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Attributes of Coffee

Where is “strength”?

- Fragrance** • Aromatic aspects of dry ground coffee.
- Aroma** • Aromatic aspects of ground coffee when infused with hot water.
- Acidity** • Brightness and / or sourness of coffee.
- Body** • The mouthfeel or heaviness perceived on the tongue surface.
- Flavour** • Defined as taste & aroma, mid-tones of coffee.
- Sweetness** • Subtle pleasant sweetness in coffee.
- Clean Cup** • Transparency in the cup, should be free of off-flavours & defects.
- Balance** • Overall rating of coffee, no one parameter should dominate.
- Aftertaste** • Duration of positive flavour attributes in coffee.
- Overall** • Your overall rating of this coffee.



Why do we use measures like “congregation size” and “number of ministries for congregational vitality?”

WHAT IF...

What if we had attributes of a
“Vital Congregation”?



Vital Congregations Initiative

Vision: By the power of the Holy Spirit, and in authentic relationships with mid councils, we seek to equip, nurture and support church leaders to empower their congregations to renew, recover and live more fully into faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ.

7 Marks of Congregational Vitality

- ① Lifelong Discipleship Formation
- ② Intentional Authentic Evangelism
- ③ Outward Incarnational Focus
- ④ Empowering Servant Leadership
- ⑤ Spirit-Inspired Worship
- ⑥ Caring Relationships
- ⑦ Ecclesial Health

For more information:

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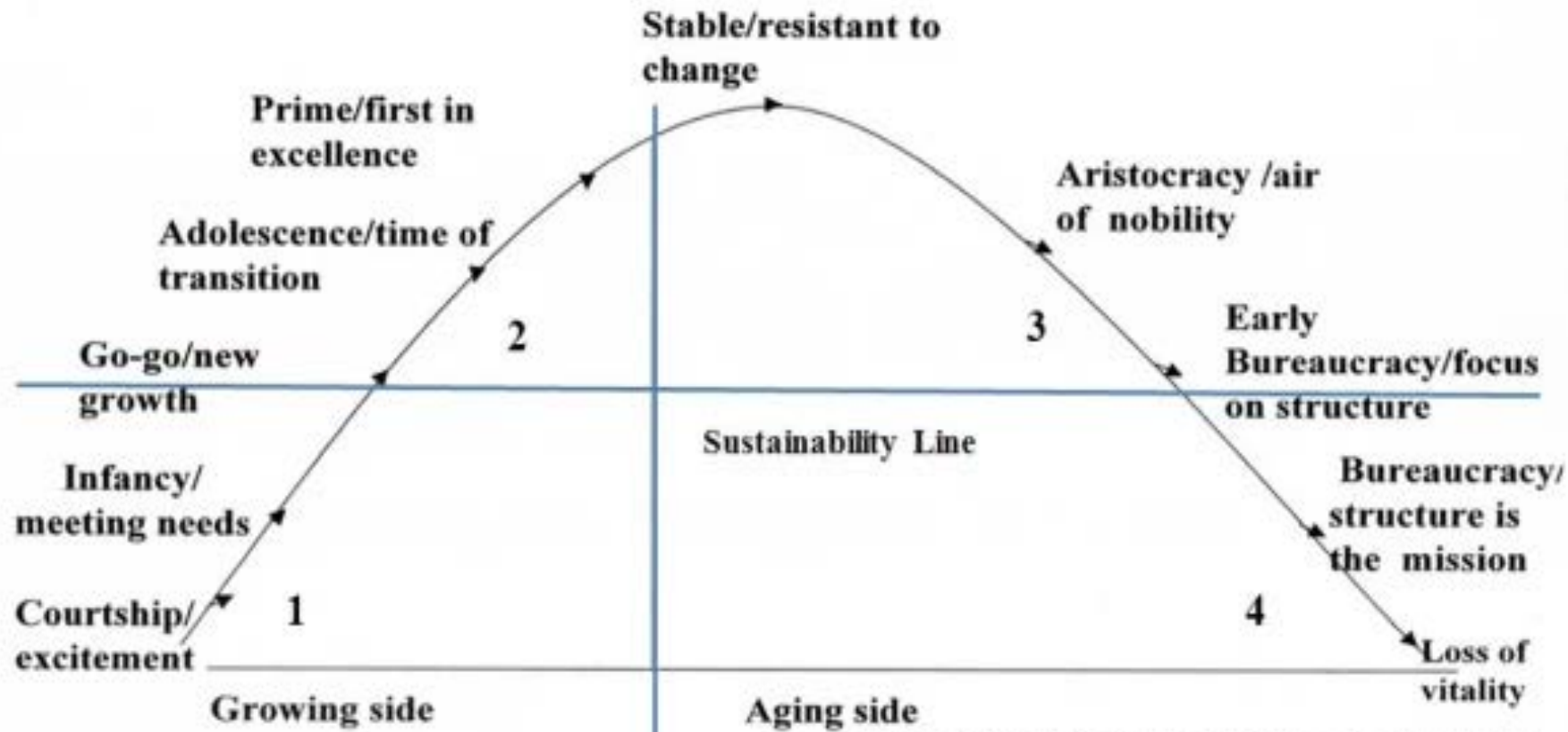
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THE
LIFE CYCLE
OF A
CONGREGATION

