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Flourishing Congregations in Canada: Preliminary Observations

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Introduction

- How do leaders in Catholic, mainline and conservative Protestant congregations conceptualize what a “flourishing congregation” looks like (or ought to look like) in a Canadian context?
 - *Presenting leader perceptions*
 - *Discussing “ideal types” – does not actually exist in reality*

Not Numbers ... Or Is It?

Some stress decoupling flourishing from the size of a congregation
- *Transformed lives and communities instead?*

Others unapologetically tie flourishing to numeric growth

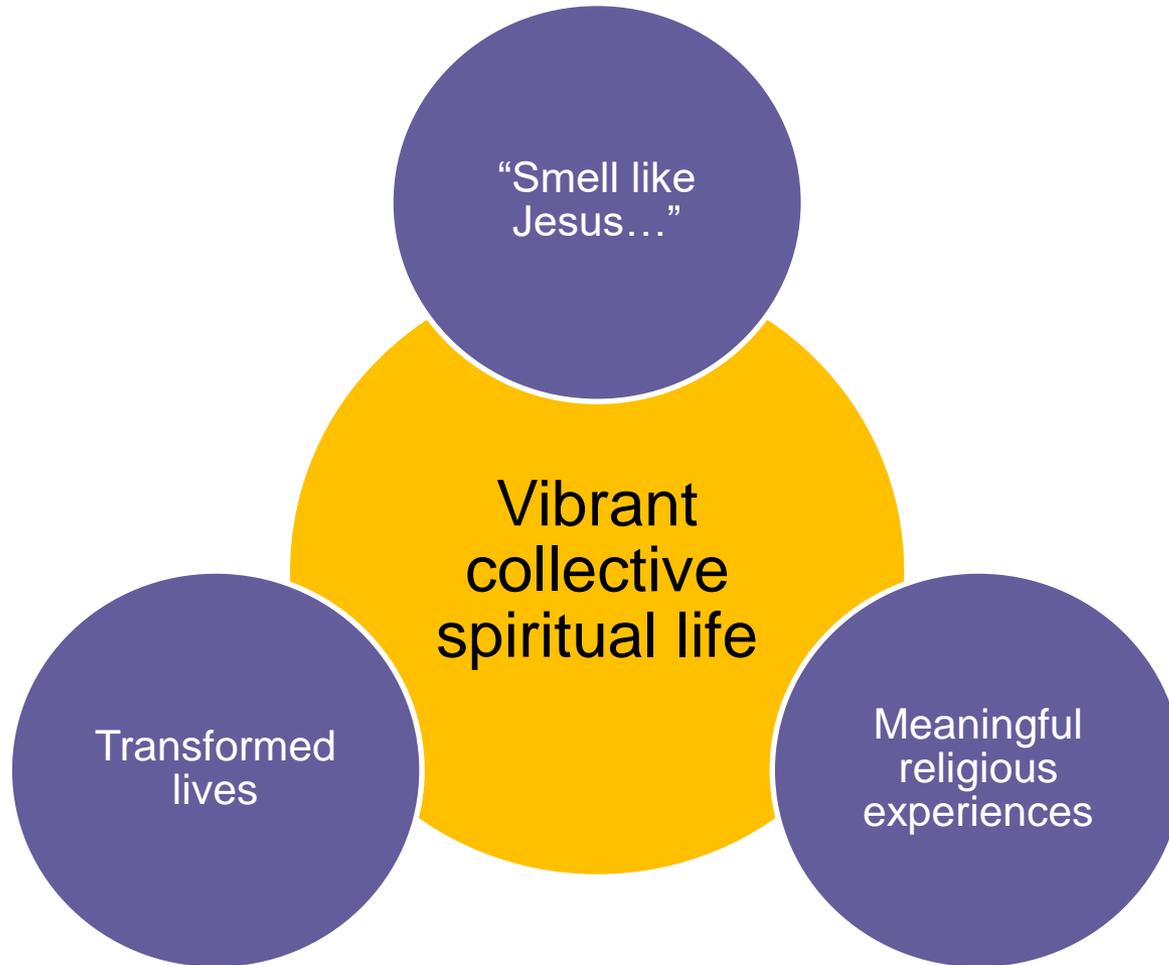
Church planting essential for some (especially ethnic congregations)

Clear Self Identity

- Clear articulation of who they are and are not
 - *Rooted, in part, in the spiritual life*
- Is it possible to have a clear self identity and not flourish?



