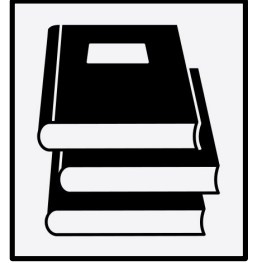
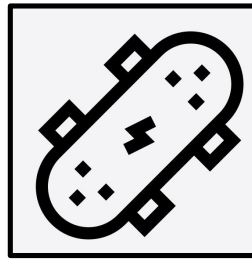


# Youth Ministry Planning and Strategy Towards a Fullness of Life for All



International Conference on Youth Ministry  
Towards a Fullness of Life for All

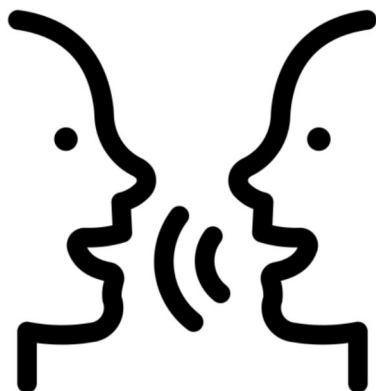
JOHNNY C. GO SJ

05 April 2024

09 - 10:15 am | 10:35 - 11:30 am



**CONVERSATION  
PIECES**



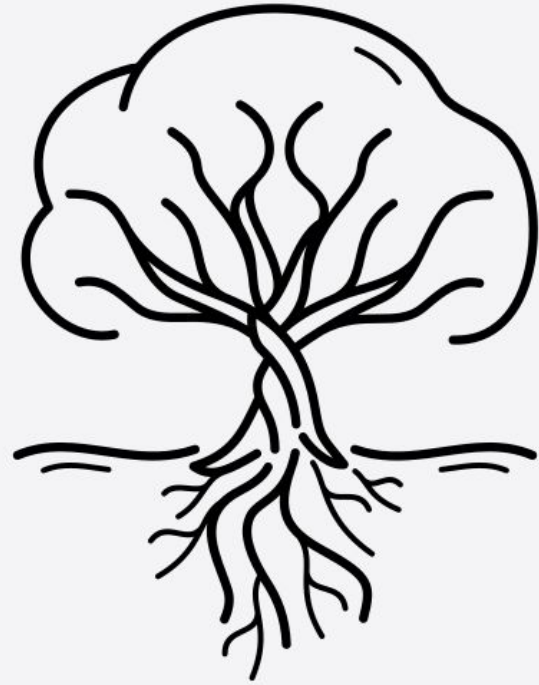
**TO PROVOKE  
THOUGHT + TALK**



**PAUSE  
REFLECT  
IMAGINE**

## Meaning

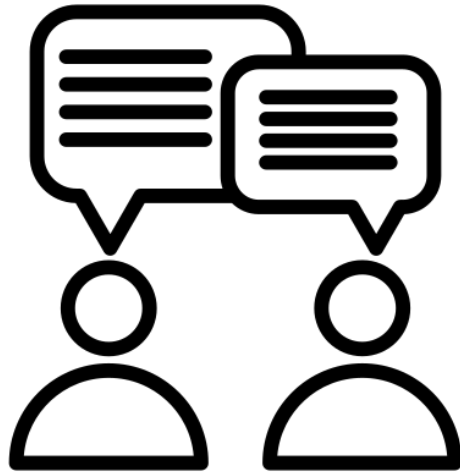
**CONNECT TO  
YOUR  
CONTEXT  
AND  
EXPERIENCE**



**PROVOCATIONS  
More Questions  
than Answers**



We learn by



**DOING**  
**LISTENING**  
**SHARING**

The Spirit of

***TANTUM***  
***QUANTUM***

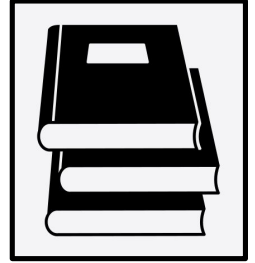
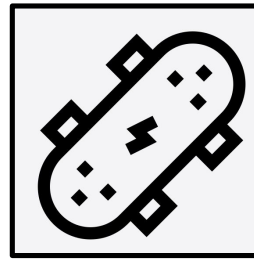
“insofar as...”

“to the extent that...”

Use whatever is useful.  
Forget the rest.



# Youth Ministry Planning and Strategy Towards a Fullness of Life for All



International Conference on Youth Ministry  
Towards a Fullness of Life for All

JOHNNY C. GO SJ

05 April 2024

09 - 10:15 am | 10:35 - 11:30 am



“New Normal” → “New Possible”

Prescriptions → Speculations



## **SPECULATIVE FORESIGHT**

Imagining plausible futures  
by exploring trends and drivers for change  
to foresee possible scenarios

**MOBILE  
DIGITAL  
TECHNOLOGY**



## **TECHNOLOGY**

**> AN EFFECTIVE TOOL  
THAT CAN IMPROVE  
OUR WORK & OUR LIVES**

**= A POWERFUL FORCE  
THAT INFLUENCES & TRANSFORMS  
THE WAY WE WORK, LIVE,  
THINK, & BELIEVE**



**Resulting Trends &  
Unintended Consequences  
of MOBILE DIGITAL  
TECHNOLOGY**

# Digital Technology: A Primary Driver of Change

## THE INTERNET

Invention of the **World Wide Web** (1989)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Mainstreaming of

**Facebook** (2004)

Six Degrees 1997

Friendster 2002

MySpace 2003

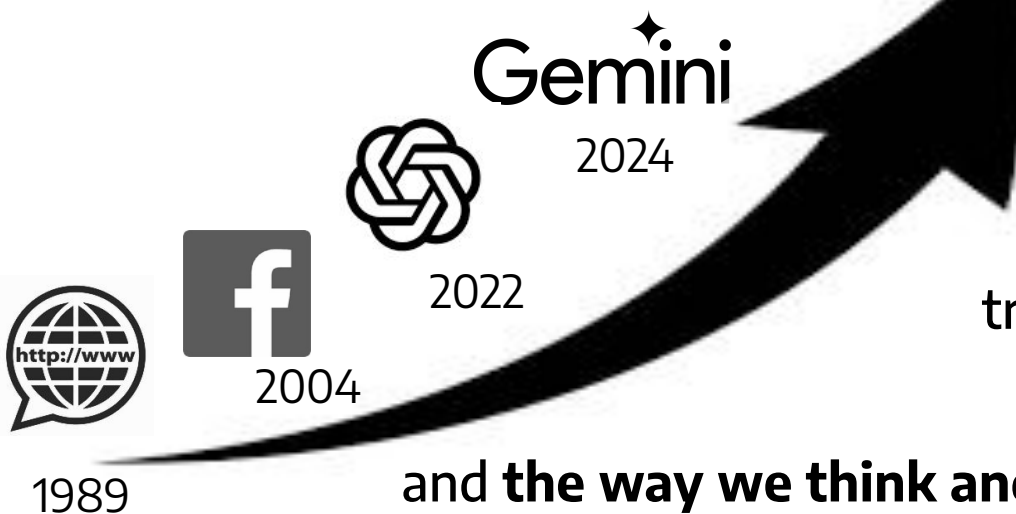


## GENERATIVE AI

Public release of **ChatGPT**

(30 Nov 2022)

The rise of GenAI is but a continuation of a trajectory that we have found ourselves on these last 35 years:



The way **digital** (and **mobile**) **technology** has been transforming the way we live and work