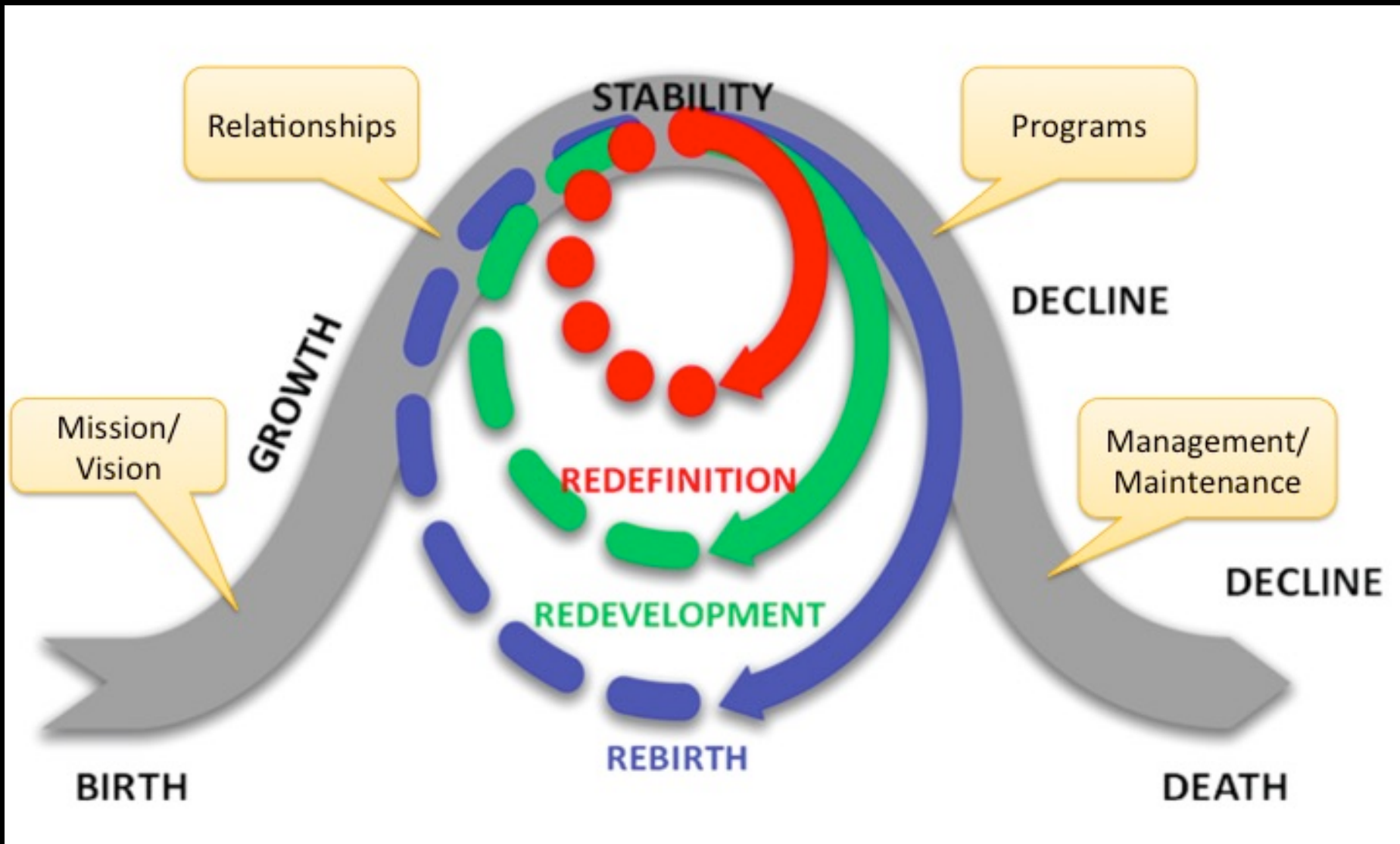
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**Oldest and most
traditional model**

