

Ten pillars of spiritual innovation

Spirituality and Innovation Field Guide

Practical wisdom from innovators, theologians, and spiritual directors, for those already at work in the field.

THE TEN PILLARS

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	2	Testimonies of God's Work are Spiritual Witness	Acts 14:26-28
	3	Justice Makes Things Right	Isaiah 61:1-4
	4	Creating from Mutual Respect	Romans 12:10
	5	Progress toward Fruitfulness	James 1:4-6
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Glossary

How We Designed the Field Guide

The purpose of a field guide is to give direction to those actively involved in the work. It isn't a theoretical exercise. Instead, it helps those in "the field" to be more productive in their work. It assumes that those reading it are actively involved and seeking to learn as they go.

This guide brings together insights from innovators, theologians, and spiritual directors to take the most practical wisdom from each of these rich disciplines and integrate them

into actionable advice for innovators on mission in the kingdom.

We gathered information through focus groups, surveys, workshops, and peer review. The goal is not academic rigor so we did not invest in that level of research. The goal is clarity, practical advice, and spirit-led integration of these disciplines.

The idea was birthed from a working group at the InnoFaith Nonference (a crowdsourced conference) held in 2024: Josiah Palusky, Samuel Chiang, Nate Scholz, Kim Kargbo, Andy Bettencourt, Paul Dzubinski, and Jon Hirst.

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AI Disclaimer: *This field guide represents a dynamic use of artificial intelligence. AI tools were used throughout the research, writing, editing and formatting process. The use of AI was initiated under clear supervision and the results were reviewed by the humans involved who take full responsibility for what is presented in this field guide.*

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How To Use This Field Guide

A field guide is naturally a practical resource designed to help field workers in very tangible ways. This guide is no different. There are several ways you might begin to use this guide today:

1. **Topically:** Consider looking at the 10 Pillars and selecting one that you are wrestling with at the moment. Dive in there to begin connecting your faith to your innovation work.
2. **Technically:** Each pillar has a section on “How to Respond” and a corresponding tool in the toolbox at the end of the guide. These sections have ideas on how to implement the pillar in your work. Dive in there to identify activities you can try.
3. **Devotionally:** Use the pillars as devotional content for you and your innovation team as you are seeking to bring your faith into your daily work.
4. **Simply:** Read the guide as a book and use it to evaluate how you are integrating your faith into your work as an innovator. Look at your discipline in a holistic way across all of the pillars and see it as a learning opportunity.

A Spiritually Integrated View of Innovation

Much of the innovation literature stresses the importance of defining innovation. This step is critical because innovation is an abstract concept (more of a process really) that can be interpreted in many ways across thought leaders, organizations, industries, and cultures. This means that part of integrating spirituality and innovation requires us to talk with our different audiences about how they would define innovation from their various perspectives.

In our various engagements with practitioners, we asked them how they would define innovation and their thoughts on definitions that emerged from some of those discussions. Through that process, we would like to propose a definition of innovation that is uniquely crafted to facilitate the integration of innovation with faith.

> Innovation in Christian cross-cultural ministry turns Spirit-led, courageous, culturally-fitting, and life-giving resourcefulness into new sustainable solutions.

That might sound like a big phrase, but it is simple: innovation happens when you trust God enough to try a better way of serving people—one that actually fits their world—and you keep learning until it bears good fruit. Nor does our definition invalidate other definitions, but it provides greater clarity and common vocabulary as we seek to do our integration work in real time as we practice disciplined innovation.

Start with Spirit-led. In ministry, innovation is not chasing trends, building a brand, or proving something simply "relevant." It's paying attention to what God is already doing and asking, "How do we join God in that here?" The Spirit leads us in innovation through prayer, Scripture, community wisdom, and careful listening to the people our innovation will serve. Spirit-led innovation is humble. It assumes God is present in the situation, context, or story before we arrive, and it invites us into co-laboring with God rather than controlling a situation.

Next is courage. Innovation always involves risk because you're stepping into the

unknown. The unknown looks like:

- trying something new that might not work
- recognizing that you might disappoint someone who preferred the old way
- feeling vulnerable because you don't have a perfect plan

Courage doesn't mean recklessness; it means faithfulness when things are uncertain. It also means not staying only with the safe ideas and practices you know. In cross-cultural settings, courage also includes the vulnerability to be corrected, to admit you misunderstood, and to change course without shame. This is where a "theology of failure" matters: not every experiment succeeds, but every honest attempt can teach you something and deepen your dependence on God. When something “fails” it does not mean you did not follow God's Spirit. God leads us into places he thinks are important. Look for God there too and ask, “Where do we go from here?”

Then comes culturally fitting. Many ministry efforts fail not because the gospel is weak, but because our methods don't translate. Culturally fitting innovation is not compromise; it's love. It takes local languages, rhythms, values, power dynamics, and social realities seriously. It asks, "What will feel respectful here? What will be understood here? What will be sustainable here?" Sometimes the most innovative move is not inventing something brand-new, but adapting something ancient and true so it can be received and lived within a particular culture. "New" can simply mean new to this context.

Finally, innovation is life-giving. Not every new idea is good. Christian innovation must be evaluated by its fruit:

- Does it lead to a greater love of God and neighbor?
- Does it reduce harm?
- Does it strengthen dignity, justice, and trust?
- Does it help people flourish—spiritually, relationally, and even materially—without creating dependence or erasing local agency?

In that way innovation isn't novelty for novelty's sake; it's a better way of serving.

Put together, this definition expands into a practical picture: ***innovation is Spirit-led, people-honoring work that turns a new (or newly re-combined) idea into a better way of serving—one that fits local culture, addresses real needs and longings, and helps individuals and communities flourish—through courageous learning and iteration.*** That last phrase matters: innovation is rarely one big breakthrough. More often it's a series of small, faithful steps—listening, trying, adjusting, and trying again—until something becomes truly helpful and truly local.

Even if you know nothing about "innovation processes," don't worry. You already practice the heart of innovation whenever you pray, listen well, improvise with what you have, and keep serving with hope. The goal is simply to become more intentional: Spirit-led, courageous, culturally-fitting, and life-giving—one humble experiment at a time.

> ***"Innovation is Spirit-led, people-honoring work that turns a new (or newly re-combined) idea into a better way of serving—one that fits local culture, addresses real needs and longings, and helps individuals and communities flourish—through courageous learning and iteration."***

10 Pillars of Spiritual Innovation

What is the purpose of the pillars?

Pillars are structural tools. They serve a very practical and mundane purpose. Think about the columns that hold a residential home, commercial building, or warehouse. But they are often very visible tools that lend themselves to great artistry. Think of the Greek columns of the Parthenon or the columns carved into the desert rock of Petra.

The following pillars of spiritual innovation are meant to be both functional and inspirational. Functionally, they are designed to help innovators hold up an approach to innovation that integrates faith and practice. Inspirationally, they are designed to lift the eyes of practitioners above the daily grind of the work to imagine what their effort could look like when it becomes spiritually informed.

If the pillars deliver on both the functional and inspirational intent, the hope is that they will strengthen the contribution of Christian innovators and lead to new solutions in the kingdom that honor God.

1	PILLAR ONE

Community Learning and Discernment

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Co-creating solutions as we listen to others

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Recognizing the role of the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

"New ideas are the children of collaboration… these are the babies that are produced out of collaborating with God" - Project Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Innovation encourages a myth: a brilliant inventor rejects the status quo, works alone, and pushes against the odds until something new arrives in the world. This myth teaches innovators to go it alone. They wear that solitude as a badge of honor. When they do bring others in, it is often out of desperation after hitting a major challenge. Or they bring people in carefully, guarding the ownership of what might someday be a million-dollar idea.

Other innovators work alone for a different reason. Their colleagues have rejected and set them aside. Their new way of thinking is not appreciated or affirmed. Isolation follows, and with it the feeling that the innovator is on their own.

In God's kingdom it should not be this way. Innovation is an opportunity to learn from others and to benefit from how God made them. Together we can bring something new into the world that honors God and blesses others.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Celebrate Uniqueness. Each person carries a distinct personality, perspective, and a set of skills and experiences that God gave them. Each one is valuable. God meant each person's skills to be multiplied in community.

Trust Other Creators with Your Idea. An idea is a very personal thing. If it is going to benefit from the contributions of others, the innovator has to trust people with it in a sacrificial way. That trust allows the idea to be expanded, worked on, and even reimagined within the community.

Welcome Loving Accountability. Innovation is full of friction, challenges, and detours. Here is one of the critical elements that spiritual life brings to the innovator: access to loving and truth-filled accountability. When we allow others to help keep us on track, the opportunity for impact increases.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Prioritize Community Over Speed. The proverb "Many hands make light work" has been with us since the 1300s. It reminds us that the work will be easier if we do it together. But we usually apply that wisdom to work someone has already imagined and defined. The speed comes in execution, on a design that someone else came up with. Try to get five people involved in the design itself, and the work is likely to slow down. There are discussions, disagreements, misunderstandings, and the patient integration of differing ideas. The main point is that working together to create new ideas usually takes more time than doing it alone. In a world fixated on efficiency, the spiritual innovator will need to prioritize community over efficiency. That choice unleashes the power of co-creation on the final product.

Balance Stewardship and Generosity. We live in a world that is fixated on owning the fruit of our labors, so that we can maximize the money, fame, and opportunity an idea may release. Joint ownership of intellectual property is seldom encouraged. Instead, creators spend significant time and money developing complex agreements that detail ownership, licensing structures, and protections for their ideas. In this setting, there are many barriers to involving the Body of Christ in your innovation work. It requires the innovator to consider compensation, attribution, and coordination. Scripture says that a worker is worth their wages. Ownership of ideas is rewarded with the ability to be paid for your creativity and to provide for physical needs. Spiritual innovators will need to balance stewardship and generosity in order to include the Body of Christ in the innovation process.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Map Your Gifts, Personality, and Innovation Archetype. Many of us have taken assessments that help us understand our spiritual gift mix or our personality type. But did you know that there are also ways to assess your innovation archetype? (Explore more in the toolbox). Now imagine integrating all three into a 3D view of you as a Spirit-

led innovator. That process would give you a holistic view of each person collaborating on the innovation project. Then, as you plan out your work, you can think through how to work together based on your spiritual gifts, personalities, and innovation archetypes.

Breathe In and Breathe Out Together. Co-creation sounds wonderful, but how does it work in practice? Breathing exercises help us align our bodies with the natural rhythms of life. They are also commonly used in prayer to focus our thinking on God's words and his ways. Breathing in and out is a wonderful metaphor for coming together with your collaborators and then going out to work on your innovation tasks. Imagine setting up a rhythm of coming together and going out that is consistent and designed to build trust during the innovation process. This might involve a weekly time together that includes prayer, listening to what was learned, and deciding the next steps in the exploration work.

Time for Community Discernment. How much time do you set aside to run an experiment or to test a pilot? Those efforts are not instant. They take time, and as you become a seasoned innovator, you build a sense of the investment required. Consider taking that same approach to community discernment around your innovation efforts. Design several co-creation projects and watch carefully how much time the community discernment process requires. Build yourself a template. Then build that time into your future innovation projects, schedules, and budgets.

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***1 Corinthians 14:26-33*** — Our actions reinforce community
- ***Ephesians 4:11-16*** — God's gifts lead to unity and love
- ***Colossians 3:16*** — The Words of God teach and guide us together

	PILLAR PRAYER *Dear God,* *You made me for community,*

but I am always fighting against your encouragement to connect.

Help me to see my brothers and sisters in Christ as collaborators

instead of obstacles or competitors.

Give me a new vision for community within my innovation work.

I want to see the contributions of others through Your eyes.

Give me eyes to see, steady hands to persevere,

broad shoulders to carry the burdens of others, and a heart of love.

As we work together give us inspiration that could only have come

through community, and strengthen us against disagreements and frustrations.

I pray that the work of our collaborative hands is a sweet offering to you God.

AMEN

2 PILLAR TWO

Testimonies of God's Work Are Spiritual Witness

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Innovation emerges from the stories we tell

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Stories are part of spiritual discernment

Acts 14:26-28

26 Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun. The believers there had entrusted them to the grace of God to do the work they had now completed. 27 Upon arriving in Antioch, they called the church together and reported everything God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, too. 28 And they stayed there with the believers for a long time.

"God is already working around us, and we just don't see the fruits… innovation is what's needed to bring about the manifestation of where God is already working" - Project Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Pillar 2 understands testimony as spiritual witness. In Acts 14, the community listens together for what God has done and where God has opened doors. The meaning of that moment sits in discernment, not in strategy.