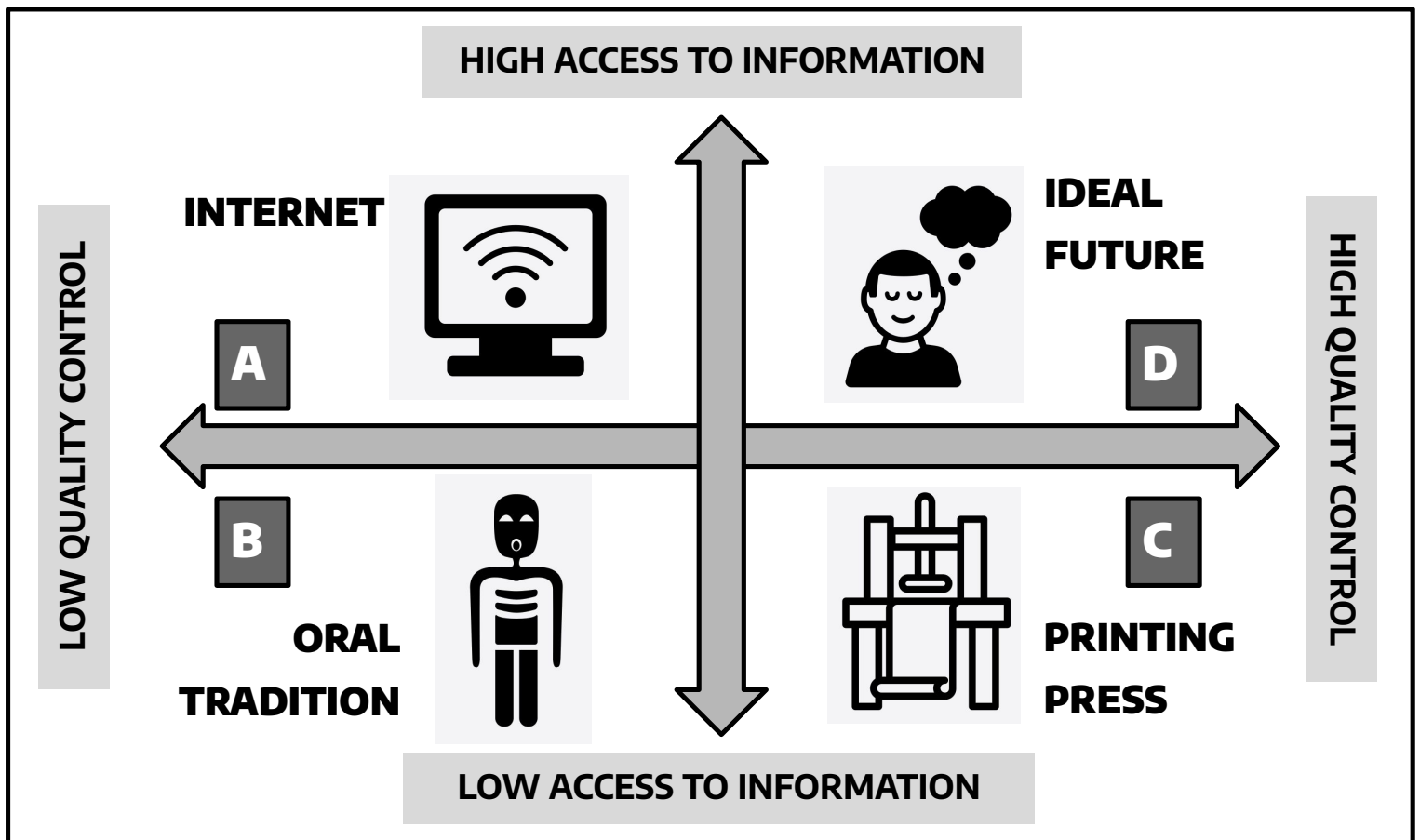
and **the way we think and learn and believe.**

#1

## Increasing access to information in general and to GenAI technologies in particular



There will remain a divide between the digital haves and digital have-nots, but this gap is expected to close as digital technology and all its content become increasingly available to the wider population.



WHAT THE  
INTERNET  
IS DOING TO  
OUR BRAINS



**THE** Nicholas Carr  
AUTHOR OF *THE BIG SWITCH*  
**SHALLOWS**

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

"A profoundly sharp thinker and writer... I have not only given this book to numerous friends, I actually changed my life in response to it." —Jonathan Safran Foer, *The Millionaire*

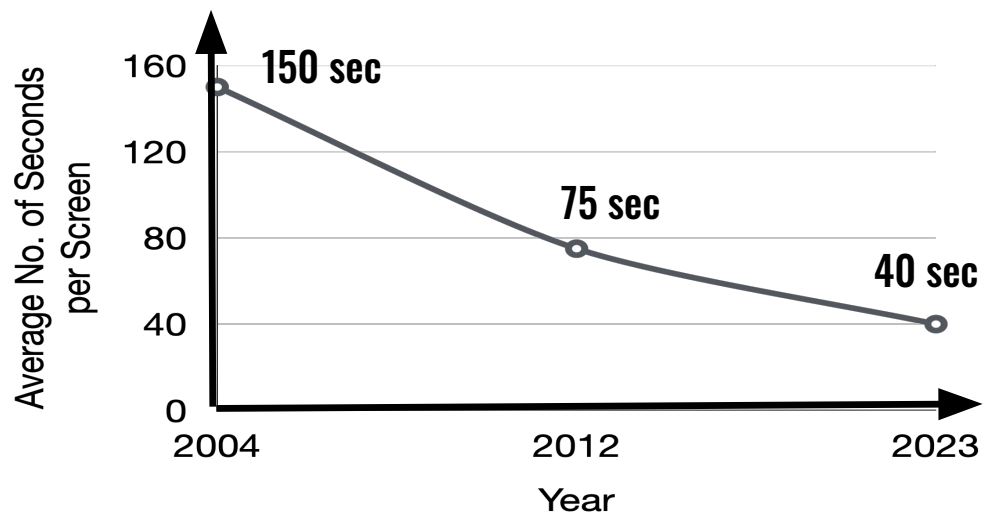
# Careful Reading & Thinking

## A Tendency to Skim

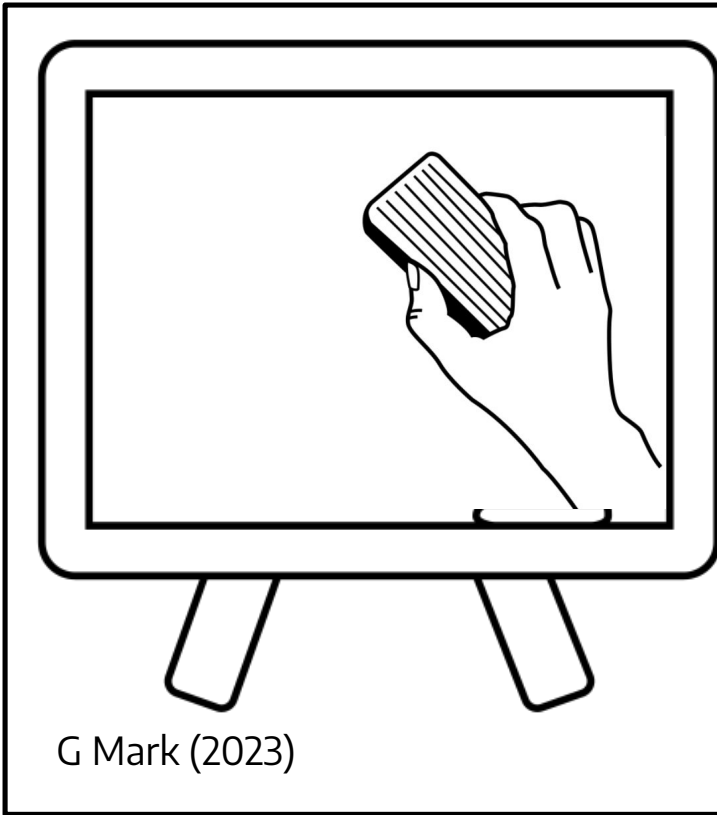


## Distraction Environment

Need to exert a constant effort to hold a single train of thought







G Mark (2023)

