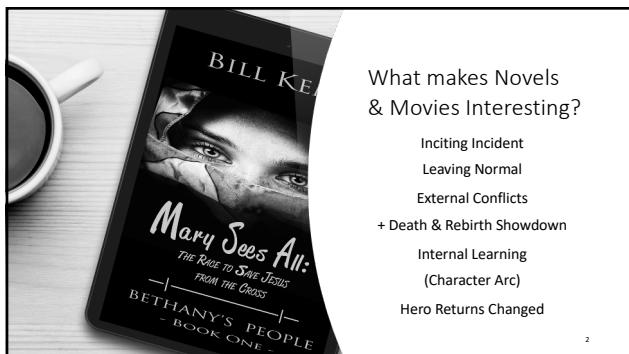
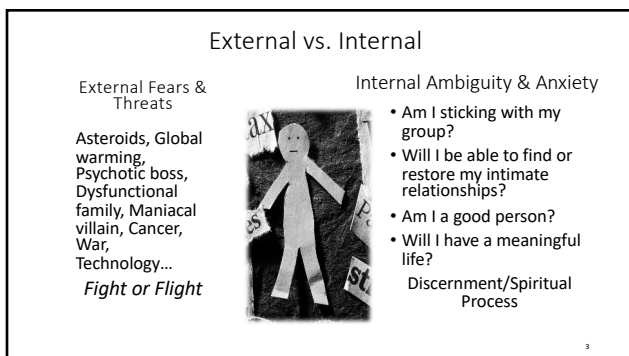


1

[illegible]

2




3

Wizard of Oz

External Fears & Threats

Tornado, Winged monkeys, Bad neighbors, Witches, Wizards...
Fight or Flight



Internal Ambiguity & Anxiety

- Am I sticking with my group?
- Will I be able to go home to my family?
- Am I a good person?
- Will I have a meaningful life?


Yellow Brick Road

4

Your Congregation

External Fears & Threats

Fire, Flood, Pandemics, Neighborhood transition, Clergy misconduct, Denominational expectations*, National politics
Fight or Flight



Internal Ambiguity & Anxiety

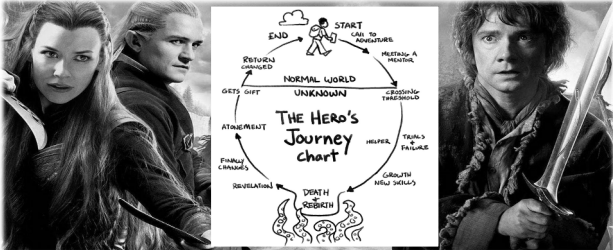
- Are we sticking with our group?
- Will we be able to honor our tradition?
- How do we attract new members, become diverse, remain socially relevant?
- Can we discover God's will for us?

Transitional Process


5

2020-2021

Your Congregation Goes on a Quest




6



What have we learned?

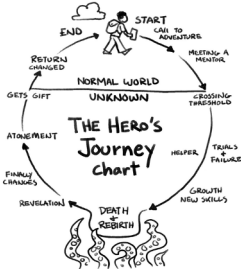
- Fear relates to external factors and forces us into binary choices: Fight/flight, Open/close, Relocate/stay
- Anxiety relates to internal factors and persists long after the (external) inciting incident has been resolved

7



Transitional Processes (yellow brick road) target internal anxiety: spiritual discernment, grief process, conflict mediation, making amends, rediscovering congregational identity...

8




The Hero's Journey or Congregational Quest begins with External Change, but continues until the Internal, Spiritual, work is done

9

Anxious Congregational Systems

Symptoms of Anxiety

1. External Fears
2. Anger & Burnout
3. Over-functioning Leaders
4. Loss of Joy (failure to celebrate or worship)
5. Risk Adverse
Fight or Flight



5 Developmental Tasks

1. Put current situation in a historical context
2. Rediscover Identity (reason for being)
3. Leadership Change
4. Rethink UMC, Sacraments, Worship
5. Commitment to future Discernment/Spiritual Process

10


10



At the Death & Rebirth moment, the heroine takes control of her own situation

11

- Some churches struggled to go online or engage in new worship practices. Others have embraced the opportunities now available
- Some churches heard a call in 2020 to increase local mission and social justice ministries
- Some congregations have failed to break free from the external political polarization of our time