Stories matter because they name reality before they propose solutions. They help us understand who we are and how God works in relationship to us and our communities. Stories help us see what our community is called to and what our faithful responses to God should be in our particular context. Innovation flows from that.

To tell these stories is therefore a moral act, not merely an interpretive one. Testimony directs attention. It shapes what a community learns to value and pursue. Innovation, in this perspective, is not control over outcomes. It is participation in God's ongoing work, as that work is recognized and received through shared witness.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Stories Can Cause and Resolve Debates. What follows Acts 14:26-28 is the story of the problem that Paul and Barnabas' testimony created. Verse one of chapter 15 shows the issue, and verse two says it was a huge problem. So they all went to Jerusalem to talk it through with the apostles and the elders. It was a theological debate. Two things settled that debate. First came the stories Peter, Barnabas, and Paul told, stories about God's clear work. Then they looked at the Bible. They understood it to agree with the stories that were told, and the debate was resolved.

Testimonies Help Us Discern. The stories of God's working described God's will through God's actions. The community found Scripture that supported it. Then they came up with an innovative solution. The stories helped the apostles and elders discern, to see clearly so that the community could live wisely and faithfully.

Listening to Testimony Brings Insight. Stories can help people live out their identity in Jesus and live faithfully. When a community tells the stories of where God opened doors, it is discovering together who it is and what it is called to do. That becomes the soil from which faithful innovation grows, as fresh insights emerge through listening.

Listening Builds Unity. Listening to one another's stories and to each other's experiences builds trust and invites people to serve together. When we understand each other and understand the situation, then we can work together in unity. We can come up with solutions to problems, or step into the opportunities in front of us.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Test Stories Against Scripture. Stories are important because they give us courage to change. The challenge is that sometimes the information we know about a situation differs from the conclusions people draw from the story. That is why it was so important to see what happened in Acts 15. The stories Peter, Barnabas, and Paul told were then supported by Scripture. This is also true of us today. When someone comes back from a city or country and describes the spiritual problems in that place, it is very helpful to examine those stories against the Scriptures to see what ministry decisions could be made.

Stories Strengthen Research. Sometimes we hear many stories from various people that all say something similar. That can be enough for us to act, to innovate. Other times, research is needed to confirm the stories. Listening to everyone's stories and doing the research can take a lot of time. And in that time, an opportunity can be missed or a problem can get worse. Finding a balance is a challenge that we must learn to work with.

Stories May Challenge Authority. Stories can challenge the way things have always been done. They explain to us what might not be working well or working at all. In that sense, testimonies can be dangerous things. For Paul and Barnabas, it meant they had a "sharp dispute and debate" with people. Telling your story can take real courage. But that courage is necessary to help the gospel and the community become whole, and to serve Jesus well.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Collect Stories for Discernment. The early church gathered to hear "all that God had done." It is really helpful to collect the stories from people involved with or touched by the problem or issue you are working on. Encourage people to tell the stories of when God opened a door nobody expected. Encourage them to express how the problem or issue has impacted them, their friends, and their families. You could ask, "Where did you notice God at work this month?" or "What really surprised you or was unexpected

lately?" Collecting them can help a community see patterns and inspire it to research more deeply. (Explore More in the Toolbox)

Discuss the Stories Together. Get everyone involved in the problem or issue together. Or at least get a representative group of people together. It should be a story time where people listen to one another. When you start a listening group, ask people to listen without correcting or interrupting the speaker. After a person tells their story, the others can ask clarifying questions about facts in the story. Giving meaning to a story comes later and should be discouraged at this point. It is important that everyone's story be heard. Then, lead the group in finding the common things in the stories. Is everyone frustrated by one particular thing? Does it seem like there is a larger problem with the system? Is there a group of people hearing the same things from God about the issue? Write those common things down.

Give the Stories a Home. Write them down somewhere they can be looked at again. When stories are kept, we can start to see patterns, themes of God's provision, doors opening in unexpected places. Or we might notice repeated tensions. Those patterns can be the information we need for innovation. They name reality and help us as a community see where God's Spirit is already moving, so innovation can develop. Before jumping into brainstorming or prototyping, sit with the stories and ask, "What is God inviting us into?" The early church in Acts 10 and 15 did that. They listened to each other and heard how God was blessing the new work. They then reflected on Scripture and decided together what to do. That kind of discernment feels slower than jumping to solutions. But it roots the work in something deeper than strategy: the identity and purpose that testimony has already revealed.

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

1. ***Acts 15:1–21*** — testimony is the basis for communal discernment
2. ***Luke 8:26–39*** — When the witness is the one transformed
3. ***Psalm 66:16*** — "...let me tell you what he has done for me."

PILLAR PRAYER

God, I often wrestle with whether to focus on strategy or testimony. I'd rather plan than slow down to notice where you've been at work. Change that in me.

Please slow me down. Help me to see what you're doing before I start planning. Like Paul and Barnabas, who gathered the church and simply told the story of what you did — give me that kind of honesty. It is difficult to listen closely to everyone's stories. Help me and my friends not rush to move on to the next thing; remind me to stay. Let testimony do its quiet work to form me and our group.

Teach my community to listen well. When we get together, help us receive each other's stories as witnesses to honor. You promised to be present where two or three gather. Please be in our listening.

I don't want to innovate ahead of your story, Lord. I want to follow where your Spirit is already moving. Show me your ways. Every door I walk through, let it be one you opened.

AMEN

3 PILLAR THREE

Justice Makes Things Right

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Seek solutions for those who are marginalized

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Hospitality and inclusion

Isaiah 61:1-4

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. 2 He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies. 3 To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory. 4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins, repairing cities destroyed long ago. They will revive them, though they have been deserted for many generations.

"A lot of ideas failed, not because just ideas failed, but because people didn't dig deep enough. They didn't go deep enough to the real issue. They solved for something on the surface. They didn't solve for the real problem." - Project Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Innovators tend to have a high value for justice. Many of them see the problems and naturally look for solutions. They are hyper-aware of the challenges people face. They are also very optimistic that those challenges can be overcome. This balance between understanding and solving is the great value that innovators bring to issues of injustice.

Too many times, people approach systemic injustice with a deep cynicism or an overly simplistic response. Addressing systemic injustice requires the innovator to dig deeper

with those experiencing the injustice, understanding the full scope of the problem, and only then seeking solutions. Those solutions have to deal with the complexity that has resulted from years of injustice.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Spend Time in the Problem. Innovators are biased toward action. That makes it very hard to spend time exploring the problem and understanding its nuances. But the details of the problem most likely hold the key to its solution. Solutions developed with only a superficial understanding don't stand a chance of addressing the injustice. Issues of injustice require deep cultural and historic understanding and translation of spiritual ideas into locally meaningful language and actions.

Go Small to Build Momentum. Injustice is usually very nuanced, and a complex set of problems causes it. If you try to address the entirety of the injustice, you are likely to get mired down in the complexity and make little progress. Pick a small part of the injustice to solve. Then build momentum through success.

Consider God's Remedy. Many times the Bible's insights into injustice provide clues to unlock solutions. God's wisdom comes alive through Scripture. It holds significant keys for understanding the nature, causes, and anatomy of an injustice.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Empathy Gets Crowded Out. Sometimes we care more about solving the problem than we do about the people we are trying to solve it for. Jesus modeled a level of presence and focus that is not often present in the innovation space. The level of care he showed to sick, hurting, and lost people he came across is a challenge to us all. We tend to skip over the empathy-gathering process in our hurry to develop the solution. We don't spend enough time with those we need to listen to. Instead, we focus on small bursts of empathy that quickly get drowned out by our activity.

Speed Leads to Abstraction. We want to deploy experiments and to iterate quickly. So our tendency as innovators is to oversimplify. This isn't usually done out of a lack of care or concern. It is a practical outcome of our effort to develop a minimally viable product quickly. The speed leads to abstraction. We need to anchor our innovation in details and specifics. Otherwise, we lose the ability to truly connect. A key part of our experimentation process needs to include making the connection between our solution and the lived experience of those who are experiencing the injustice we hope to address.

Optimism Can Overpromise. Innovation is propelled by optimism. But misplaced or careless optimism can lead to over-promising and under-delivering. There is a balance between the realistic understanding of injustice and the optimistic hope that it can be addressed. This balance requires a level of reality-based expectation that can only be guided by a kingdom view of the situation. The "here but not yet" reality of the kingdom allows room for us to hold the imperfect now with the perfect future we know is coming.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Build a Marginalized Persona Canvas. Most of the personas we build are for the "average" user of the innovation we are considering. But what if we designed a persona (a detailed description of the type of person) specifically around a marginalized audience that needs special support to benefit from our work? By identifying our vulnerable stakeholders and describing their persona, we can then validate our work based on their specific needs.

Build a Beauty for Ashes Canvas. Take an Asset-Based Community Development process and apply it to innovation. Instead of starting out with the problems a user or persona has, consider starting with the assets they have (no matter how marginalized the community). Use the image of Isaiah 61:3 to highlight how beauty can replace ashes in the Spirit's power. Then look at innovative solutions that will use and amplify the beauty in those assets. (Explore More in the Toolbox)

Host a Justice "Red Teaming" Session. Take the innovation practice of "Red Teaming" to find the problems with a given solution and apply it to the issue of justice for marginalized communities. Red Teaming is a process that invites some members to take the antagonist role and others to take the protagonist roles in order to play out the positive and negative results. Design a "Red Teaming" exercise that specifically focuses on how the innovation solution might create disparities, dependencies, and injustice, as well as how it might solve them.

Try Jubilee Brainstorming. God designed the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25) to set right the injustices that a fallen human world would naturally create over time. Imagine a brainstorming session that integrated "scenario planning" in order to imagine a state where the Year of Jubilee had happened, and what it might look like for an innovation to support that future state. Now we know that this is not fully possible till Jesus returns, but elements of it are worth designing for!

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***Proverbs 16:8*** — Righteousness outweighs worldly resources
- ***Romans 9:14*** — God's ways are always just
- ***Jeremiah 22:3*** — Our actions should fight injustice

PILLAR PRAYER

Dear God,

I want my innovation efforts to lead to justice

But so many times new thinking only creates new hurts.

Help me see the impact of my work on those who are most vulnerable

And give me the courage to advocate for them as I innovate.

Help me see these weaknesses in new ways.

Give me a view into how these struggles can become strengths.

Join my heart and hands with those seeking justice

So that our common cause will lead to innovations that make a difference.

AMEN

4 PILLAR FOUR

Creating from Mutual Respect

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: ”Mutual respect may be the key to an innovative culture.” — Ken Gray

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Wisdom is released in the presence of honor

> **Romans 12:10**
> *10 Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.*

> *"We need to create the community where we can dream, where we can imagine, even if it doesn't make sense to us and we need our brothers and sisters to speak into that. Have you thought about this? I can't really see that happen, or I had the same dream that you have" - Project Contributor*

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Pillar 4 understands mutual respect as a formative spiritual practice rather than a cultural preference. It is grounded in Paul's call in Romans 12 to honor one another as an expression of shared devotion.

Respect names the sacred worth of each person. In doing so, it creates the conditions in which truth can be spoken and received without distortion by fear or status (1 Samuel 25, Luke 7:1-10).

Practiced consistently, mutual respect becomes an exercise in humility. It reorders power away from control and toward partnership. Authority begins to function

relationally rather than hierarchically (Acts 15). In this environment, communal discernment becomes possible, as wisdom is released through honored voices (Acts 15:12) rather than concentrated positions. This may be difficult in hierarchical societies. But the Apostle Paul also lived in a hierarchical society.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Honor Creates Openness. When people feel safe to open up and take risks, it helps a group innovate. Openness and safety grow in the soil of mutual respect. The Holy Spirit has given gifts to each believer. Older, respected team members listen to younger ones partially because God's Spirit is at work in the younger person also. When team members experience genuine honor—when their voices are received rather than just tolerated—they are freed to openly offer their thoughts. We all need to listen to one another because God's Spirit is poured out *"on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams."* (*Acts 2:17*)

Respect Multiplies Group Wisdom. One of the richest sources of innovation happens at the intersection of different disciplines, cultures, and experiences. But difference alone does not produce innovation. Differences have to be recognized, respected, and discussed. We see this in the church's leadership at Antioch in Acts 13. Barnabas was from Cyprus. Simeon called Niger was a Black African. Lucius of Cyrene was from North Africa (Libya today). Manaen was a Judean aristocratic Jew. Paul was a Diaspora Jew and Roman citizen. In all of that diversity, they listened together to God's Spirit. Respect is the spiritual practice that makes sure differences are heard, not silenced. When we honor one another above ourselves (Romans 12:10), we create the conditions for wisdom to surface from voices that might otherwise be overlooked.