# The Myth of MULTITASKING

Each time  
we switch task  
is like ERASING  
everything  
on our whiteboard

## COGNITIVE FRACTURE



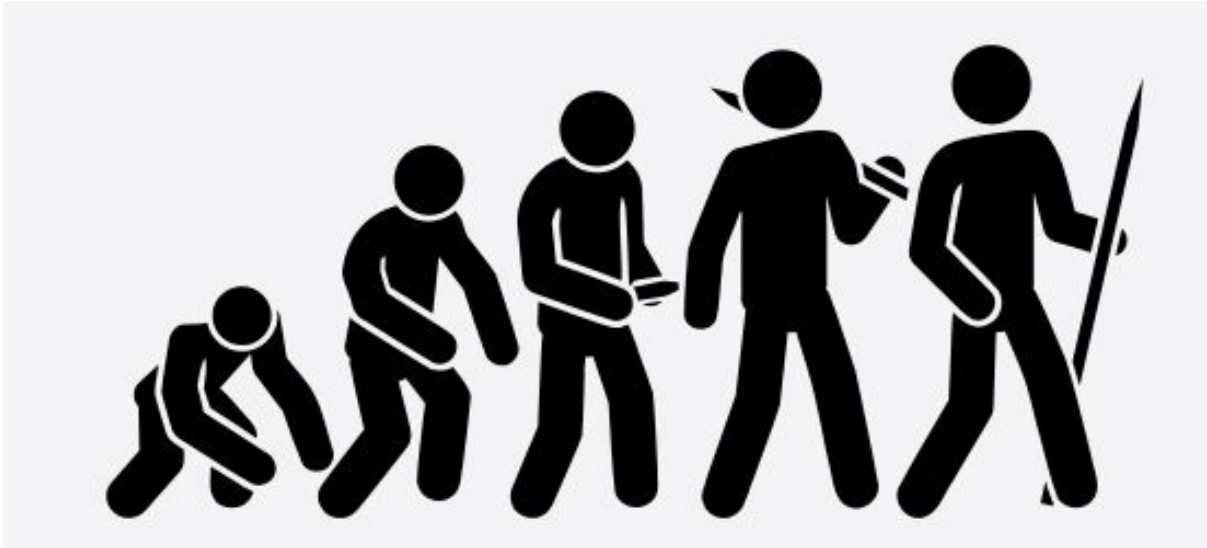
## THE INTERNET

**PLUS** PRODUCTIVITY  
**MINUS** FOCUS

- LEAP in INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, & COLLABORATION
- But with  
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES:
  - Constant Shift of Focus
  - Less Attention Spans
  - Polarization → Less Collaboration

# Reverse Evolution

From CULTIVATORS OF PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE



To HUNTERS & GATHERERS OF INFORMATION  
IN THE DIGITAL FOREST

## Unintended Consequences

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

FAKE NEWS

ADDICTION | DOOMSCROLLING

SHORTENED ATTENTION SPANS

INFLUENCER CULTURE

CULT FACTORIES | QANON

SEXUALIZATION OF KIDS

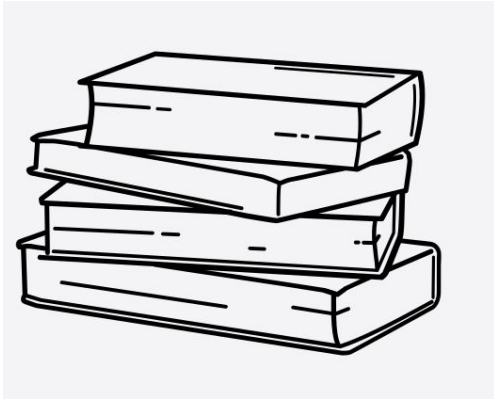
BOTS / DEEPPFAKES

POLARIZATION



## #2

### Devaluation of truth and truth-finding



It is unlikely that digital content will be regulated. Hence, for digitally accessed information, quality control will remain minimal. This absence of quality control, coupled with the tendency towards superficial and distracted thinking bred by the Internet, will continue to diminish the importance of truth and critical thinking.

#### RELIGIOUS PARTICULARITY & INDIVIDUALISM AMONG US TEENS (13 - 17 YEARS OLD)

BELIEFS ABOUT THE TRUTH OF RELIGIONS	US TOTAL	ROMAN CATHOLIC
Only one religion is true.	29%	19%
Many religions may be true.	60%	71%
There is very little truth in religions.	9%	9%
Don't know/refused.	2%	1%

National Survey of Youth & Religion (2002-03)

**RELIGIOUS PARTICULARITY & INDIVIDUALISM AMONG US TEENS  
(13 - 17 YEARS OLD)**

<b>BELIEFS ABOUT RELIGIOUS PARTICULARITY</b>	<b>US TOTAL</b>	<b>ROMAN CATHOLIC</b>
People should practice only one faith.	<b>46%</b>	<b>40%</b>
It is OK to practice religions besides one's own.	<b>51%</b>	<b>58%</b>
Don't know/refused.	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>

National Survey of Youth & Religion (2002-03)

**RELIGIOUS PARTICULARITY & INDIVIDUALISM AMONG US TEENS  
(13 - 17 YEARS OLD)**

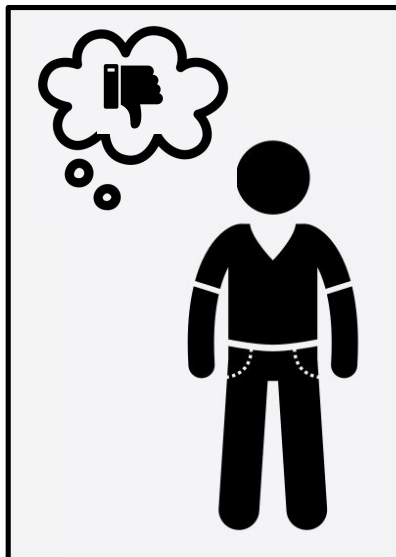
<b>OK TO PICK &amp; CHOOSE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WITHOUT ACCEPTING EVERYTHING</b>	<b>US TOTAL</b>	<b>ROMAN CATHOLIC</b>
Agree	<b>46%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Disagree	<b>52%</b>	<b>29%</b>
Don't know/refused.	<b>2%</b>	<b>-</b>

National Survey of Youth & Religion (2002-03)

**RELIGIOUS PARTICULARITY & INDIVIDUALISM AMONG US TEENS  
(13 - 17 YEARS OLD)**

<b>FOR BELIEVERS TO BE TRULY RELIGIOUS &amp; SPIRITUAL, THEY NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN A RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION.</b>	<b>US TOTAL</b>	<b>ROMAN CATHOLIC</b>
Agree	<b>32%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Disagree	<b>67%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Don't know/refused.	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

National Survey of Youth & Religion (2002-03)



**NONEs**

**SPIRITUAL**

**with no religious affiliation**  
including atheists



**SBNRs**

**SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS**

**with religious affiliation,**  
but do not practice

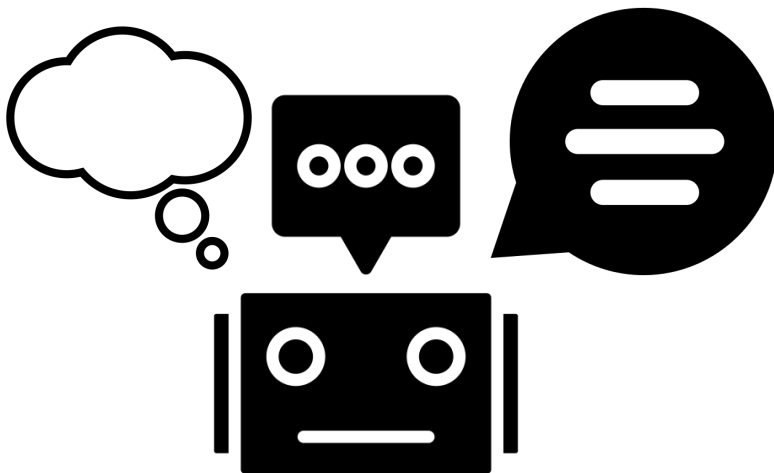
#3

## Shift from Organized Religion to “Spiritual Irreligiosity”



A study of belief in a British town:  
Decrease of the Religiously Devout  
+ the Rise of **Spiritual Seekers**  
(self-guided spiritual practitioners  
who aim to foster their sense of who they are).