Vibrant Collective Spiritual Life



Discipleship



- Disciples making disciples
- Clearly articulated pathway and process for discipleship
- Concern about how to define and implement discipleship (and processes) remain

Leadership

Organizational culture for leadership success

Lay leadership, collaborative leadership, and leadership development

- *“Yes” culture; Hiring from within*

Spirit-led leadership

Strategic leadership – “let leaders lead”

“Outside the Box”

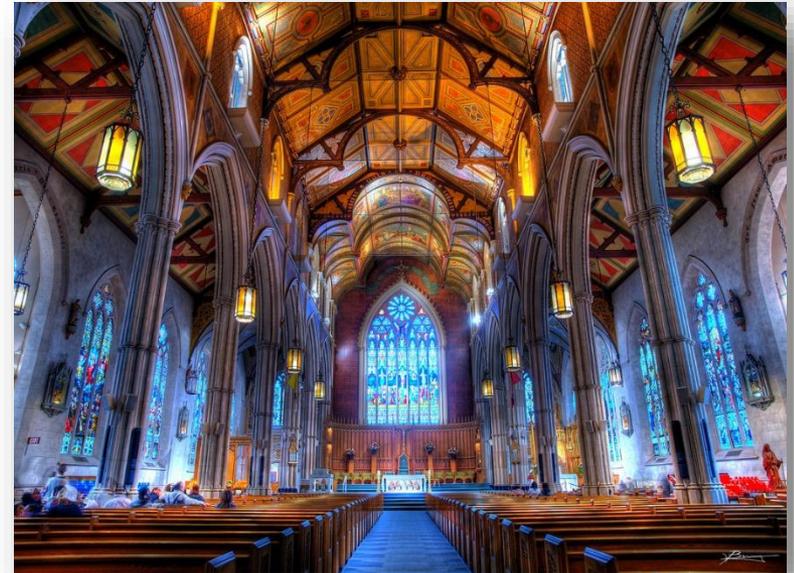
Entrepreneurial initiatives, risk-taking endeavours, and dreams

- *Perhaps a response to secular context...*



Hospitable Community

- People are loved and cared for, and seem to enjoy one another's company
- Clear processes for joining and remaining involved
- Pride in one's congregation



Neighbourhood Presence and Involvement

- “Incarnational presence” or “Being the hands and feet of Jesus”
- Community would notice if they left



Evangelism

Embedded in broader discussion of discipleship

Alpha Program

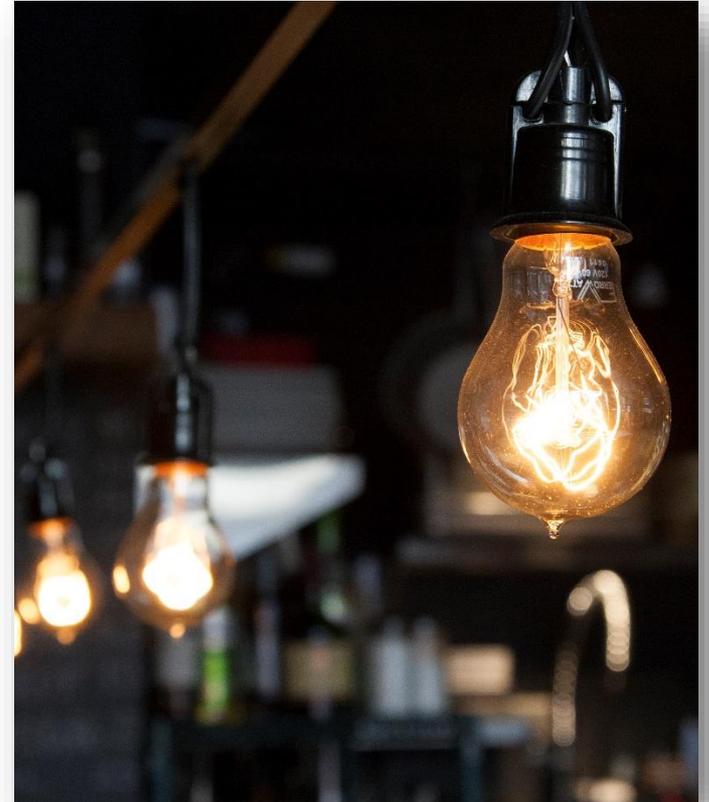
...but no one wants to evangelize ...