Respect Enables Partnership. Some innovation cultures empower individuals to pursue new ideas and distribute decision-making authority. Those cultures depend on trust and openness as foundational values. Respect practiced as a spiritual discipline—

not merely a management technique—reorders the way power flows within a team. It invites the quiet voice. It elevates the overlooked contributor. It makes room for the kind of bottom-up creativity that emerges when people closest to a challenge feel genuinely valued. We wonder if the most innovative teams are the ones with the best ideas. They may actually be the ones where honor runs so deep that every member's contribution is treated as a gift worth receiving (1 Corinthians 12:21-25).

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Hierarchy Decides Whose Voice Counts. Most cultures and communities operate with deeply embedded hierarchies. Titles, credentials, seniority, and social position all signal whose voice carries importance in a room. Innovation research consistently shows that creative work improves when people feel safe to take risks and admit mistakes. Yet cultivating that safety requires leaders to voluntarily lower their positional authority so that others can speak honestly. In hierarchical societies, and even in many church structures, this reordering of power can feel threatening or even disrespectful to those who hold formal authority. The tension is real. Honoring one another above ourselves (Romans 12:10), as Paul instructs, may look like organizational weakness in settings that equate leadership with control.

Ministry Habits Narrow Our Listening. Our habits can help us, but those habits in our ministries can also block personal curiosity. They form traditions and help us focus on specific things in our community's memory. They impose certainty on uncertainty. Over time, these things that give us stability can also keep us from listening to unfamiliar voices. Subtly, unconsciously, and out of view, ministry habits can reduce true mutual respect which listens to everyone, leading us to overlook certain people in order to continue our traditions and ministry habits. The challenge is not simply adding respect to an existing culture. It is discerning where institutional habits have already decided whose ideas matter and whose do not. Moses welcomed other prophetic voices even when Joshua wanted to silence them (Numbers 11:26–29). Jesus told us in the parable

of the Good Samaritan that the priest and Levite had religious habits that made them bypass the wounded man. The marginalized Samaritan was the one who showed mutual respect and love (Luke 10:25–37).

Impatience Cuts Listening Short. Innovation environments often prize rapid iteration and decisive action. Genuine mutual respect, however, takes time. The mutual respect we show one another when we listen to each other's stories (*Pillar 2*) takes time. Listening to a colleague whose perspective differs from your own slows the process down, especially when that colleague comes from another culture. It seems that there is a persistent temptation to try to move quickly. It is important to acknowledge someone's contribution and to sit with it long enough for wisdom to surface. Spiritual innovators who accept that the pace of respect-shaped discernment may not match the pace that secular innovation requires. Scriptures that talk about this kind of patience are:

- ***James 1:19*** *— Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak*
- ***Proverbs 18:13*** *— To answer before listening— that is folly and shame*
- ***Proverbs 19:2*** *— It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way*

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Run a 1-2-4-All Conversation. To address the social and status differences in a group, you can use a method called 1-2-4-All. To start, you ask a question. It should be a question that you know the ministry is struggling with. Let everyone reflect silently. This is the “1.” The “2” asks everyone to pair up, and each person has a minute or two to share their thoughts on the question. It is helpful if you keep strict time and only let each person share for two minutes. Then comes the “4.” Ask each paired group to get together with another paired group, and all four people share their thoughts about the question. Again, each person only gets 2 minutes to share. Then ,in the “All,” everyone gets together, and those who want to share with the whole group can share with everyone. Ideas rise up from the bottom before any single voice can dominate. These

methods help us follow Romans 12:10, making honor a rule of the room. (Explore More in the Toolbox)

Use Appreciative Interviews. Ministry habits rarely need to change completely. Use what is called "Appreciative Interviews" to get around some of the “defenses” of tradition. Gather your group together. Ask them to pair up and give testimony about a time they overcame a challenge. Ask them to share what made that success possible. The person listening is responsible to uncover the hidden strengths and support behind the story. Next, bring pairs together into small groups so each person can kindly retell their partner's experience. The group should listen for shared themes of hope and resilience. Return to the full circle to name these patterns, celebrating what binds the group together. You can even make a chart or put all the things on a whiteboard. Close by reflecting together on how you can nurture those life-giving conditions and carry that shared strength into your community's future. This activity helps people listen deeply and therefore live out James 1:19, "quick to listen, slow to speak."

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***1 Peter 2:17*** — Our posture towards others matters
- ***1 Peter 5:2–5*** — Humble care for God's people
- ***Proverbs 18:13*** — Wisdom means listening first

PILLAR PRAYER

Lord, thank You for calling us to work together. I confess that honoring others doesn't always come naturally to me. I am often too quick to speak and too slow to truly listen. Please give me the wisdom to change.

I want to help build a team where every voice is valued, but I know how easily pride and hierarchy can get in the way. Remind me to lead as Christ did—choosing to serve rather than to control. Give me the humility to step back so

that others might rise.

When the pressure to succeed tempts us to rush, strengthen our patience. Give us the grace to sit with each other's words long enough for real wisdom to surface. Teach me that the insight we need most might come from the person I am most likely to overlook.

Please make this a place where truth can be spoken without fear, and where our differences are received as gifts. When we falter, draw us back to mutual respect. Let our care for one another be a genuine reflection of your love for us. May every person here be honored as one made in your image, and may we learn to honor each other well before we try to build anything else.

AMEN

5 PILLAR FIVE

Progress toward Fruitfulness

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Learning is the primary metric for successful innovation

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Compounded faithfulness in learning will bear fruit in God's time

James 1:4-6

4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. 5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind.

"Finding your purpose is like bumper cars. You normally do it through trying things and repositioning and trying again and moving forward. Very few people have an understanding of their purpose in foresight. It's usually in hindsight." - Project Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

The discipline of innovation challenges people to move from empathy gathering to action as quickly as possible. The assumption is that action produces learning and that solutions will emerge. The logic says that the sooner you act, the more likely you are to find a winning solution. Or you fail and learn what you should do differently. The greatest value is believed to be breaking out of the status quo.

The concept of faithfulness struggles to find a place in this framework. Many label faithful perseverance as maintaining what exists and resisting innovation. When it is perceived this way, innovators struggle to see faithfulness as proactive. But faith

teaches the believer something else. Success, or fruitfulness, comes through faithful dependence on God rather than simply through personal proactivity. A healthy understanding of faithfulness and fruitfulness is critical for spiritual innovation.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Practice a Prayer of Indifference. A key to faithfulness is a spiritual indifference that accepts whatever God might have for us. This ties in very well with innovation. Innovators recognize that they are experimenting and cannot control the results of their tests. They must trust the results to the process and then learn from what happens. We can take a step beyond the objectivity of an experiment and submit our will to the Father as we try new things. This puts God in the driver's seat of our experimentation process, as we submit to the needs of our users and the will of our Father.

Choose Intentional Contentment. Innovation is often characterized by people who are frustrated by the status quo. They impatiently push for change out of good motivations. But many times they use wrong methods to fuel their action. If we really believe that faithfulness to God and dependence on him will produce fruit in His timing, then we have the ability to be proactive and content at the same time. This requires us to direct our innovative action into Godly postures of dependence, patience, and humility. But contentment doesn't mean laziness or inaction. It simply means that we are content with God's ways of working.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Ask Who Sets the Learning Mandate. As innovators we need to ask the question, "Why are we learning about a given problem or opportunity?" Who made this learning objective a priority? Most of the time, innovators are driven by innate curiosity and market pressures. Needs arise and innovators respond. But as spiritual innovators, our learning mandate comes from our heavenly Father. He is asking every innovator to

obediently practice their trade in light of the opportunities God has for us to address. It is a great challenge for many of us to give up control of our learning agenda.

Learning Takes More Than One Cycle. Learning is never a one-step process. This is very discouraging for many who are hoping that one round of learning will provide the insights needed for the innovation work. The reality is that innovation requires cycles of learning that build on each other and compound towards wisdom and insight. This takes time, repetition, and persistence. These are aspirational skills for many but not prioritized ones. That means that while we talk about perseverance, the act of persevering can sometimes seem like failure.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Try Cathedral Thinking. There is a whole school of thinking that comes out of the reality of multi-generational projects. Cathedral thinking prioritizes the long game and recognizes that the new idea will require years, decades, and even centuries to be fully realized. By taking your team through a Cathedral Thinking exercise to look at the long-term process of bringing your idea to life, you give permission to your team to think bigger and to be more holistic and integral in the grand idea that is driving your innovation.

Pray the Innovator's Prayer of Indifference. Consider praying a customized version of the prayer of indifference from St. Ignatius of Loyola. *"Father, I am indifferent to every pathway of exploration except your will. I want nothing more or less than your desire for what I do as an innovator. Amen"* (Explore More in the Toolbox)

Build a Sabbath Pause into the Sprint. When innovating we tend to drive hard towards the solution. There is a sense of urgency and a desire for immediate results. But what if we integrated the Sabbath into our sprints? This could be as simple as designing a sabbath day into the sprint planning process. Essentially you are adding time for reflection and rest within the innovation cycle in order to reset people's

perspectives and expectations.

Build an Assumptions Altar. Many times the driver for our urgency and expectations are assumptions about time, outputs, and outcomes. But what if you designed a way to submit your assumptions to God? It is common practice to identify and document assumptions, especially when you are running innovation experiments. But simply identifying them is not usually enough to change behavior. They just sit on the page and are not proactively addressed. But if you were to have an Assumptions Altar, where you bring these ways of thinking to God and ask him to reframe them and renew them to align with his thinking, that would take the assumptions from a passive to an active state. You could even build your Assumptions Altar into your white boards or innovation planning documents in such a way that people can reference what they have surrendered to God.

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***Habakkuk 3:17-18*** — Joy in the Lord is not based on circumstances
- ***Isaiah 55:11*** — What God says always bears fruit
- ***Hebrews 11:1-2*** — Faith opens our eyes

PILLAR PRAYER

Dear God,

Why is it so hard to submit my will to you?

I love you and value your ways but I spend so much time fighting against them.

Align my heart with yours, oh God.

Help me to see that your ways are better.

Give me your perspective on time and impact.

So that when I see a problem or opportunity, I see it as you do.

Change my heart when I resist you.

Give me humility to accept that your ways are better.

Thank you for guiding me into a right perspective of faithful perseverance.

Help me to balance that humility with an obedience to be courageous.

AMEN

6 PILLAR SIX

Reframe Systems in God's Spirit

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: "99 percent of what goes wrong in systems goes wrong because of faulty or missing information." — Donella Meadows

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Systems must be evaluated in God's truth

Exodus 18:13-16

13 The next day, Moses took his seat to hear the people’s disputes against each other. They waited before him from morning till evening. 14 When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, “What are you really accomplishing here? Why are you trying to do all this alone while everyone stands around you from morning till evening?” 15 Moses replied, “Because the people come to me to get a ruling from God. 16 When a dispute arises, they come to me, and I am the one who settles the case between the quarreling parties. I inform the people of God’s decrees and give them his instructions.”

"Stopping with regular intervals, ideally once a day, to stop and to notice, where did I encounter the life-giving presence of God. How did God show up this day?… For most of us, we go for so much time, not taking a reflective moment to recognize, oh, wow, I really had a fantastic day" - Project Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Exodus 18 tells a profound story. Moses's deep faithfulness was caught in an unsustainable system. He was faithful, but the system he was using was not helping his faithfulness. God's Spirit works not just through devotion but through examining how our structures actually function.

Reframing systems becomes faithful repentance. We receive truth through data and feedback as tools of the Spirit rather than threats to leadership. When Jethro speaks truth to Moses, he models something essential. Systems should cultivate human flourishing. Innovation emerges when we're willing to reorder our structures to align with how God sustains people rather than exhausts them.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Truth Cultivates Trust. When leaders invite honest feedback about how the parts of the ministry actually work together, not just how it was designed to work together, they cultivate an environment where people feel safe to name what they see. If you want to encourage innovative and creative work, an atmosphere of trust, openness, and transparency must define your ministry culture. That helps spiritual innovators see and treat data, patterns, and feedback as tools of God's Spirit rather than threats to leadership. That environment creates the conditions in which new solutions can emerge. Cultivating truth becomes an act of worship, a recognition that God's reality is always more trustworthy than our assumptions about it.