L. Woodhead (2005)  
*The Spiritual Revolution*



GENERATIVE AI

- Learns patterns from information fed to it (text, images, audio)
- Creates content using language that resembles it
- Mimics human language, NOT human thought (as far as we know!)

# SAPIENCE

We used to define ourselves by reiterating our **intelligence** to distinguish ourselves from beasts.

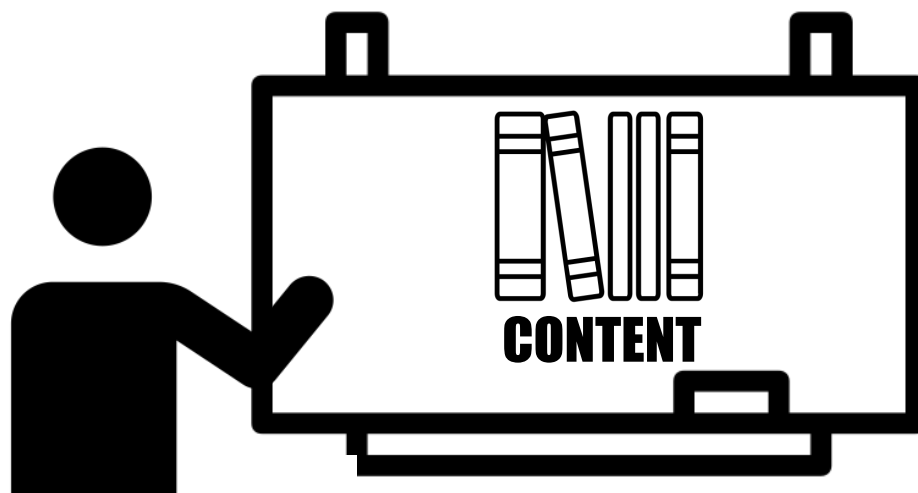
## Reverse Evolution II

# SENTIENCE

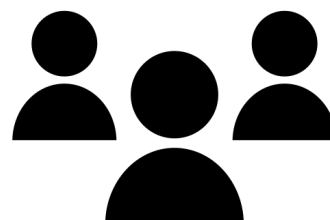
Now we distinguish ourselves from AI, and seek metaphysical shelter by emphasizing our **kinship to animals**.



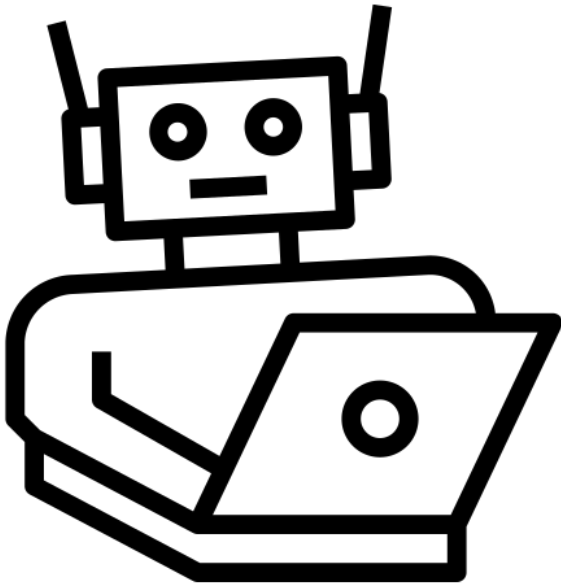
Megan O’Gieblin. *God, Human, Animal, Machine.*



What do we **TEACH**  
& **PREACH?**



# NO LONGER RELEVANT IN THE AGE OF AI



TEACHING & PREACHING  
cannot primarily be  
**SUPPLYING CONTENT**

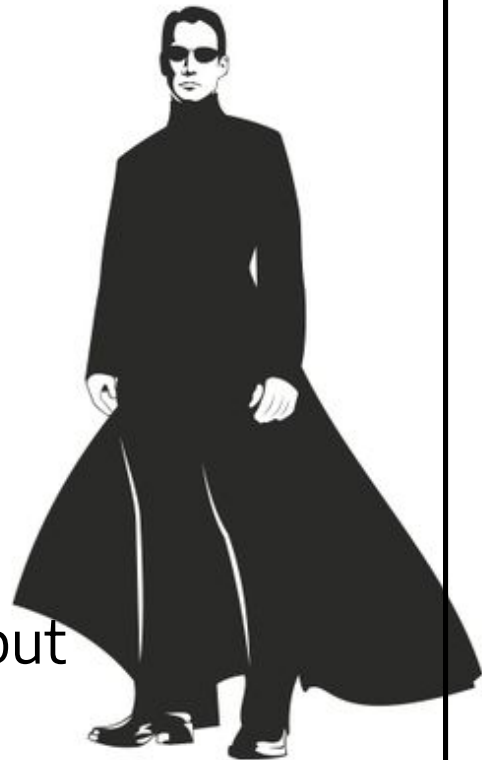
LEARNING & BELIEVING  
cannot primarily be  
**KNOWING CONTENT**

## The **MATRIX** Theory of Knowledge

### **DOWNLOADING**

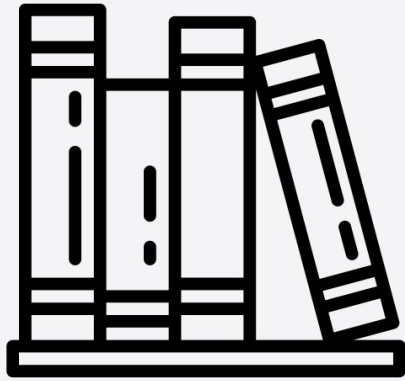
knowledge + skills  
as fast & as efficiently  
as you can

MAXIMUM Productivity but  
MINIMUM User Effort



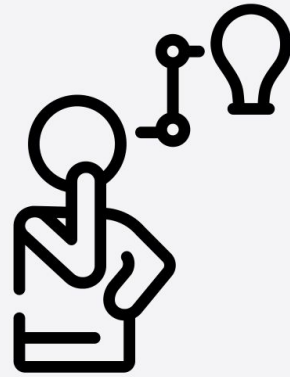
Ezra Klein





## PRODUCT

**KNOWLEDGE + DOCTRINE  
+ CHURCH TEACHINGS**



## PROCESS

**THINKING + LEARNING  
+ KNOWING + BELIEVING**

CONTENT IS CHEAP.