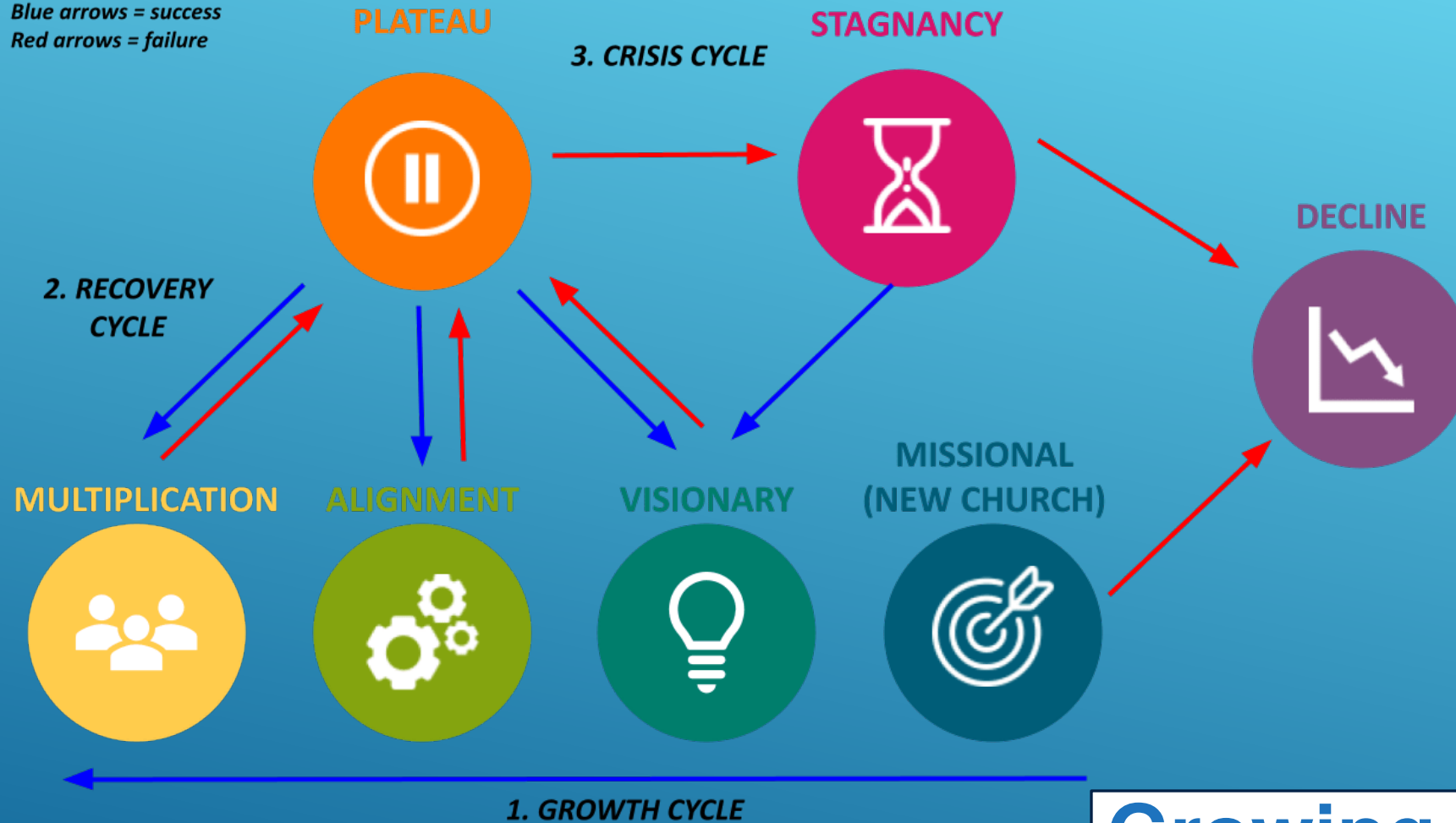


Other more complex model



More useful "agile" model

Blue arrows = success
Red arrows = failure



Growing The Church in its Life Cycle Stage

The phases in the life cycle of a church:

1. Missional Stage
 2. Visionary Stage
 3. Alignment Stage
 4. Multiplication Stage
 5. Plateau Stage
 6. Stagnancy Stage
 7. Decline Stage
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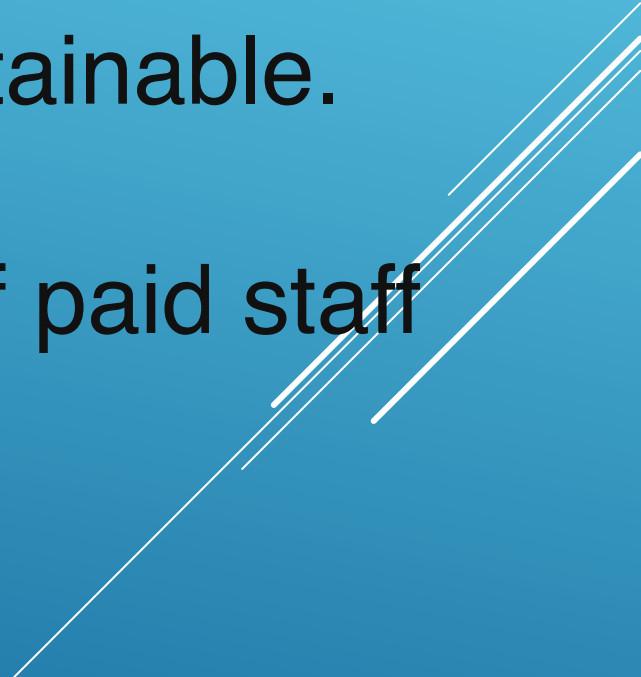
The Missional Stage