Structures Exist to Serve Life. A wonderful part of thinking about the whole ministry system is this: systems behavior depends on the relationships between the parts of the ministry, not just the intentions of the people within it. W. Edwards Deming put it this way: "A bad system will beat a good person every time." That is good news, because leaders often just blame themselves. But it could also just be the system. Moses was faithful, devoted, and tireless, and the system was still unsustainable. This means that faithfulness alone is not sufficient. The innovator is also called to examine the structures through which faithfulness is expressed. When we reframe systems in God's Spirit, we are asking whether the structures we have built actually serve the life and participation God intends. Do they slowly exhaust the people they were designed to sustain? If so, that is a clear call to innovate. This shift from evaluating people to evaluating structures is itself a profound act of grace within innovation work.

Feedback Is a Spiritual Practice. Thinking about systems encourages adaptability and learning from feedback. It is much like the way discipleship emphasizes personal growth, reflection, and guided change. For the spiritual innovator, this means that the iterative cycles of listening, testing, and adjusting that define good innovation practice are more than technical disciplines. They are echoes of the formational rhythms of repentance, discernment, and renewal. One innovator may invite an outside perspective, the way Moses received Jethro's counsel. Another may examine data or redesign a process. In each case they are participating in a deeply spiritual act: allowing God's truth to reshape not just beliefs but the very systems through which those beliefs are lived out.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Structures Become Part of a Leader's Identity. One of the deepest challenges to reframing systems is when a leader's personal calling has become inseparable from the organizational structure. Moses sat as sole judge not because he was power-hungry. His identity and sense of faithfulness were wrapped up in being the one who mediated God's will. To reframe the system feels like an assault on who the leader is. It feels like disloyalty. When structures become extensions of a leader's identity, any feedback that challenges the structure is experienced as a personal threat. Spiritual innovators kindly help leaders cultivate the inner freedom to distinguish between their calling and the structures they have built around it. If the spiritual innovator is the leader, they will need to learn that this distinction will help make change feel like relief rather than defeat.

Data and Feedback Feel Like Criticism. Innovation sees feedback as essential to healthy systems, and regular feedback helps growth and stability. But some faith-based organizations treat data with suspicion. Feedback feels like criticism. Numbers can feel like they reduce sacred work to metrics. This creates a painful tension. Pillar 6 asks us to receive truth, including data, patterns in that data, and feedback, as a tool of the Spirit. Yet sometimes spiritual communities value passion and vision over verification.

The result is that faulty or incomplete information guides our ministry systems, because no one has been given permission to research. Innovators can help their communities see that gathering honest information is not a lack of faith but an expression of it. It is a willingness to let God's truth, however uncomfortable, show us how we organize our shared life.

Sacred Tradition Can Make Systems Untouchable. When inherited practices are connected directly with the Gospel itself, our organizational structures may have a false sanctity. One outcome in our communities is subtly embracing a "burnout theology," where human exhaustion is embraced as spiritual devotion rather than a failure of the system. This unspoken paradigm makes an unhelpful system untouchable. It traps dedicated leaders in cycles of unsustainable labor. Faithfulness means recognizing the difference between the eternal work of the Spirit and the flexible systems we build to support it. By gently uncoupling our sacred calling from historical methods (traditions), we cultivate systems that can sustain the people called to embody God's enduring peace.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Map Calling and Containers. When guiding leaders through structural change, one gentle entry point is the "Calling vs. Container" mapping exercise. Together, begin by articulating the leader's core assignment—their timeless vocational center—and mapping the surrounding programs and meetings as temporary containers. By placing these side by side, you create a reflective space to ask whether each container actively serves its God-given assignment or quietly depletes it. This simple visual practice helps leaders discern that while their calling remains steady under God's care, the operational vehicles must remain flexible. In doing so, adjusting a program shifts from feeling like personal disloyalty to becoming a joyful act of stewardship.

Treat Data as a Tool of God's Spirit. To help faith communities embrace information as a tool of the Spirit rather than a cold metric, you can invite teams into "Holy Curiosity"

data audits. In this practice, you pair quantitative numbers with human stories. The data, numbers, get reframed as a form of attentive listening. Rather than using metrics to measure performance or assign blame, you can gently ask diagnostic questions about where life is flourishing and where people are quietly falling through the cracks. "Holy Curiosity" allows leaders to receive feedback non-defensively. Gathering honest information is not a lack of faith, but a willing participation in discovering how God's truth can reshape our shared life.

Question Burnout Theology. As mentioned above, in missional communities, we frequently encounter the unspoken assumption that exhaustion is a mark of spiritual devotion. But is exhaustion a mark of spirituality or of a poor ministry system? For Moses it was a problem with his system. To get a clearer picture of your team, invite them to process their shared work through the "capacity-to-impact spectrum." (Explore More in the Toolbox)

By mapping every active initiative on an axis of activity/effort required versus true spiritual fruitfulness, you can create a simple way to identify high-strain, low-yield programs. This reflective diagnostic allows leaders to see that ongoing high effort is often caused by a poorly organized system rather than a personal failing. Through this gentle evaluation, communities receive permission to change unsustainable structures. It helps them steward things away from programs that require long-term heroic endurance. Heroic effort is occasionally required. Doing that all the time moves something from very fruitful to low fruitfulness. We are called to create systems that sustain those called to embody God's peace and fruitfulness.

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***Nehemiah 2:11–18*** — Pray first and act second
- ***Acts 6:1–7*** — God calls different people to serve in distinct ways
- ***1 Kings 3:16–28*** — God's wisdom leads to novel solutions

PILLAR PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we recognize how easily the ministry systems we create with good intent can begin to exhaust the staff and communities we are called to serve. We want to have a faithful witness. We confess that we sometimes mistake institutional fatigue for devotion to you and the calling you have put on our lives.

Please give us the humility to discern where the structures of our ministry require your Spirit-led reordering. Teach us to accept honest feedback and see administrative data not as threats, but as an invitation to change and even to repentance. As we journey with one another, help us to hold our designs loosely—recognizing that no framework is sacred. Only you are sacred.

Grant us the wisdom to create practical governance and to build rhythms that sustain rather than drain. If something hinders growth, help us have the courage to redesign. We want our leadership to align with your restorative work. Rebuild through us, Lord, so that our systems serve life and godly love, and reflect your peace.

AMEN

7 PILLAR SEVEN

Spiritual Awareness in the Midst of Complexity and Ambiguity

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Taking risks while guarding values

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Courage in the Spirit to trust in uncertainty

> **Proverbs 3:5-6**
>
> *5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.*
> *6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

> *"When we can cling to the movement of God and the movement of the Spirit, it allows us, gives us the freedom to say, it's okay if the future doesn't look like the past, and so I think it frees us to try something different" - Project Contributor*

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Risk is typically a calculation: assessing benefits and drawbacks. The innovation discipline has sophisticated tools for this work. They help a leader understand these forces, align them with priorities, and integrate organizational values and mission. But where does the Holy Spirit fit into an innovator's calculation of risk?

Many times the extent of spirituality in the risk assessment effort is a prayer for protection. Then comes a prayer of thanksgiving if it works, or lament if it fails. But the Holy Spirit should have a much greater role in an innovator's wrestling with the unknown. Because God invites us as co-creators, He provides the ultimate cover for the

risks we take on behalf of the kingdom. He promises to guard our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7) and to be with us as we courageously obey (Joshua 1:9).

The question is not God's faithfulness or provision. It is our willingness to submit to his ways and accept his invitation to step into ambiguity on his terms.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Accept Complexity Without Settling for It. There are two very different reactions to complexity. Some people revel in it. They enjoy the nuance and going deeper and deeper into the subject matter. Others are embarrassed by it and apologize for the complexity. Too often we either see complexity as the point or as a flaw in the system. Instead of getting lost in it or apologizing for it, wouldn't it be healthier to recognize that it is a part of our world with both good and bad effects? The job we have in front of us is to build successful innovations that look for what Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. described as "simplicity on the other side of complexity." This is a simplicity that recognizes and understands all the detail and yet finds the core truth beyond it. This is possible, and it is God's will for you. He will give you the strength to see the world the way he does: never oversimplified, not stuck in complexity, but fully understanding the complexity and yet seeing it through God's eyes.

Carry Others' Burdens. Complexity and risk can feel like heavy burdens. Part of the spiritual role of an innovator is to be sensitive to fellow believers carrying these burdens and to respond with real help. When someone is carrying a burden of complexity, you have a variety of ways you could step in and help. Sometimes the innovation work itself cuts through the complexity or risk by testing solutions that bring clarity. Other times, your innovation work will add to the complexity, but your process will give direction to the journey and will bring consolation. However you respond, your job is not to reduce all friction and struggle, because many times it is in the struggle that we grow. But your job is to point a way through the complexity and ambiguity.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Be Patient with the Process. When we come into contact with complexity, our human nature is wired to tackle it head on with the goal of removing it. We want life to be simple, clear, and controlled. But as innovators, we know that the growth and learning will happen in the friction, risk, and ambiguity. So when you are in those difficult moments where your tendency is to resolve the complexity, lean on the innovation process instead. By allowing complexity or ambiguity to stand as you go through the innovation process you have set up, you are providing the space for experimentation, empathy gathering, and even failure to do its work. Your idea and eventual solution will be much stronger for it.

Resist Oversimplification. Complex situations resist simple answers. But we so want a simple solution to our proble!. In fact, that desire for a simple answer will tempt us to rush to conclusions in our innovation work. It feels so good to unlock a clear and simple solution. It is the ultimate prize. But it is also very rare. You are much more likely to come up with innovations that address part of the problem, or address it under certain circumstances. So when you think you have come across a solution that seems too good to be true, assume that it is. Use your discernment to try and understand it more fully. If it is truly a simple and elegant solution, consider it a jewel to be treasured. But if it isn't, don't beat yourself up. God is working in a world full of fallen people, mixed motivations, and barriers to thriving. He is able to guide you to valuable solutions even in the midst of complexity.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Reframe Complexity in the Kingdom. We are not promised easy and straightforward paths to walk. Instead, we live in a fallen world full of pain and brokenness. It is into this reality that we must bring our innovation efforts. Instead of wishing things were not as complex, the kingdom innovator is able to reframe complexity into a rich tapestry on

which to create what is next. At the same time, many times we fool ourselves into thinking things are more complex than they really are. A simple way to discern the truth about your scenario is to perform a reality check. Start with a list of the people involved in your ministry scenario. Then list out the various expectations people have. Finally make a list of the situations (challenges and opportunities). Now group people, expectations, and situations that go together. Identify where different groups intersect and diverge. Then spend time in prayer about these different realities that you are learning to balance, and ask God how to navigate these complexities.

Share Risk in Community. We love to share positive moments, but the negative ones tend to be very lonely. In fact we do not have many healthy ways to share risk in community. Consider using a simple mechanism that is familiar to most of us today: the Gift Card. Imagine that you had the ability to give a risk to a friend or colleague in the form of a Gift Risk Card. This would act as a tool to identify, share, and carry each other's burdens in the innovation process. Imagine that you have identified that a major risk with your innovation project is a virus outbreak such as Ebola or Avian Flu. A Gift Risk Card would allow you to explain the project, the risk, and the prayer request you want people to pray for. You could also give people multiple ways they could help alleviate or at least carry the risk. Then you would invite friends to join you in sharing that risk. (Explore More in the Toolbox)

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***1 Corinthians 13:12*** — Partial view of what God sees completely
- ***Philippians 4:6-7*** — Look to God and resist the temptation to worry
- ***Deuteronomy 31:8*** — God is with us

	PILLAR PRAYER *Dear God,* *I am mired in complexity. Surrounded by ambiguity.*

	It muddles the mind and leaves me frustrated. *Help me to see through the complexity to the simplicity of Your solution* *And give me the discernment to sense what is from you and what is my wishful thinking.* *Give me words of encouragement for those who are frozen by ambiguity.* *Allow me to see each of them the way you see them.* *I know you have all the answers and I pray that you would reveal them to me.* *In your time, in your way and for your reasons.* *AMEN*

8 PILLAR EIGHT

Move Towards Action with Patience and Contentment

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: "Ideas won't keep; something must be done about them." — Alfred North Whitehead

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Faithful steps, patient pace, surrendered outcomes

> **James 2:18**
>
> *18 Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”*

> *"Ignatius wrote about being free from our disordered attachments, attachments that do not serve us well. And it's a great gift to be freed from disordered attachments... that sense of being entangled and encumbered, and that journey to freedom, which is such a gift" - Project Contributor*

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Pillar 8 describes action as a faithful response rather than an anxious reaction. It draws on James' insistence that faith becomes visible through lived obedience. Action, in this sense, is not driven by impatience or the need to prove effectiveness. Action shows trust that God's work unfolds through deliberate steps taken in faith.