**PROCESS IS PRECIOUS.**

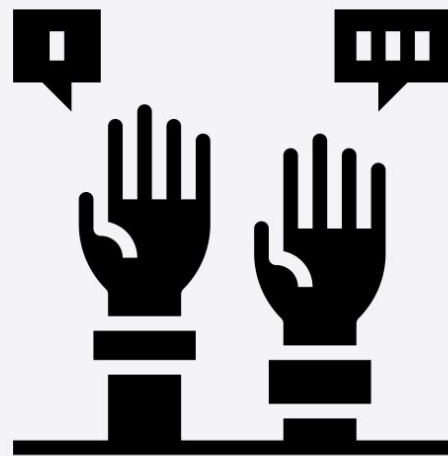
**PREACHING**



**DESIGNING THE SEARCH**



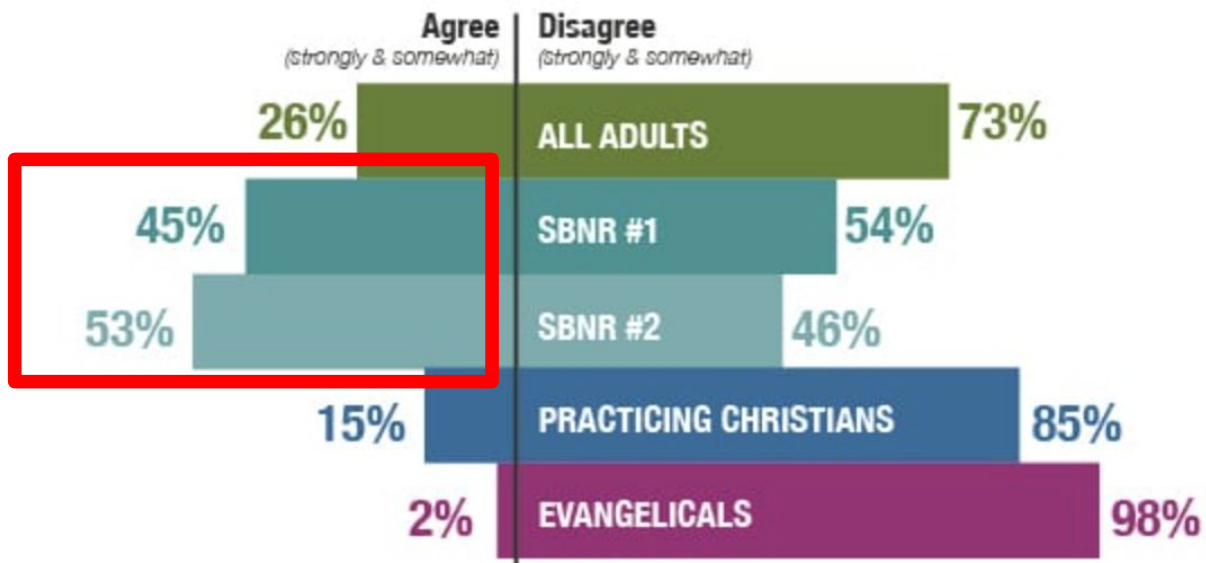
Supplying  
**CONTENT**



Enabling  
**PROCESS**

## Religion is Mostly Harmful

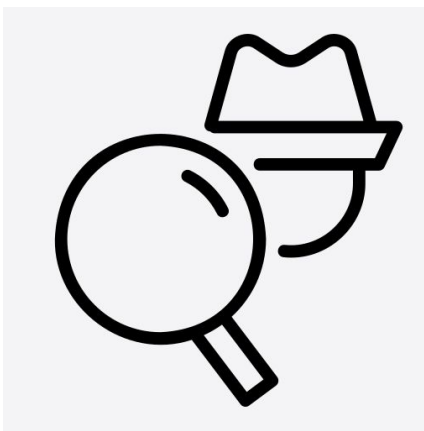
Barna



n=1,281 | November 4-15, 2016

### #4

## Erosion of trust in authority and institutions, including religious institutions & the Church



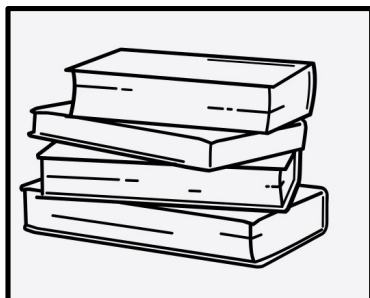
Already evident today, this phenomenon is partly due to the increased access to information.

An additional contributing factor for the Catholic Church would be the sex abuse scandals.

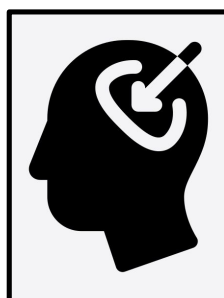
**Among these trends, which, in your opinion,  
poses the most serious (but actionable) challenge  
to your youth ministry work?**



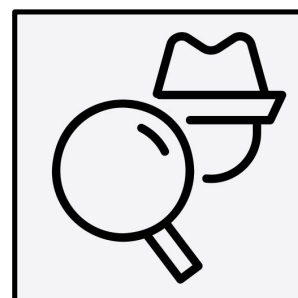
**1** - Increasing access to information (especially GAI)



**2** - Devaluation of truth & truth-finding



**3** - Shift from organized religion to NONE & SBNR



**4** - Erosion of trust in religious authority & institutions

[OPEN](#)

[POLL](#)

[RESULT](#)

## ON YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY

Although many young people are happy to see a Church that is humble yet confident in her gifts and capable of offering fair fraternal criticism, **others want a Church that listens more, that does more than simply condemn the world.** To be credible to young people, there are times when she needs **to regain her humility and simply listen, recognizing that what others have to say can provide some light to help her better understand the Gospel (ChV 41).**



*Christus Vivit*

25 March 2019

Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and the Entire People of God

**A YOUTH MINISTRY**  
that is...

**INCLUSIVE**  
**POPULAR**  
**SYNODAL**

Has room for all “those who have other visions of life, who belong to other religions or who distance themselves from religion altogether.” (ChV 234-235)

Against “a pure and perfect youth ministry, marked by abstract ideas... ends up completely removed from the world of young people and suited only to an elite Christian youth that sees itself as different.” (ChV 232)

“...towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements.” (ChV 206)

## **A SPIRITUALITY OF SYNODALITY**



How can we form synodal Catholics?  
What kind of spirituality  
do we need to promote?



“...is a style,  
it is a walk together,  
and it is what the Lord  
expects from the Church  
of the third millennium.”

## **SYNODALITY**

A LISTENING CHURCH

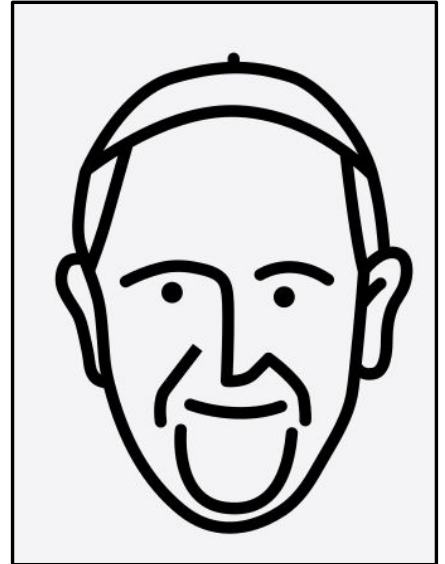
Pope Francis  
19 November 2019



## **SYNODALITY**

BEING A CHURCH that LISTENS  
to the SPIRIT OF THE LORD speaking  
THROUGH the People of God

By virtue of the *sensus fidei*, every Christian, **regardless of position in the church or level of instruction in the faith**, is an active member of the Church.



Pope Francis  
*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120

WHAT IS  
***SENSUS FIDEI*** ?



## ***SENSUS FIDEI***

### **“A Sense of the Faith”**

An ancient teaching of the Church

Dogmatic Constitution  
of the Church (Vatican II, 1964)



International Theological Commission (2018).  
*Sensus Fidei* in the Life & Mission of the Church

## ***SENSUS FIDEI***

A “sense of the faith”

An instinct of the faith

A connaturality with divine realities

A spiritual perception

A sense of discernment



The World Council of Churches (1998)

# TO BECOME CREATIVE + CRITICAL BELIEVERS

THE CAPACITY  
TO **INTERPRET** REVELATION  
& TO **DISCERN** THE AUTHORITY  
OF THESE INTERPRETATIONS.

*SENSUS FIDEI*



*Lumen Gentium 12*

THE **CREATIVE** WORK  
OF **INTERPRETING**  
REVELATION

A SENSE  
**FOR** THE FAITH

What **COULD** this faith  
mean for us today?