Diversity



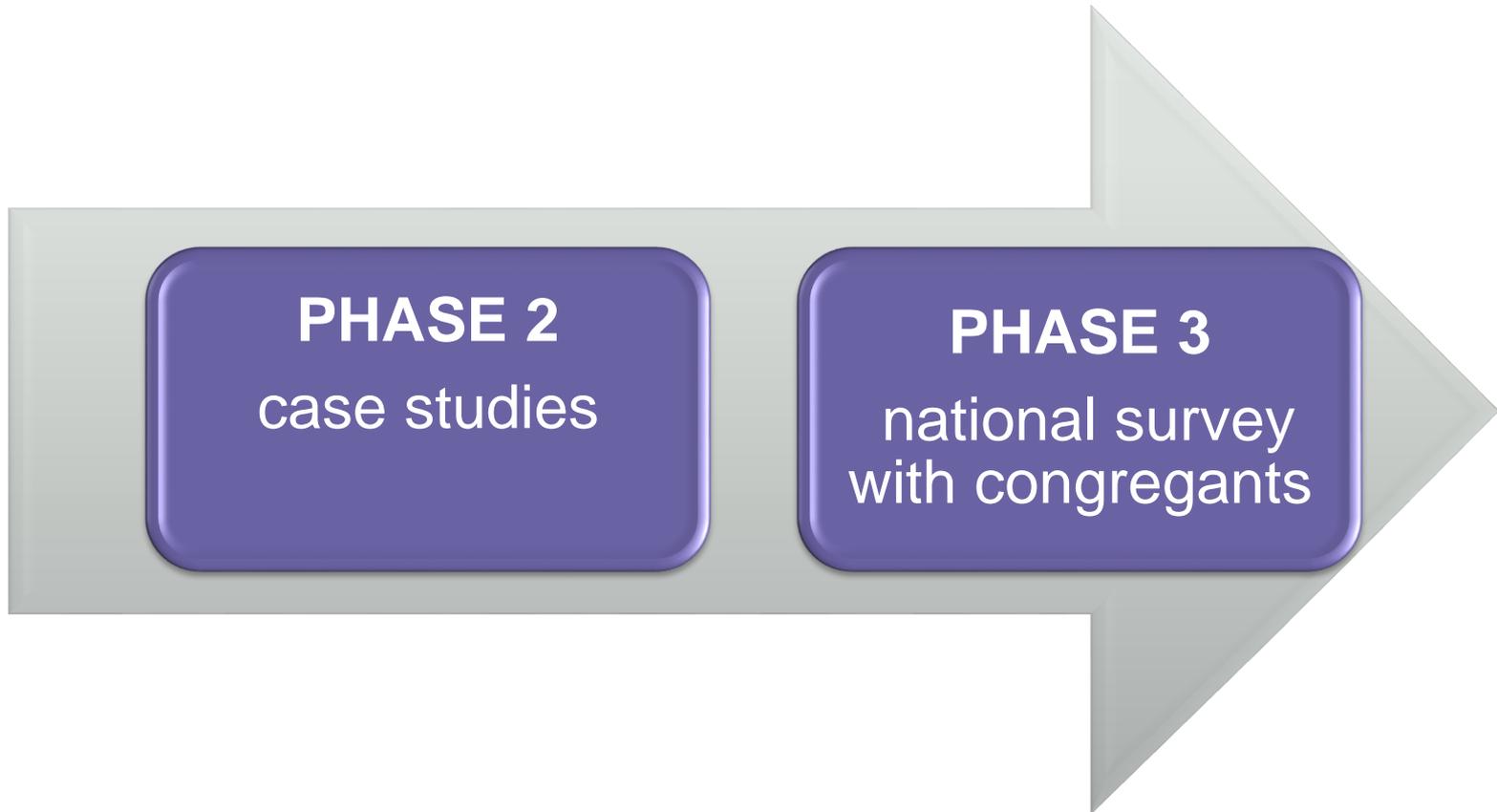
Discussion and Conclusion

- Aware of highly secular context in Canada – contributes to a sense of urgency and action
- Alert to negative perceptions toward Christianity and congregations – striving to repair “brand image”
- Diversity



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Looking Forward





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