Contentment comes from accepting that the innovation God drew us to has outcomes under God's control, not ours. Patience aligns action with God's timing rather than the

pressures of immediacy. Innovation, then, follows a spiritual rhythm of faithful steps and surrendered results, where doing flows from trust rather than from restlessness.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Action Cultivates Believing. Lanny Vincent wrote in his book *Innovation Theology* that *"the substance of things hoped for, the convictions of things unseen"* (*Hebrews 11:1*) is an essential trait of the innovator. It seems that faith and action share a common root. Both require us to move forward before we can see the full picture. When we take a step—however small—we practice believing that is part of innovation. Sometimes that means researching an idea you think is odd. Other times it is carefully testing a unique method. Faithful, innovative action does not wait for certainty; it cultivates trust through doing. Each step taken in obedience, even into ambiguity, deepens our capacity to discern what God is doing in and through the work.

Contentment Frees the Innovator from Anxiety. One of the quieter gifts of spiritual life is the freedom to act without being enslaved to outcomes. Mother Teresa said that "God does not require that we be successful, only that we be faithful." Innovation culture often measures worth by speed to market, return on investment, and scale. But contentment, rooted in the knowledge that God holds the results, releases the innovator from the pressure to perform. Scripture reminds us that *"those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength."* (Isaiah 40:31a) We could compare the innovator's posture to that of a farmer waiting patiently for the harvest. (James 5:7) Contentment does not mean passivity. It means acting from a place of peace rather than panic. We want to live in the victory and contentment we have in Christ. It is true that there are injustices to overcome and problems to solve, and God wants us to feel the pain of that. But pain and injustice are not the source of our innovative imagination. It is the victory in Christ that helps us imagine a quality innovation.

Patient Steps Produce Lasting Fruit. The innovation process is inherently repetitive. Insights emerge, those insights are tested, some of them fail, and they get refined. Then

you start over again with those refined insights. Innovators and leaders can struggle with the question, “am I relying on the Spirit to help me, or am I pursuing my own desires?” Patient steps of trust, taken in community with others and in prayer, help us truly surrender to God's will. Patience in this context is not waiting to act. It is allowing each step to be shaped by prayerful discernment in community with others. When we resist the urge to rush past the learning embedded in each phase, we allow God to form us even as we form the innovation. The result is a work that is both more sustainable and more deeply aligned with the purposes of God's kingdom.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Balance Faith and Wisdom. Innovation is also an act of faith. It is a bit like the story in Joshua 3. The people assigned to carry the Ark of the Covenant of God had to first put their feet into the flood waters of the Jordan before God made the waters stop flowing. That was an act of faith before results came. But how can you gain the certainty needed to act in the development of an innovation? Sometimes it really seems like walking across a busy street wearing a blindfold. You can hear, touch, and smell, but you cannot see the scooters or the people.

Innovation is best done with other people. Yes, sometimes God may give you an innovative idea to explore by yourself. But in groups there are more advantages. Collective wisdom, balance in spiritual giftings, and people with diverse skills help us take active and wise steps of faith.

The Pressure of Metrics and Productivity. The need to get an innovation into practice, and the pressure of wanting to get the gospel to those who need it, are part of the pressure of accomplishment, measurements of effectiveness, and forward movement. These pressures are not inherently wrong, but they also can build anxiety and steal our contentment in ministry. When we are measured by how quickly we move from idea to action, patience begins to look like indecision. The spiritual innovator faces a genuine tension: "ideas won't keep." They can spoil like food left out in the sun. So

action matters. Yet the inner posture James calls for, faith made visible through works, is not the same as frantic productivity. It seems that one of the deepest challenges is learning to distinguish between faithful momentum and anxious acceleration. The ministries we work within often set the goals for us. It is therefore really good to help our ministry leaders by letting them know what to expect, how long things take, and how many resources (time, people, and finances) a project might need. Don't underestimate it. Give your team margin.

Contentment Can Look Like Complacency. In a world that equates ambition with restlessness, contentment can be seen as complacency. As innovators we see gaps in processes, needs in programs, and opportunities for ministry. We can be seen as always dissatisfied with the way things are being done. That instinct is a gift. But left unchecked, it can erode the soul. The challenge is to hold "creative discontent" and spiritual contentment together without one taking over the other. Scripture speaks honestly about the difficulty of waiting. Job cries out, *"What strength do I have, that I should still hope? What prospects, that I should be patient?"* (Job 6:11) The farmer in James 5:7 waits for the harvest with patience, but anyone who has planted knows how hard that waiting is. Surrendering outcomes to God while still investing wholeheartedly in the work is not a skill learned once. It is a discipline cultivated across a lifetime.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Balance Faith and Wisdom in Practice. To do this you can do two activities. They are called "15 percent solution" and "Post-up." They can work well together if you start with 15 percent solution, do the Post-up, and then do 15 percent solution again. The 15 percent solution helps give an idea of what can be done right away. The Post-up is more reflective and therefore focuses on deeper discernment. Here is what they are:

15 percent Solution (20 min, any size group). "Where do you have discretion and freedom to act? What can you do without more resources or authority?" This is the Joshua 3 tool — it asks each person to identify the step they can take now, before the

waters part. It "reveals the actions, however small, that everyone can do immediately" and "shows that there is no reason to wait around, feel powerless, or fearful." For a group that has discerned a direction but feels paralyzed by uncertainty, this breaks the paralysis into faithful, incremental steps. (Explore More in the Toolbox)

Post-Up (10–60 min, 1–50 people). Silent sticky-note brainstorming. Everyone writes ideas individually before anything is shared aloud. "The silence lets people think without interruption." This is especially useful when a group needs to hear from God together, but some members process internally and need quiet before they can articulate what they sense. If the group is big enough, have them get together in groups of 3 or 4 to share what they wrote down. Then come back together as a larger group and rewrite your 15 percent solution ideas. Discussing these as a group helps balance a faith that just wants to be active with some deeper thinking and prayer.

Cultivate Contentment with Flip It. One way to help your team with this is by an activity called Flip It. It takes between 30–60 min depending on how many people you have. It works well with a group between 5–20 people. Ask them to write their fears on sticky notes (fears about complacency, fears about burnout, fears about never being satisfied), then "flip" them into hopes, then move to how you could move forward into hope. The instruction for this activity said, "We can choose to see the glass as either half full or half empty, but often when we perceive it as half full, we get better results." For a group wrestling with the discontentment/complacency tension, this activity externalizes the fears so they can be reframed rather than suppressed. "You want the group to see concerns (even if it's a momentary view) as a chance to be hopeful and get motivated around action."

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***Hebrews 11:8–10*** — Abraham's Faithful Steps into the Unknown
- ***Psalm 90:14–17*** — Satisfaction in God and the Establishment of Our Work
- ***Habakkuk 2:2–3*** — Write the Vision and Wait for Its Appointed Time

PILLAR PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, we recognize how easily our desire for faithful action can become anxious performance and drivenness. We confess that we often mistake acting quickly on something for obedience. In our desire to see belief shown by action, we can validate our behavior by measurable outcomes rather than surrendering to Your timing.

We pray for discernment to cultivate rhythms of patient engagement. Teach us to step forward without demanding complete clarity, honoring the gradual nature of spiritual formation and ministry growth. As we navigate the tension between urgent mission and steady faithfulness, help us to journey with one another as we hold our visions with open hands before you.

Please give us the grace to integrate action with trust; after all, you alone establish the work of our hands. Where anxiety pressures us to produce, secure us in your sufficient grace. Help us walk attentively in each season, so that our daily efforts may foster your peace and bear witness to your ongoing work.

AMEN

9	PILLAR NINE

Identity Precedes Innovation

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: Anchor innovation to your "Why" and your "Where" so that your unique "What" can have the most impact

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: Align creativity with who you are in Christ and a confidence that comes from hearing God's voice

Ephesians 2:1-10

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

"Man is always looking for a better method. God is looking for a better man. Man is God's method... we're looking for a new technology, and he's looking for a new humanity" - Project

Contributor

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

We all identify with major influences in our lives. Some allow their identity to be tied to family or geography. Others link their identity to their career. When we meet a new person, typically one of our first questions is, "What family are you from?" or "What do you do?" Seldom is that question followed up with "Why do you live there?" or "Why do you do what you do?" The "what" question is not bad. But it does reveal how central the "what" is to our identity. More than "why," "where," or even "how," we are too quickly satisfied with majoring on the "what."

This focus can be especially true for innovators. Innovation is a discipline that requires explanation of the "what," because the “what” is not a well-known path. Innovation also requires defending, because people question the value of the innovator role when it is challenging the status quo. Because of this, innovators naturally build up a defensive posture about their role and are quick to defend their value.

It is in this environment that we need to reframe what it means to be an innovator. We reframe it in light of the "why" that a believer has as a child of God, redeemed sinner, and ambassador for Christ. It takes some intentional pivoting to reframe an innovator's identity in light of these other more central identifiers. Let's explore how to do this effectively.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Co-creation Takes Clarity. If you don't know who you are, why you are doing the work, and where God has asked you to serve, it is hard to show up in an intentional way. But as you gain clarity about how you fit into God's bigger plan, you bring confidence and focus to the exploration of the unknown.

Clarity Strengthens Commitment. It is easy to have initial energy and excitement

about a new idea. It doesn't require a deep sense of calling, because you are simply exploring a new idea in a very abstract way. But once you decide to pursue an idea, your ability to follow through will be directly tied to your understanding of how the idea fits into your purpose and calling. That alignment is what will give you the strength to persevere through resistance, discouragement, and unexpected turns.

Alignment Leads to Integration. When you have a clear understanding of your "why" as a God-directed innovator, God begins to weave the strands of your life together with your work. He is the great integrator! He has amazing ways of tying that conversation at church to your latest idea, with a connection to the right article you read on a Saturday morning. When you are looking at your innovation work through the lens of who you are in Christ, there is nothing that happens in your day that can't be a resource for you to innovate well.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Submission Is Hard. It is hard to submit our own perceptions of ourselves or others to God. In fact, it is hard for us even to think about something in such an abstract way. Most of the time our identity is like a computer program running in the background while we go about our daily routines. This means that we have to intentionally choose to ask ourselves the hard questions about how we view ourselves. Then the challenge is to submit those views to God, consider what he says about our identity, and then allow him to begin changing it to align with his values and priorities. As we do this, our perspective about our work as innovators will move from something we define to something that God directs.

Isolation Reduces Visibility. God uses our interactions with others to help us more clearly see ourselves. But many people live much of their lives without significant human connection. Without human relationships, you have no one to share other perspectives with you, question your thinking, or give you feedback on your work. Many times innovators describe the loneliness of the work. This can also happen because

many others do not understand what you do or value it in the same way. It is crucial to have a community of friends and colleagues around you to explore what it means to innovate.

Overload Blurs our Identity. Innovators tend to be generalists who enjoy many things. But innovators can also be subject matter experts in a specific area of work. Whether you go deep or wide, the danger of getting overloaded with inputs is real. Sometimes we have so many interests to pursue or details to follow up on that we allow our identity to get lost in the overload. We become the details instead of letting the details inform who we are.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Run a "What Do You Do?" Roleplay. In order to understand identity you need to see it play out in real interactions. To simulate this, break people up into groups of two. Then instruct Person A to ask Person B: "So, what do you do?" and allow Person B to give a 60 second natural answer. Then Person A asks three follow-up questions:

- Where do you invest your time?
- Why do you do what you do?
- Who are you becoming as you do this work?

Allow Person A and Person B to switch roles and do the same activity.

Now debrief the group with the following questions:

- Which question was easiest to answer? Which was hardest?
- How much of your first answer was tied to title, productivity or organizational function?
- What changed when the question moved from what to why to who?
- How might this relate to our identity in Christ?