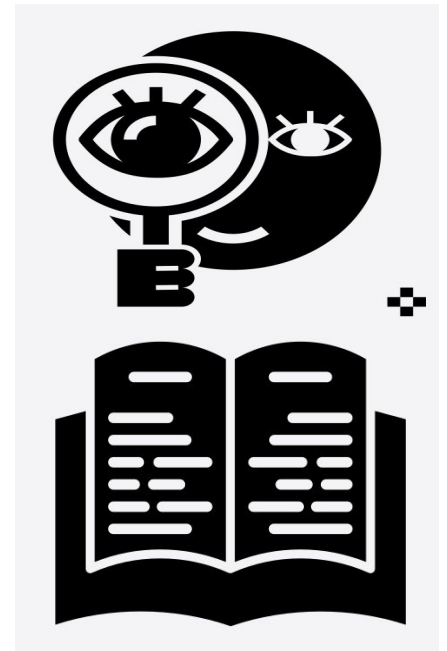
*Lumen Gentium 12*



THE **CRITICAL** WORK  
OF **EVALUATING**  
INTERPRETATIONS OF REVELATION

A SENSE  
**OF THE FAITH**

Which of the  
DIFFERENT interpretations  
is the most valid given our faith?



*Lumen Gentium 12*

**THREE** TEACHING AUTHORITIES OF THE CHURCH

**LAY FAITHFUL**

*Sensus fidelium*

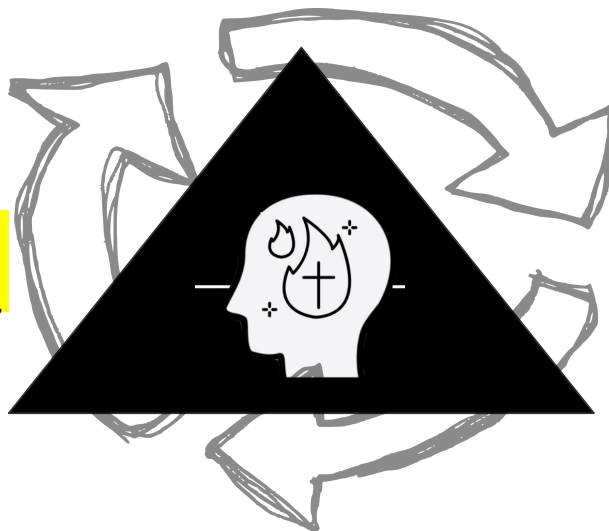
AUTHORITY FROM THE LIVED FAITH

“Concrete  
catechisms”  
Rahner (1988)

“The most  
concrete  
incarnation of  
revelation”  
Gaillardetz (1997)

**MAGISTERIUM**

*Sensus magisterii*  
OFFICIAL  
AUTHORITY



**THEOLOGIANs**

*Sensus theologiae*  
SCHOLARLY  
AUTHORITY

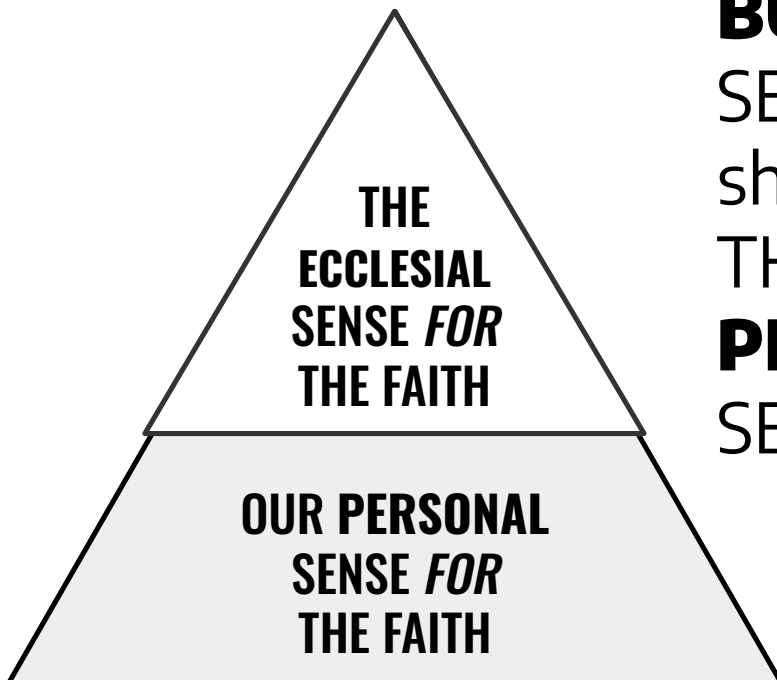
OUR **PERSONAL**  
SENSE *OF* THE FAITH  
ought to be rooted in  
THE **CHURCH'S**  
SENSE *OF* THE FAITH

**REVELATION**



**BUT** THE **ECCLESIAL**  
SENSE *FOR* THE FAITH  
should now be rooted in  
THE FAITHFUL'S  
**PERSONAL**  
SENSE *FOR* THE FAITH.

The **PROCESS** of  
Interpreting **REVELATION**





## THE CHURCH AS A CANOE

“... the elderly help to keep on course by judging the position of the stars, while the young keep rowing, imagining what waits for them ahead. Let us steer clear of young people who think that adults represent a meaningless past, and those adults who always think they know how young people should act.” (ChV, 201)

## *SENSUS FIDEI*

Based on the doctrine of the *sensus fidei fidelium*, all the members of the Church are agents of evangelization.



## SYNODALITY



Synodality involves the exercise of the *sensus fidei* of the *universitas fidelium*.

International Theological Commission (2018).  
*Synodality in the Life & Mission of the Church*.

# A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE ENTIRE CHURCH

NOT JUST THE ORDAINED,  
BUT ALL THE BAPTIZED.

“...from the bishop  
to the last of the faithful.”

*SENSUS FIDEI*



*Lumen Gentium 12, 35*

How do you feel  
about your PERSONAL  
SENSE FOR THE FAITH?  
Confident? Uncertain?  
Why?

**UNCERTAIN**

**CONFIDENT**



**PAUSE  
REFLECT  
SHARE**

**A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT  
TO THE ENTIRE CHURCH**

NOT JUST THE CATHOLICS,  
BUT ALL THE BAPTIZED.

“...to all who belong  
to any Christian tradition.

*SENSUS FIDEI*



*Lumen Gentium 12, 35*

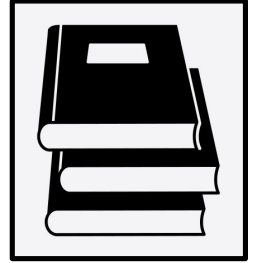
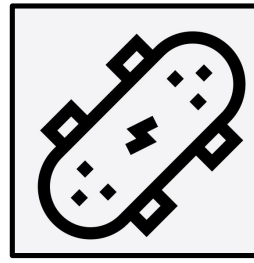
**NOT** JUST THE ORDAINED?  
**NOT** JUST THE CATHOLICS?



How do you feel  
about this doctrine?

**PAUSE  
REFLECT  
SHARE**

# Youth Ministry Planning and Strategy Towards a Fullness of Life for All



International Conference on Youth Ministry  
Towards a Fullness of Life for All

JOHNNY C. GO SJ

05 April 2024

09 - 10:15 am | 10:35 - 11:30 am

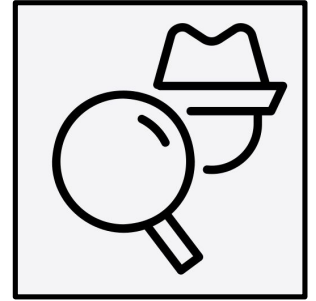
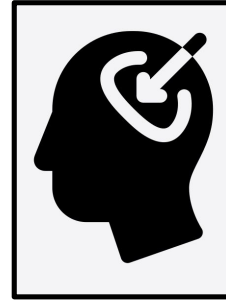
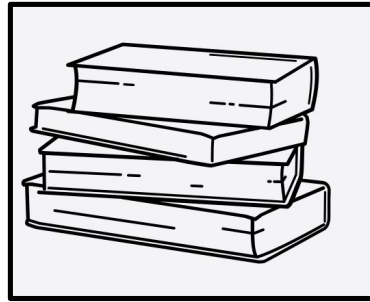


*SENSUS FIDEI* is the basis  
of SYNODALITY.

