

❖ Mark Lau Branson and Juan F Martinez. *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*.

❖ Stanley McChrystal. *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World.*

❖ Roy Oswald and Barry Johnson. *Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities.*

❖ Carson E. Reed. "The Geometry of a Theology of Ministry." *Restoration Quarterly*. (2014).