Play the Identity Matching Game. In order to reorient ourselves around our identity in

Christ, it is helpful to take a list of our various identity markers and figure out how they are tied to who we really are. Make a list of characteristics, interests, skills, and values that have defined your identity. Now take some time to go through Scripture and write down descriptions of who you are in Christ. Put these two lists next to each other and start to draw lines from your list to the Biblical list. How many of the identity markers you wrote down have a link to your identity in Christ? (Explore More in the Toolbox)

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***1 John 3:1-2*** — As God's children we can be like him
- ***Psalm 139:1-6*** — God knows and guides us
- ***Colossians 3:1-3*** — New life requires new ways of thinking

PILLAR PRAYER

Dear God,

My vision is cloudy. I cannot see as you do.

Instead my heart and mind are full of lies about who I really am.

But you promise to vanquish the Father of Lies and bring Truth.

Truth that can set me free to live life as I really am.

Help me to bravely accept my true identity as your child.

And intentionally step out to innovate from that solid foundation.

AMEN

10	PILLAR TEN

God's Wisdom and Emerging Challenges

INNOVATION PRINCIPLE: "In innovation, uncertainty actually creates opportunity." — Stefan Thomke

SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE: God's wisdom helps us discern next steps.

> **1 Kings 3:9**
>
> *9 Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"*

> *"Where people come together and really focus on listening to the Lord, they just want to hear God concerning [the challenge], in uniformity of heart, and the Lord speaks to them. Before you know it, someone gets a part of the solution…" - Project Contributor*

EXPLORING THE PILLAR

Opportunities to innovate often come as a result of a difficulty or challenge. This is especially true when the challenge has significant complexity to it. It is also true when there is a big gap between the values people stand for and the situation they are in.

This brings to mind the desire expressed in King Solomon's prayer (1 Kings 3). He prayed for a discerning heart when everything was uncertain and complex. Unclear situations are invitations to seek God's wisdom, so we can act wisely even when outcomes cannot yet be seen. A challenge can be something to overcome, or it can be a warning not to continue. The wisdom to discern is received through humility, as we

acknowledge our limits and seek guidance.

These types of challenges require support from our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our faith community can help give us the capacity to manage complexity. When we look at innovation as resolving a challenge in community together with God's wisdom, innovation becomes an expression of faithfulness. The next steps taken in this way clarify the path forward even when things are uncertain.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Encouragement for Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Uncertainty Is an Invitation, not an Obstacle. It is tempting to treat ambiguity as a problem to be solved quickly, or a reason not to address an issue. When the outcome is uncertain, treat it as a gift of freedom from the pressure to get a quick plan into action. Treat it as an invitation into a posture of discernment, asking God what the next faithful step might be. Solomon did not ask for wealth or victory. He asked for a listening heart. That prayer, offered when he stood in front of a complex and growing kingdom, suggests that the wisest response to a difficult challenge is not to tighten control or abandon the task. It is to open ourselves more fully to God's wisdom. For the spiritual innovator, uncertainty is a place where dependence on God deepens and creative possibilities expand. Discernment can lead us to engage or to wisely walk away. Either way, uncertainty serves as an invitation, not an obstacle.

Humility Unlocks Seeing. One of the quiet dangers in innovation work is the tendency to overestimate what we know and underestimate what we do not. Ministries and leaders can assume certainty. But in reality, uncertainty is closer to the truth. When a leader overestimates what they know, it blocks their personal curiosity, a curiosity that might lead to fresh ways forward. Humility is an attitude or posture that makes wisdom accessible. When we assume that we do not know, we are open to observing what we may never have seen before. Cultivating this honest not-knowing before God and our ministry team or partners creates room for insights that a more confident posture might have missed.

COMMUNITY IS GOD'S GIFT. Community conversations make clearer what we are hearing from God. When we tell people our thoughts, we get the chance to clarify our ideas. Talking about them allows others to reflect on those ideas with us. God often uses that process to speak to us. The gifts of God's Spirit are part of this discernment process. There are different categories of spiritual gifts given to people in Christ that can clearly help us in discernment. The gifts that have to do with "utterance" are the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, prophecy, discerning of spirits, and teaching (1 Corinthians 12:8, 10, 28, 29; Romans 12:6, 7). Telling our thoughts to sisters and brothers with those spiritual gifts could really be helpful. But equally helpful would be discussing an idea with any of the people with practical ministry gifts like helping, administration, serving, comforting, giving, and acts of mercy (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:7–8). They can help you think through how to turn an idea into action. There are other gifts as well that can help. But clearly these gifts of God in the Body of Christ help us address the emerging challenges we face.

WHY THIS IS DIFFICULT

Challenges to Integrating this Pillar into Innovation Work

Habits Are a Mixed Blessing. There are two things that help us in a ministry: the ministry leader's personal habits and consistency in ministry organization. Both things make it easy for people, because they know what to expect and things move forward with less friction. That is a blessing. Ministry routines also help people relate to the public uniformly. However, it’s not a blessing that habits and routines do not usually encourage curiosity. They encourage people to think they have everything figured out. Many of the systems that need to innovate—churches, agencies, organizations—have been shaped by decades of routines, frameworks, and assumptions that quietly do the thinking for us. Even when leaders genuinely desire discernment, they are hindered because of the ways we have always done things. Those ways reward predictable outcomes and penalize the kind of open-ended exploration that emerging challenges demand. The spiritual innovator must reckon honestly with the possibility that existing

ministries may be designed to avoid the very ambiguity or uncertainty that God's wisdom is meant to address. Uncertainty is an invitation.

The Illusion of Mastery. Three of the causes that keep us from humbly seeking discernment are expectations from those we lead, habits of thought, and the standard solutions used in ministry. The first is the pressure to be confident in our leadership. The people we serve expect us to be both confident in how we lead and competent in leading. That expectation encourages leaders to focus on things that are clear and to address uncertainties with overconfidence. The second is that it is easier to continue with what we have always thought instead of humbly seeing a situation or uncertainty the way it actually is. These habits of thought can keep us from accepting that something is very different from what we expect. Then there are standard solutions. Although these are helpful, just like habits of thought and confidence in leadership, they can also keep us from humbly accepting new or uncertain things.

One example illustrates all three. It is related to youth at church. When youth get old enough and graduate from highly structured youth programs, they often leave church. The standard solution for that is to integrate youth and young adults into the core life and serving teams of the church. A leader's habit of thought, which is to prioritize people coming to church, means the leader is following their calling. But the deeper reasons for youth leaving may be their intellectual doubts about the faith, society's shifting moral paradigms, or the hypocrisy they see at church. For a leader to clearly see the details of these deeper reasons requires humility and vulnerability. These are required to sit with not-knowing long enough for God's wisdom to surface.

Community Rhythms Are Uneven. In volunteer-driven or tightly resourced organizations, the workload normally falls on a small core of highly competent, already-overextended people. That is then combined with an imbalance of available time for the innovation process. Paid staff have more time to dedicate than volunteer staff who help out after their regular jobs. A person may come into conflict with a long-standing unpaid volunteer who holds a lot of social authority in the community. Navigating all of those

dynamics can be challenging.

HOW TO RESPOND

Ideas to Integrate this Pillar with a Spiritual Framework

Run a Flip It Session. There is an innovation activity tool called Flip It. It helps to bring out honest concerns and helps us to see them as opportunities. It addresses the mixed blessing of community. Here is how to do it: Post four to eight flip-chart sheets on a wall. Label the bottom row FEAR and the top row HOPE. Name the topic (a ministry, program, or emerging challenge). Give participants 5–10 minutes to write concerns and fears on sticky notes; post them along the FEAR row and briefly discuss. Then invite the group to spend 10–15 minutes "flipping" each fear into a hope, writing reframed sticky notes for the HOPE row. You can then vote on the hopes people can act on. Move the winners to a TRACTION sheet and brainstorm concrete next steps. You can find a fuller explanation of this activity in the Toolbox (Explore More in the Toolbox).

Play Talking Chips. This innovation activity is helpful because it shows the value of everyone's opinion. It also helps draw out the quieter people in the group. It structurally embodies the honoring of one another. Here is how you do it: Before the meeting begins, give each person a single chip—it can be a coin or small stone. Clearly describe the question or challenge the group is to discuss. You might even write it out and put it on the table. To speak, a participant places their chip (coin or rock) in the center of the group. They may not speak again until every chip has been played. Once all chips are in the center, participants take back their chip and the cycle repeats. The facilitator's only job is to protect the rule; the group self-manages the flow or order of who speaks. That can be random. You can find a fuller explanation of this activity in the appendix.

Change Where You Innovate. Sometimes the key to innovation isn't what you do but where you do it. What might feel very normal in one place becomes a game-changing experience in another location. Canon Michael Green shared the power of changing where we innovate when he reflected on his leadership of the Decade of Evangelism Springboard

Initiative in the Church of England. "We tried all the programs and approaches and study guides, and more. But the statement that we found changed more lives to engage in evangelism was a simple one: 'Do the orthodox thing in the unorthodox place.' If you're practicing your choir pieces, do it in a public square. If you're doing a baptism, do it down by the river, and you'll likely end up baptising more people than you planned on. If you're preaching, do it in the pub. If you're doing a Bible study, do it in a cafe."

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES TO EXPLORE

- ***Proverbs 2:1–6*** — The Pursuit of Wisdom as Hidden Treasure
- ***Daniel 2:19–23*** — Wisdom Revealed in the Night
- ***Exodus 18:13–24*** — Jethro's Counsel and the Wisdom of Outside Voices

PILLAR PRAYER

Dear good God, maker of all that is. We are opening our eyes to the depth of complexity there is in ministry. Thank you for helping us to see our community and the wider society as it is, with all of the relationships and challenges it represents. Help us to understand where our normal way of handling ministry is insufficient. Help us let go of that, even if it is a tradition. We are here to love the people in our society, not the comfort of the way we do things.

Thank you for keeping us humble. It really is your posture, Lord Jesus. And although it is difficult sometimes to see where we or even where our ministry community has a posture or habit that keeps us from acting with humility, please give us humility as a gift. It will help us love you better and our neighbor as well.

Thank you for the community you have given us. Thank you for all the gifts you have given them. They have skills and insights; they have wisdom and discernment. Please give us unity of heart and mind, a real peace in our midst so that our relationships might be strong with each other, with you, and with our society.

	In the name of our Lord Jesus we pray, *AMEN*

SECTION TWO

Toolbox - Spirituality and Innovation

One practical exercise for each of the ten pillars. Open the box when a specific job needs doing.

1 PILLAR ONE TOOL

1 Community Learning and Discernment

Return to the pillar

Innovation Assessment

Innovation Assessment: To identify which type of innovator you are, consider using this simply Innovator Assessment. Once you have taken the assessment, use the prompt below to do analysis of how your innovator archetype integrates with other personality assessments you might have taken:

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT INTEGRATION PROMPT

You are an executive coach, leadership development consultant, and expert in personal assessment interpretation.

- Using Carla Johnson's Innovation Archetype framework as the primary lens, analyze how my Innovation Archetype aligns with the other assessment results I provide.
- Innovation Archetype: [Enter Innovation Archetype and any related details]
- Using XX Spiritual Gift Assessment
- Spiritual Gift List: [Enter Spiritual Gift answer]
- Additional Assessments to Compare: [Include only the assessments you want analyzed]
- Examples:

- Working Genius: [results]
- CliftonStrengths (StrengthsFinder): [Top 5 strengths]
- Enneagram: [type]
- Myers-Briggs (MBTI): [type]
- DISC: [style]
- MCode [motivation]
- Other assessments: [results]

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Begin with a brief overview of my Innovation Archetype, including its key strengths, motivations, contributions, and potential blind spots.
2. Compare the Innovation Archetype to each assessment provided.
3. Identify areas of strong alignment where multiple assessments point to similar strengths, preferences, motivations, or behaviors.
4. Identify any tensions, contradictions, or growth edges where assessments suggest different tendencies.
5. Highlight recurring themes that appear across multiple assessments.
6. Explain how these insights may influence:
    - Innovation and creativity
    - Problem-solving approach
    - Communication style
    - Collaboration preferences
    - Leadership tendencies
    - Personal growth opportunities
7. Provide practical recommendations for leveraging strengths and addressing potential blind spots.
8. Include 3-5 reflection questions to support deeper self-awareness and development.

OUTPUT REQUIREMENTS

- Limit the report to approximately 1-2 pages.
- Use clear, professional language suitable for personal development.
- Include the following sections:
    - Executive Summary
    - Innovation Archetype Overview
    - Cross-Assessment Alignment Analysis
    - Key Strengths and Growth Opportunities
    - Development Recommendations

    - Reflection Questions
- Focus on patterns and insights rather than simply restating assessment definitions.
- Where assessment results appear to conflict, explain possible interpretations instead of treating one assessment as more valid than another.
- Clearly state that assessments are developmental tools intended for self-awareness and should not be viewed as definitive measures of capability or potential.