What is the role of  
YOUTH MINISTRY  
in forming *SENSUS FIDER*?



# FEARLESS OR FEARFUL FORECAST

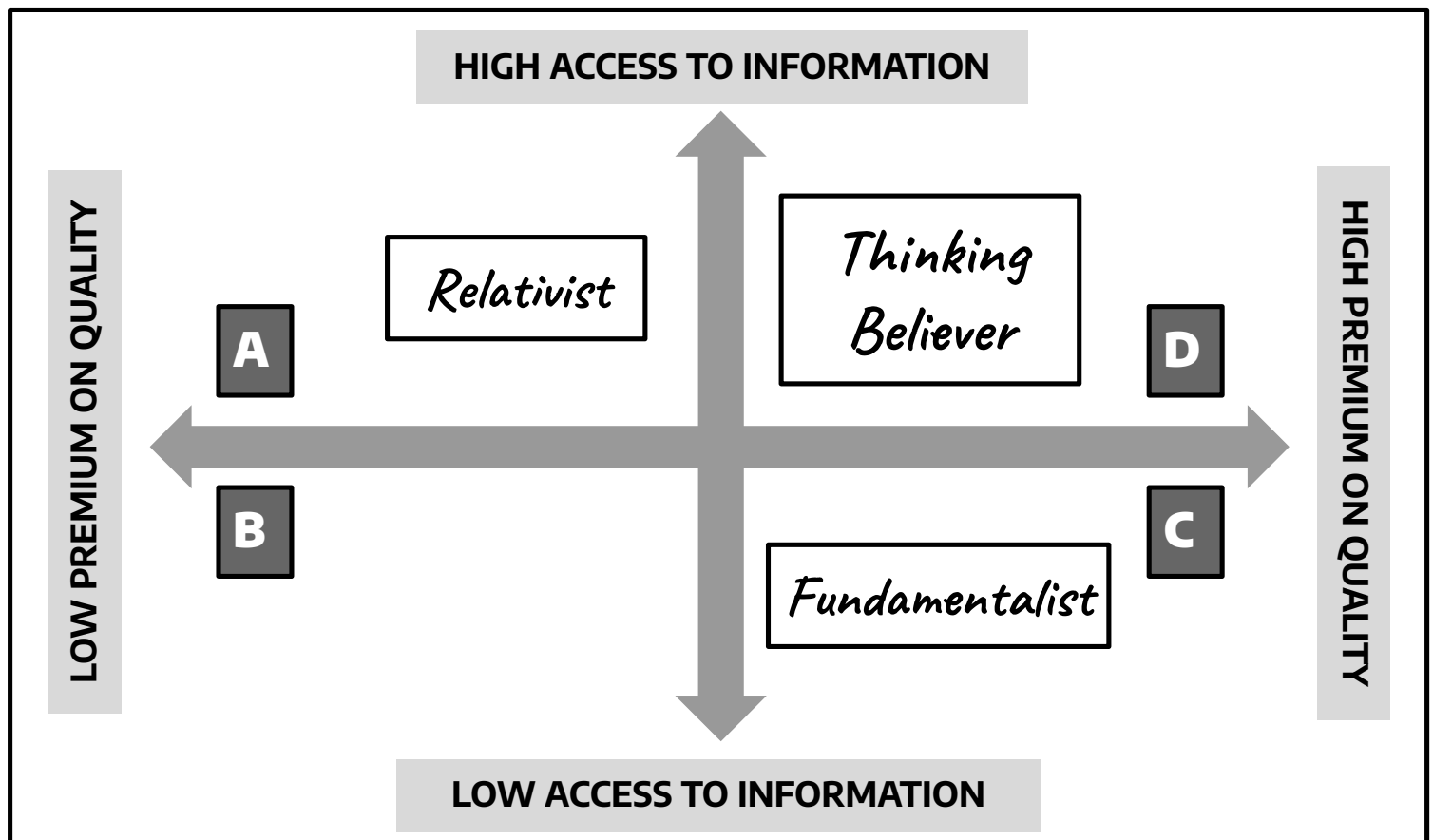


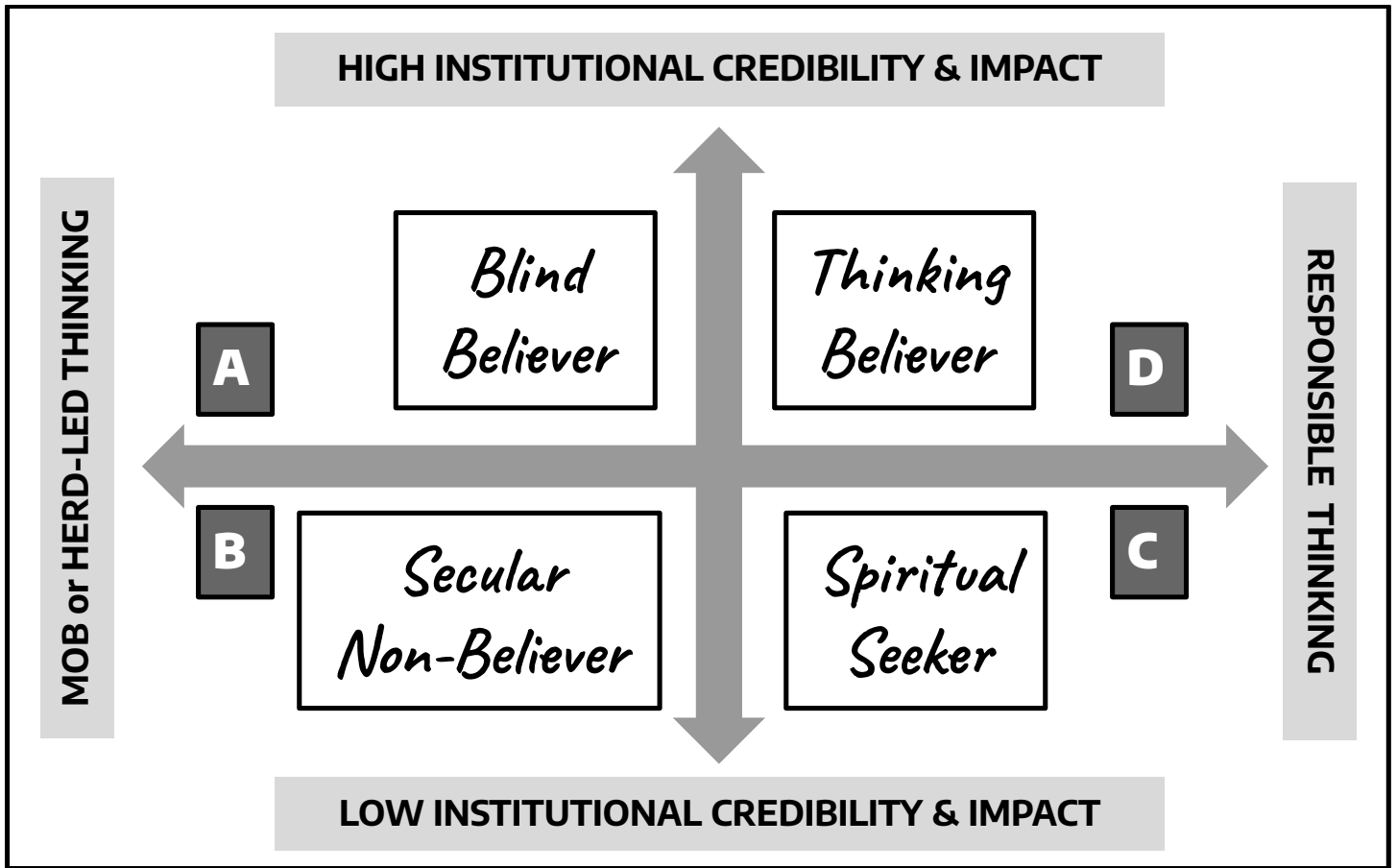
**HIGH** OR LOW ACCESS TO INFORMATION

HIGH OR **LOW** PREMIUM ON QUALITY INFORMATION

HIGH OR **LOW** CHURCH/SCHOOL CREDIBILITY & INFLUENCE

RESPONSIBLE OR **MOB/HERD-LED** THINKING





## KOOL AID



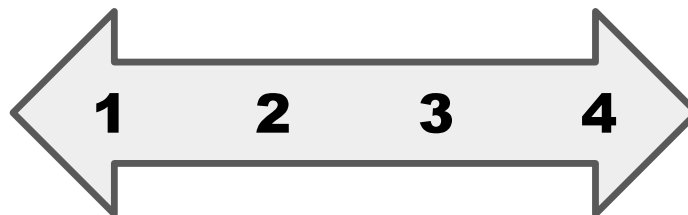
**INDOCTRINATION**  
*Fundamentalist*  
*Blind Believer*

## COKE ZERO



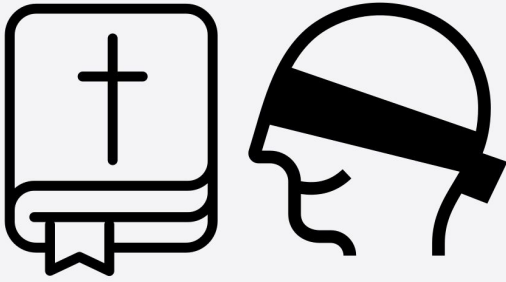
**SPIRITUALITY LIGHT**  
*Relativist*  
*Spiritual Seeker*

What do you tend to serve the young people you minister to?

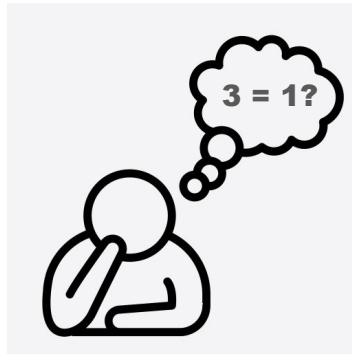




## 3 Audiences of Catholic Youth Ministry



**Fundamentalist  
Blind Believer**



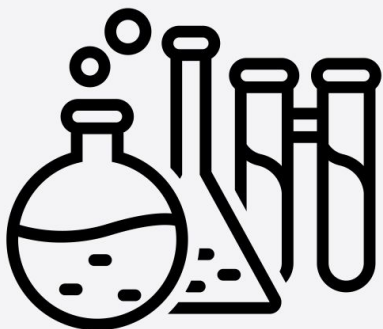
***SENSUS FIDEI*  
Thinking Believer**



**Relativist  
Spiritual Seeker**

Which of the three types of Catholic youth are you serving?  
Do you agree that the **Thinking Believer with *Sensus Fidei*** is our ideal?  
What do we do to get there?

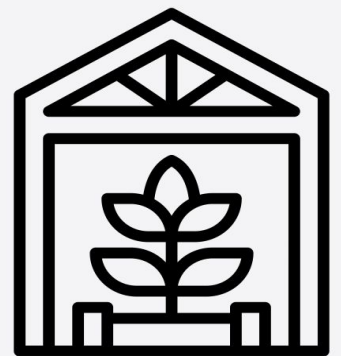