- All hands are on deck, everyone is involved, and there is energy and excitement. We are family.
 - Money is tight but no-one minds.
 - Mission and Evangelism are key; they seek to see others join them.
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The Visionary Stage

- Growth is happening and new initiatives and ideas are springing up – there is no shortage of creativity during this time.
 - A leadership "team" is building, even if the senior leader is ultimately making the decisions and doing the work.
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The **Alignment Stage**

- There is an intentional clarifying and development of things like culture and structure.
 - Ministries multiply, succeed and are sustainable.
 - The church has an increasing number of paid staff
 - Fewer generalists - many specialists
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The Multiplication Stage

- There is no shortage of resources, whether people, leaders, finance or gifting.
 - Whatever the church does has a level of excellence and success about it, and growth seems to come naturally without even trying.
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The Plateau Stage

- The result of drift and *complacency*.
- Illusive and hard to identify because all the visible markers of health are there – functioning ministries, healthy finances and a competent team.

The Plateau Stage

- The congregation still attracts people, but the **focus has shifted wholly to the people inside of the church and there is limited focus or sensitivity to the people outside of it.**
- A program-driven church and a staff-centric culture are all red flags of a church in plateau.



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The Stagnancy Stage

- The twin challenges of declining finances and a haemorrhaging of people – particularly those who are strong leaders, visionaries, pioneers, innovators and creatives.
- **Methods and practices have become entrenched and sacred cows have arisen. Change is resisted.**
- **The pastor is blamed, but the pastor is rarely the sole problem.**

The Decline Stage

- A relaunch, replant, or reboot is needed
- The need is resurrection rather than resuscitation (a new young pastor won't fix it)
- Nostalgia, tradition, tribalism, and politics have caused the remaining faithful few to hang on – and they won't change for anyone or anything. When the money runs out or the last person is left standing, the inevitable happens – sadly, the church stops.

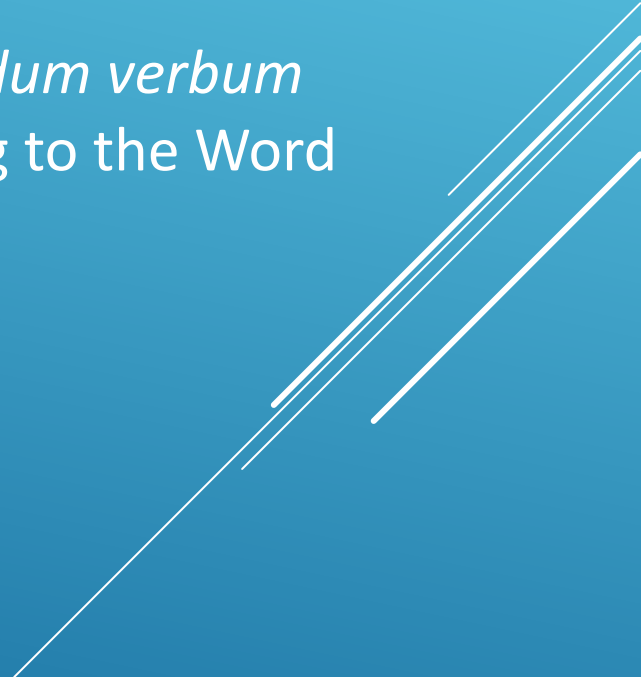
THE THREE ACTIONS



RE-FORMING —Helping congregations to re-think and re-envision how to carry out vital marks in new ways.

In Part II of our PC(USA) Constitution it states:

“The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, that is, ‘The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit.” (F-2.02)

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MISSIONAL CLUSTERING —Helping congregations live into new community clusters in ministries, resources and staff.

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting...All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages...” Acts 2:1-4.

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Death and Resurrection—Helping congregations live into death with gratitude and memorial, while preparing for resurrection and new life in various forms

In *Searching For Sunday*, Rachel Held Evans writes, “Death is something empires worry about, not something resurrection people worry about.” Her words are powerful. Fear of death is a powerful motivator. But we are called to believe in something ever more powerful, life; resurrection; a God who makes all things new.

What if "new life" means launching a **new worshiping community**?
What it means thriving without a building?

God, we're listening!!!!



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