NON-AI VERSION OF THE ACTIVITY — INNOVATION ARCHETYPE ALIGNMENT EXERCISE

1. Create Your Comparison Grid

On a sheet of paper, make a table with these columns:

Innovation Archetype	Spiritual Gifts	Assessment 1	Assessment 2	Assessment 3

Write your Innovation Archetype strengths, motivations, and blind spots in the first column. For example, Carla Johnson's archetypes include roles such as Strategist, Collaborator, Culture Shaper, Provocateur, Psychologist, and Orchestrator. [carlajohnson.co]

2. List Key Themes

Under each assessment, write 5-10 words or phrases that describe:

- Strengths
- Motivations
- Preferred ways of working
- Potential blind spots

Keep it simple. Use keywords rather than full definitions.

3. Look for Alignment

Draw lines connecting similar themes across assessments. Examples:

- Strategic thinking ↔ Strategy gift ↔ CliftonStrengths Strategic
- Building relationships ↔ Encouragement ↔ Collaborator archetype
- Challenging assumptions ↔ Prophet ↔ Provocateur archetype

Circle themes that appear in three or more places.

4. Look for Tensions

Put a star (*) next to any results that seem to pull in different directions. Examples:

- Independent thinker vs. consensus builder
- Fast action vs. careful analysis
- Big-picture vision vs. detailed execution

Ask: "When do I naturally lean toward one side versus the other?"

5. Identify Recurring Patterns

On a new section of the page, complete these sentences:

- I consistently contribute by: _____
- I am energized by: _____
- Others likely experience me as: _____
- I may overlook: _____
- My unique innovation contribution is: _____

6. Apply the Insights

Reflect on:

- How do these patterns influence my innovation work?
- How do they shape the way I solve problems?
- How do they affect teamwork and leadership?
- What strengths should I lean into more?
- What blind spots should I intentionally address?

7. Reflection Questions

1. Which themes showed up most often across assessments?
2. What surprised me about the connections?
3. Where do I see tension between different parts of my profile?
4. How does my faith or spiritual gifting influence the way I innovate?
5. What is one growth area I want to focus on next?

2 PILLAR TWO TOOL

2 Testimony: Stories of God's Work are Spiritual Witness

Return to the pillar

The Four Signals Framework

The next time you are meeting with your team reviewing stories, listen for four signals inside stories.

1. **Surprise**
    - "What happened that no one expected?"
    - Unexpected events frequently reveal emerging opportunities.
2. **Provision**
    - "What resources appeared when needed?"
    - Look for relationships, capacity, funding, influence, wisdom, or timing.
3. **Tension**
    - "What obstacle appears repeatedly?"
    - Tensions often identify problems worth solving.
4. **Invitation**
    - "What action seems to be calling us forward?"
    - This moves discernment toward experimentation.

3 PILLAR THREE TOOL

3 Justice: Making Things Right

Return to the pillar

Beauty For Ashes Canvas

This canvas transforms the traditional deficit-based approach into one focused on asset discovery. By identifying existing strengths, gifts, and relationships, we align innovation with the theological promise of Isaiah 61:3—uncovering beauty that God has already planted within a community.

- Click here to download the Canvas PDF

4 PILLAR FOUR TOOL

4 Creating for Mutual Respect

Return to the pillar

1-2-4-All: Liberating Community Wisdom

- **Frame the Inquiry:** Articulate a core question that touches upon a persistent tension or emerging opportunity within your mission field.
- **1: Silent Discernment (1-2 min):** Provide space for each individual to prayerfully attend to the question in quiet reflection.
- **2: Shared Witness in Pairs (4 min):** In pairs, practice mutual respect by giving each person two minutes to offer their insights without interruption.
- **4: Communal Testing in Fours (8 min):** Join two pairs to notice patterns and themes. Each participant continues to steward their voice for two minutes.
- **All: Gathering the Harvest:** Reconvene the full body to name the insights that have surfaced, allowing the collective wisdom of the Spirit to clarify the path forward.

5 PILLAR FIVE TOOL

5 Progress towards Fruitfulness

Return to the pillar

Innovator's Prayer of Indifference

> *Father,*
>
> *As I seek to serve You in my innovation work, free me from attachment to my own ideas, solutions, and outcomes.*
>
> *Make me indifferent to success or failure, recognition or obscurity, rapid progress or slow learning, except insofar as they help accomplish Your will.*
>
> *When an experiment succeeds, keep me humble. When it fails, keep me teachable. Protect me from the temptation to force outcomes that serve my preferences more than the people I serve.*
>
> *Help me listen deeply to those I am trying to help, receiving their needs with compassion rather than defending my assumptions. Give me courage to test new possibilities, wisdom to learn from what happens, and freedom to let go of what is not bearing fruit.*
>
> *I surrender my plans, expectations, reputation, and desires to You. Teach me to seek Your presence in every discovery and insight; even in the setbacks and surprises.*

> *Guide my imagination. May I be faithful to the process You have given, attentive to the people You love, and obedient to the future You are revealing.*
>
> *Amen.*

6 PILLAR SIX TOOL

6 Reframe Systems in God's Spirit

Return to the pillar

Capacity-to-Impact Spectrum Activity

Purpose: Identify ministries and programs that may be causing burnout because they require high effort but produce limited fruit.

1. **Draw the Spectrum**
    - Vertical axis: Effort Required (Low to High)
    - Horizontal axis: Fruitfulness (Low to High)
2. **List Your Current Ministries**
    - Write each ministry, program, or initiative on a sticky note.
3. **Place Each Item on the Grid**
    - As a team, decide where each ministry belongs based on:
        - How much ongoing effort it requires
        - How much spiritual fruit it produces
4. **Discuss the Results**
    - Which initiatives are high effort, low fruitfulness?
    - Which are low effort, high fruitfulness?
    - Where are people relying on constant heroic effort?
5. **Decide One Next Step**
    - Stop, simplify, redesign, or strengthen one ministry based on what you learned.

7 PILLAR SEVEN TOOL

7 Spiritual Awareness in the Midst of Complexity and Ambiguity

Return to the pillar

Gift Risk Card Exercise

1. **Name a Risk** — Write down one significant risk facing your project or idea.
2. **Create a Gift Risk Card** — Include:
    - Project name
    - The risk
    - One prayer/support request
    - 2-3 ways others can help
3. **Gift the Risk** — Share your card with someone and briefly explain it.
4. **Accept the Risk** — The recipient chooses one way they will help carry the burden.
5. **Follow Up** — Check in within a week and share progress, insights, or encouragement.

8 PILLAR EIGHT TOOL

8 Move Towards Action with Patience and Contentedness

Return to the pillar

Faith & Wisdom Exercise

1. **15% Solution** — Ask: "What can I do right now with the authority, resources, and freedom I already have?" Write down 1-3 immediate actions.
2. **Post-Up** — In silence, write insights, ideas, concerns, questions, or prayers on sticky notes.
3. **Connect the Two** — Review the Post-Up ideas and ask:
    - What new opportunities emerged?
    - What assumptions need rethinking?
    - Which 15% actions seem most important now?
4. **Share & Discern** — Discuss the themes together (or first in groups of 3-4 if the group is large). Look for patterns, confirmation, and wisdom.
5. **15% Solution Again** — Rewrite your 1-3 immediate actions based on what emerged from the discussion.
6. **Commit & Act** — Choose one action to take this week and share it with the group.

9 PILLAR NINE TOOL

9 Identity Precedes Innovation

Return to the pillar

Identity Matching Exercise

1. **List Your Identity Markers** — Write down characteristics, interests, skills, roles, accomplishments, and values that help define who you are.
2. **List Your Identity in Christ** — Read relevant Scripture and write down descriptions of who God says you are in Christ.
3. **Match Them Up** — Place the two lists side by side and draw lines connecting your identity markers to your identity in Christ.
4. **Look for Gaps and Connections** — Ask:
    - Which identity markers are rooted in Christ?
    - Which ones depend on performance, status, or circumstances?
    - Which biblical identities give deeper meaning to who I am?
5. **Reflect** — Consider how your life might change if your primary identity came from who you are in Christ rather than what you do.

10 PILLAR TEN TOOL

10 God's Wisdom and Emerging Challenges

Return to the pillar

Piloting with Discernment

1. **Discern Readiness** — Before launching, ask:
    - Has God used your experiments to give clarity where needed?
    - What evidence, feedback, or conviction suggests it is time?
    - How might God want you to handle concerns that still need attention?
2. **Discern the Right Pilot Context** — Choose a location, group, or setting where you can learn the most. Ask:
    - Where is there openness to this idea?

    - Where might God already be at work?
    - Which context will give us the clearest feedback?
3. **Launch the Pilot** — Implement the solution in that specific context and pay attention to the whole system, not just individual activities.
4. **Listen & Observe** — Throughout the pilot, notice:
    - What is working?
    - What is not working?
    - What is surprising?
    - Where do you see energy, resistance, fruit, or unmet needs?
5. **Discern the Learning** — Reflect with your team and ask:
    - What are we learning about the solution?
    - What are we learning about the people being served?
    - What might God be saying through these results?
6. **Adapt & Decide** — Refine the solution and discern the next step:
    - Continue as planned
    - Modify the design
    - Expand to a new context
    - Pause or stop

Glossary

Each entry below gives the plain meaning first, then how the guide uses it. Idioms include the literal picture, because the words alone will not carry the meaning across languages. Pillar numbers show where a term first appears.

Numbers

1-2-4-All

(Pillar 4) — A way of running a discussion so that everyone speaks, not only the confident or senior people. A question is given; each person thinks alone (1), then talks in pairs (2), then in groups of four (4), then the whole group shares (All). Ideas build from the bottom up before any one voice can dominate.

15% Solution

(Pillar 8) — An exercise that asks: what can I do right now, using only the authority, money and freedom I already have? It is used when a group knows what it wants but feels stuck waiting for permission or resources. The name means you act on the small part you control rather than the whole.

A–B

Already but not yet

(Pillar 3, written there as "here but not yet") — A theological idea that God's kingdom has truly begun in Jesus but is not yet complete. For innovators it means holding two things together: real improvement is possible now, and no solution will be perfect before Christ returns.

Appreciative Interviews

(Pillar 4) — A structured conversation in pairs where each person tells the story of a past success and the listener's task is to name the hidden strengths that made it

possible. It works when a group is defensive about change, because it starts with what already works rather than what is broken. From the Liberating Structures collection.

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)

(Pillar 3) — An approach that begins with what a community already has — skills, relationships, land, faith, traditions — instead of listing what it lacks. It treats people as contributors rather than as recipients of help.

Assumptions Altar

(Pillar 5) — A practice created for this guide. You write down the assumptions behind your project (about time, results, resources) and deliberately surrender them to God in prayer, keeping them somewhere visible so the team can see what has been given over. An "altar" here is the biblical place of offering, not a piece of furniture.

Badge of honor

(Pillar 1, idiom) — Literally, a medal worn to show an achievement. Figuratively, something a person is proud of that perhaps they should not be. The guide says innovators "wear solitude as a badge of honor" — meaning they boast about working alone.

Beauty for Ashes

(Pillar 3) — A phrase from Isaiah 61:3, where God exchanges the ashes of mourning for a crown of beauty. In this guide it names an approach that looks for the God-given beauty already present in a suffering community.

Beauty for Ashes Canvas

(Pillar 3 Tool) — The one-page worksheet in the Toolbox that applies Asset-Based Community Development to innovation: you map a community's existing assets first, then design solutions that amplify them.

Bias toward action

(Pillar 3) — A strong natural preference for doing something rather than studying, discussing or waiting. "Bias" here means a leaning or tendency, not prejudice. The guide treats it as a strength that can crowd out listening.

Body of Christ

(Pillar 1) — Paul's picture in 1 Corinthians 12 of the church as one body with many different parts, each necessary. In the guide it is the theological reason why innovation should be collaborative rather than solitary.

Bumper cars

(Pillar 5, idiom) — Small electric cars at a fairground that people drive deliberately into one another, bouncing off in new directions. A contributor uses it to describe how purpose is usually found: by trying, colliding, repositioning and trying again, rather than by planning ahead.

Burnout theology

(Pillar 6) — A term coined in this guide for the unspoken belief that exhaustion proves spiritual devotion. The guide argues that exhaustion usually reveals a badly designed system, not a faithful heart.