12

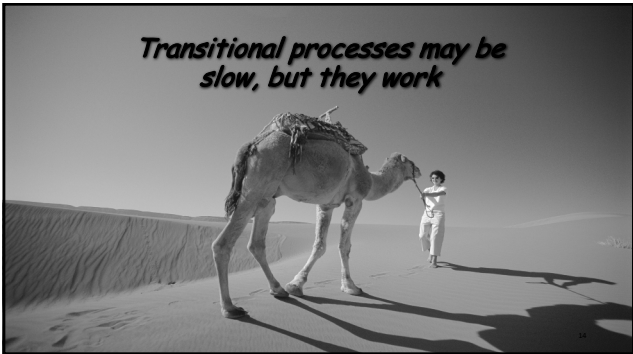
12



A cartoon set in a doctor's office. A doctor asks, "YOU'RE NOT THE WIZARD ARE YOU?". Four patients respond with their anxiety-related "prescriptions": "THIS IS A PRESCRIPTION FOR A MOOD STABILIZER" (a wizard), "MINE IS FOR A BRAIN TRANSPLANT" (a wizard), "THIS ONE'S FOR AN ARTIFICIAL HEART." (a wizard), and "MINE'S FOR GETTING NEUTERED" (a wizard).

It is irresponsible to lower a congregation's anxiety without increasing their awareness and empowerment for mission


13



A black and white photograph of a camel standing in a vast desert landscape under a clear sky. A person is walking alongside the camel, leading it.

Transitional processes may be slow, but they work

14



A close-up photograph of a camel's head, looking slightly to the side.

5 Paradigm Shifts that lower Congregational Anxiety:


- 1. Denial → Awareness of Current Reality
- 2. Anger → Greater Self-Awareness
- 3. Dysfunctional Leadership → Collaborative Discernment
- 4. Depression → Self-Care
- 5. Passive-Aggressive Reactivity → Active Future Orientation

15



16

An Evolving Approach to Anxiety



Elizabeth
Kubler-Ross

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

Loren Mead & Dianne C.

1. History awareness
2. Identity discovery
3. Leadership change
4. Denomination reconnection
5. Future acceptance

Bill's Paradigm Shifts

1. Denial -> Awareness of current reality
2. Anger & Blame -> healthy Identity
3. Authoritative leadership -> Collaborative leadership
4. Depression -> Self-determination
5. Passive-aggressive Reactivity -> Active Future Orientation

Stages of Dying → Developmental Tasks → Paradigm Shifts

17

17

1. Denial to Awareness of Current Reality



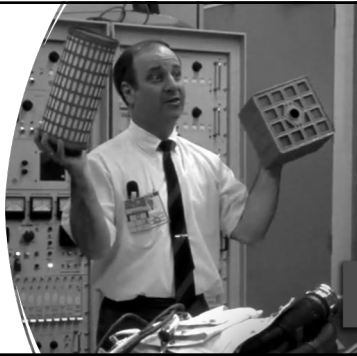

The Opposite of Denial is Awareness

18

18

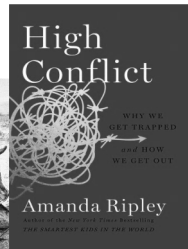
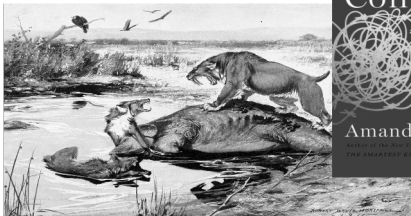
Group Process

- History Work
- Interviews/Listening Posts
- Asset & Spiritual Gift Appreciation



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2. Anger to Authentic Self-Awareness (Identity)




20

3. Positional Leadership to Collaborative Discernment



23

The process for making a decision is more important than any one decision



Winning a battle versus Writing a constitution

24


Decision Making & Transition:

- The Roundabout is a Transitional Experience
- Once you enter the Roundabout, you must make a choice to leave
- The Choices are limited
- No Choice is Perfect
- Eventually there will be another Roundabout



25

4. Depression to Self-Care



"But when he came to himself..."
- The turning point of Jesus' story about a prodigal son. (Luke 15:17 NKJV)

26

TIIMS KNOW:

- Transitions can not be Rushed
- Wilderness time is Educational
- The importance of worship and sabbath
- Transition involves whole being: body, mind, and soul

ARE WE THERE YET ?

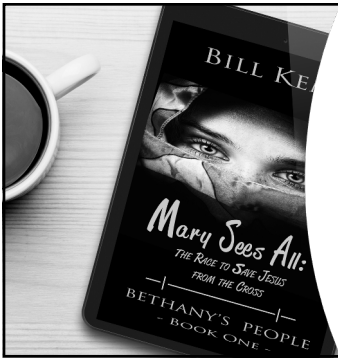
A1 NEXT EXIT 

27

5. Passive-Aggressive Reactivity to an Active Acceptance of the Future



28



What's follows a Heroic journey?

- Inciting Incident
- Leaving Normal
- External Conflicts
- + Death & Rebirth Showdown
- Internal Learning (this can't be rushed)
- Hero Returns Changed

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Contact me for slides, books, and questions

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