C

Calling vs. Container

(Pillar 6) — A mapping exercise in this guide. The "calling" is a leader's lasting God-given assignment; the "containers" are the temporary programmes, meetings and structures built around it. Separating the two makes it possible to change a programme without feeling disloyal to the calling.

Canvas

(Pillar 3, 3 Tool) — In innovation, a single large sheet divided into labelled boxes that a team fills in together. It is a thinking worksheet, not a painting surface. Examples here are the Beauty for Ashes Canvas and the Marginalized Persona Canvas.

Capacity-to-Impact Spectrum

(Pillar 6, Pillar 6 Tool) — A grid exercise where each ministry activity is placed according to how much effort it demands and how much spiritual fruit it produces. Activities in the high-effort, low-fruit corner are candidates to stop, simplify or redesign.

Cathedral Thinking

(Pillar 5) — Planning for results that will take longer than one lifetime, named after medieval cathedrals whose builders knew they would never see them finished. It gives a team permission to pursue goals measured in decades.

Co-creation

(Pillar 1) — Making something together with the people it is meant to serve, so they shape the solution rather than only receive it. In this guide it also means creating together with God.

Creative discontent

(Pillar 8) — Healthy dissatisfaction that notices gaps and imagines something better. The guide contrasts it with anxious restlessness and pairs it with spiritual contentment.

D–F

Design Thinking

— A widely used innovation approach with five loose stages: understand the people affected, define the real problem, generate many ideas, build a rough version, test it. It is the background method behind much of this guide's practical advice.

Discernment

(throughout; Pillars 1, 2, 10) — Prayerful, careful judgement about what God is doing and what should be done next. It is slower than deciding and usually done with others. It is the word this guide uses where a business book would say "decision-making".

Disordered attachments

(Pillar 8) — A term from Ignatian spirituality for attachments that hold us more tightly than God does — to a reputation, an outcome, a favourite idea. "Disordered" means out of proper order, not broken.

Driver's seat, in the

(Pillar 5, idiom) — Literally the seat where a person steers a vehicle. Figuratively, being in control. "Putting God in the driver's seat" means letting God direct the experimentation rather than steering it ourselves.

Empathy gathering

(Pillars 3, 5, 7) — The deliberate work of listening to the people a solution is meant to serve, long enough to understand their experience from inside. In this guide it is a spiritual discipline, not only a research step.

Experiment

(Pillars 1, 5) — A small, deliberate test designed to produce learning, run in a way where failure is acceptable and informative. It does not mean careless or unserious.

Facilitator / facilitation

(Pillar 10 Tool) — The person who guides a group process and protects the rules, without contributing their own opinions or steering the conclusion. In Talking Chips, the facilitator's only job is to guard the rule.

Faithfulness and fruitfulness

(Pillar 5) — Faithfulness is steady obedience over time; fruitfulness is the visible good that results. The pillar argues these are connected but not the same, and that God controls the timing of fruit.

Feedback loop

(Pillar 6) — A repeating cycle in which the results of an action are fed back and change the next action. The guide compares it to repentance and renewal.

Field guide

(title) — A short practical book carried by someone doing the work, meant to be consulted while working rather than studied beforehand. Birdwatchers and botanists carry field guides; "the field" is the place of actual work.

Flip It

(Pillar 8, 10) — A group activity where people write their fears on sticky notes, then rewrite each fear as a hope, then choose which hopes they can act on. "Flip" means to turn something over to see its other side. From the Liberating Structures collection.

Four Signals Framework

(Pillar 2 Tool) — A listening guide for reviewing stories as a team, attending to four things: surprise, provision, tension and invitation. Each signal points toward a different kind of opportunity.

G–I

Gift Risk Card

(Pillar 7, Pillar 7 Tool) — A practice created for this guide, borrowing the form of a gift card. You write your project, one specific risk, a prayer request and two or three ways

others could help, then give the card to someone who agrees to carry part of that burden with you.

Glass half full

(Pillar 8, idiom) — A glass containing water to the middle can be described as half full or half empty. The phrase contrasts a hopeful reading of a situation with a discouraged one, using identical facts.

Go it alone

(Pillar 1, idiom) — To do something without help or partners. The guide names this as a myth that innovation culture teaches.

Holy Curiosity data audit

(Pillar 6) — A practice in this guide where a team reviews its numbers alongside human stories, asking where life is flourishing and where people are quietly falling through the cracks. The aim is to treat data as attentive listening rather than as judgement of performance.

Indifference / Prayer of Indifference

(Pillar 5, Pillar 5 Tool) — In Ignatian spirituality, indifference means inner freedom from any outcome except God's will. It does **not** mean not caring — nearly the opposite of the ordinary English word. The innovator prays to be equally willing for the experiment to succeed or fail.

Innovation

Innovation is Spirit-led, people-honoring work that turns a new (or newly re-combined) idea into a better way of serving—one that fits local culture, addresses real needs and longings, and helps individuals and communities flourish—through courageous learning and iteration. Innovation in Christian cross-cultural ministry turns Spirit-led, courageous, culturally-fitting, and life-giving resourcefulness into new sustainable solutions.

Innovation Archetype

(Pillar 1, Pillar 1 Tool) — A named pattern describing how a person naturally contributes to innovation. This guide uses Carla Johnson's framework, whose archetypes include Strategist, Collaborator, Culture Shaper, Provocateur, Psychologist and Orchestrator. "Archetype" means a basic recurring type.

Iteration / iterative

(Pillar 3, 8) — Repeating a cycle of building, testing and improving, where each round starts from what the previous round taught. Not the same as repeating the same thing unchanged.

J–M

Jubilee, Year of

(Pillar 3) — In Leviticus 25, every fiftieth year debts were cancelled, slaves freed and land returned to its original families. It was God's built-in correction for accumulated injustice.

Jubilee Brainstorming

(Pillar 3) — An idea-generating session in this guide that imagines a future in which Jubilee-style restoration has already happened, then asks what innovation would support that future.

Liberating Structures

— A published collection of simple facilitation methods by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless, free to use and available at liberatingstructures.com. 1-2-4-All, 15% Solution, Post-Up, Appreciative Interviews and Talking Chips all come from it.

Many hands make light work

(Pillar 1, proverb) — An English proverb from the 1300s meaning that shared labour is easier for everyone. The guide notes its limit: it applies to carrying out a plan, not to designing one.

Marginalized

(Pillar 3) — Pushed to the edge of a society's attention, resources and decisions. The margin is the blank edge of a page; marginalized people are those whose needs are not written into the main text of how things work.

Marginalized Persona Canvas

(Pillar 3) — A worksheet in this guide that builds a detailed profile of a vulnerable person rather than an average user, so that solutions can be tested against their specific needs.

Metrics

(Pillar 6, Pillar 8) — The specific numbers an organisation chooses to measure and report, such as attendance or baptisms. The guide notes that faith communities often distrust them, and argues they can serve the Spirit's work.

Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

(Pillar 3, written there as "minimally viable product") — The smallest, simplest version of a solution that still works well enough to test with real people and produce real learning. "Viable" means able to survive or function.

Mired down

(Pillar 3, idiom) — A mire is deep mud. To be mired down is to be stuck and unable to move forward, as a cart is stuck in mud.

Missional

(Pillar 8) — Describing a community organised around participating in God's mission in the world, rather than around maintaining its own institutional life.

N–R

NLT

(front matter) — New Living Translation, an English Bible translation that renders meaning in natural modern English rather than word-for-word. It is the translation quoted throughout this guide. Scripture quotations in this document are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Nonference

(front matter) — A word invented by combining "non" and "conference". It describes a gathering with no fixed programme of speakers, where participants propose and lead the sessions themselves. The InnoFaith Nonference of 2024 is where this guide began.

Persona

(Pillar 3) — A short written portrait of one imagined but realistic person who represents a group you are serving, with a name, situation, needs and pressures. Designing for one specific person keeps a team from designing for nobody in particular.

Pillar

(throughout) — A column that holds up a building. This guide uses ten pillars as both structure and inspiration: each holds up an approach to innovation, and each is worth looking at.

Pilot

(Pillar 10 Tool) — A full version of a solution run in one limited setting before wider release, to learn how it behaves in real conditions. A pilot is larger than an experiment and smaller than a launch.

Post-Up

(Pillar 8) — Silent brainstorming where everyone writes ideas on sticky notes individually before anything is said aloud, then posts them up on a wall. The silence protects people who think before they speak. From the Liberating Structures collection.

Prototype

(Pillar 2) — A rough, cheap, unfinished version of an idea, built quickly so people can react to something concrete rather than to a description.

Red Teaming

(Pillar 3) — An exercise where part of the group deliberately argues against a proposal and looks for its weaknesses. The name comes from military training, where the opposing force was marked in red on the map.

Return on Investment (ROI)

(Pillar 8) — The benefit gained compared with the money, time and effort spent. The guide lists it among the measures that can pressure innovators toward anxious speed.

S

Sabbath (as a work rhythm)

(Pillar 5) — Beyond the weekly day of rest, a deliberate pause built into a period of intense work for reflection and recovery. The guide suggests placing one inside a sprint.

Scenario Planning

(Pillar 3) — Imagining several different plausible futures in detail, then asking what each would require of you. It prepares a team for more than one outcome instead of betting on a single forecast.

Simplicity on the other side of complexity

(Pillar 7) — A phrase attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., contrasting shallow simplicity (which ignores detail) with hard-won simplicity (which has passed through all the detail and found the core truth beyond it). Only the second is worth having.

Speed to market

(Pillar 8) — How quickly an idea reaches the people who will use it. A commercial measure that the guide names as a source of pressure on ministry innovators.

Spiritual direction / spiritual director

(front matter) — An ancient practice, strongest in Catholic and Anglican traditions, in which a trained companion meets with a person regularly to help them notice God's presence in their life. A director listens and asks questions; they do not give orders, despite the name.

Sprint

(Pillar 5) — A short fixed period of focused work, usually one to four weeks, ending with something to review. Literally a short fast run. **Sprint planning** is the meeting that sets its goals and limits.

Stakeholder

(Pillar 3) — Anyone affected by a decision or solution, including people with no power over it. The guide's concern is with vulnerable stakeholders, who bear the consequences but are rarely consulted.

Status quo

(Pillar 5, 9) — Latin for the existing state of things; the way matters currently stand. Innovators are often described as dissatisfied with the status quo.

Strategic foresight

(Pillar 3, Pillar 5) — The discipline of studying trends and possible futures to prepare for them. The guide's contributor notes that purpose is usually seen in hindsight (looking back) rather than foresight (looking ahead).

Systems thinking

(Pillar 6) — Looking at how the parts of an organisation interact, rather than at individual people's effort or intentions. Its central insight, in W. Edwards Deming's words, is that a bad system defeats a good person every time.

T–V

Talking Chips

(Pillar 10) — A discussion method where each person holds one token. To speak you place your token in the centre, and you may not speak again until everyone's token is down. It gives quiet members guaranteed space and limits dominant voices. From the Liberating Structures collection.

Testimony

(Pillar 2) — A first-person account of what God has done, told to a community. In this guide it is a form of spiritual discernment, not a legal statement or a formulaic conversion story.

Theology of failure

(introduction) — A phrase used in this guide for taking failure seriously as part of faithful work: an experiment that does not succeed is not evidence that you disobeyed God, and it can deepen dependence on him.

Too good to be true

(Pillar 7, idiom) — Said of something so appealing that you should suspect it is not real. The guide applies it to solutions that seem to resolve a complex problem completely.

Toolbox

(Toolbox section) — The collection of practical exercises at the end of this guide, one for each pillar. Like a carpenter's box of tools, it is meant to be opened when a specific job needs doing.

Validate / validation

(Pillar 3) — Checking a solution against the real needs of real people to confirm it actually works for them, rather than assuming it does because it works in theory.

Attribution notes

These entries answer the "add references to tools that were not made up" item on your todo list.

Term	Origin
1-2-4-All, 15% Solution, Post-Up, Appreciative Interviews, Talking Chips	Liberating Structures, Lipmanowicz & McCandless (liberatingstructures.com)
Flip It	Also in the Liberating Structures family; widely used in facilitation
Innovation Archetype	Carla Johnson, *Re:Think Innovation*
Asset-Based Community Development	Kretzmann & McKnight, Northwestern University
"A bad system will beat a good person every time"	W. Edwards Deming
"99 percent of what goes wrong in systems…"	Donella Meadows
Prayer of Indifference	Ignatian tradition, after Ignatius of Loyola
Design Thinking, MVP, Red Teaming, Sprint	General innovation practice, no single author