## 3 Approaches to Catholic Youth Ministry



**LABORATORY**



**GARDEN**

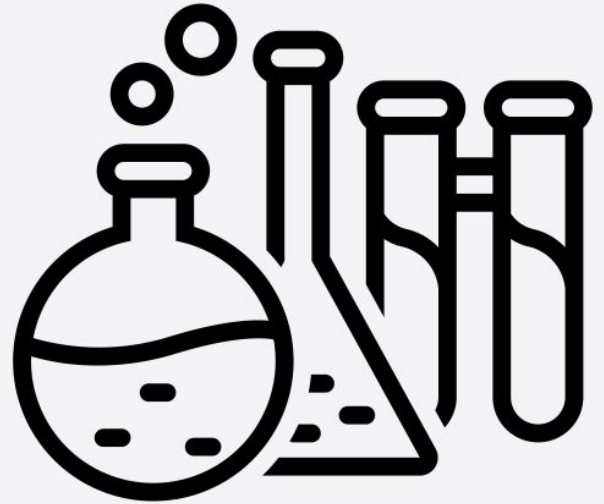


**GREEN HOUSE**

Which of the three will lead to the formation  
of a **Thinking Believer with *Sensus Fidei***?

## LABORATORY

- Conditions are **CONTROLLED**.
- To the extent possible, the youth are **SHIELDED** from the world.
- **TRUTH** and **ORTHODOXY** are granted the highest value.
- The approach is more **TRANSMISSION** of the faith.

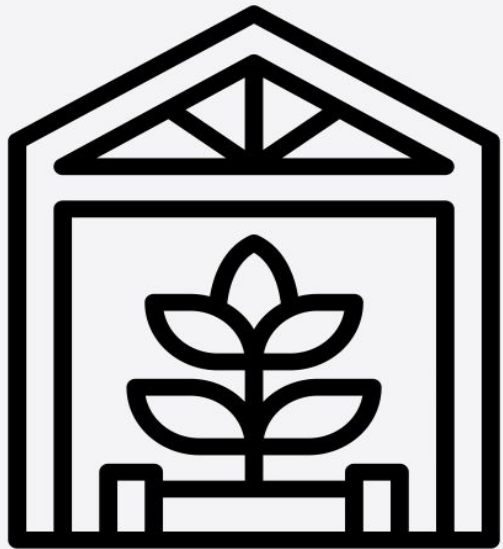


- Conditions are **LEAST** controlled.
- The youth are **EXPOSED** to the world, to all its elements including the negative ones.
- The approach is more **LEARNING BY DOING** coupled with guidance.

## GARDEN



# GREEN HOUSE



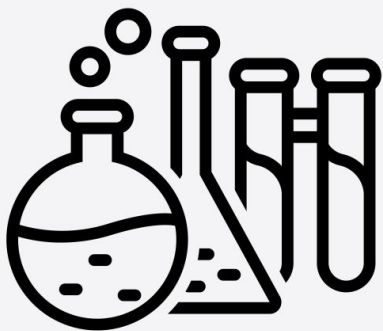
- Control is calibrated between the LABORATORY and the GARDEN.
- There is still a degree of PROTECTION provided to the extent possible but less than in the LABORATORY.
- There is greater STRUCTURE and SCAFFOLDING than the GARDEN.

“Which of the following, in your opinion, should **Catholic youth ministry** look like in the future?”

[OPEN](#)

[POLL](#)

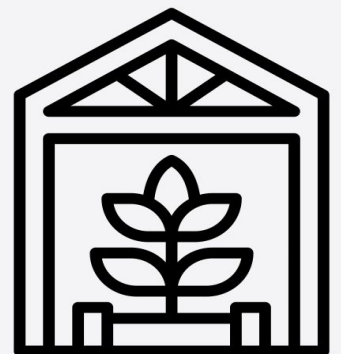
[RESULT](#)



**LABORATORY**



**GARDEN**

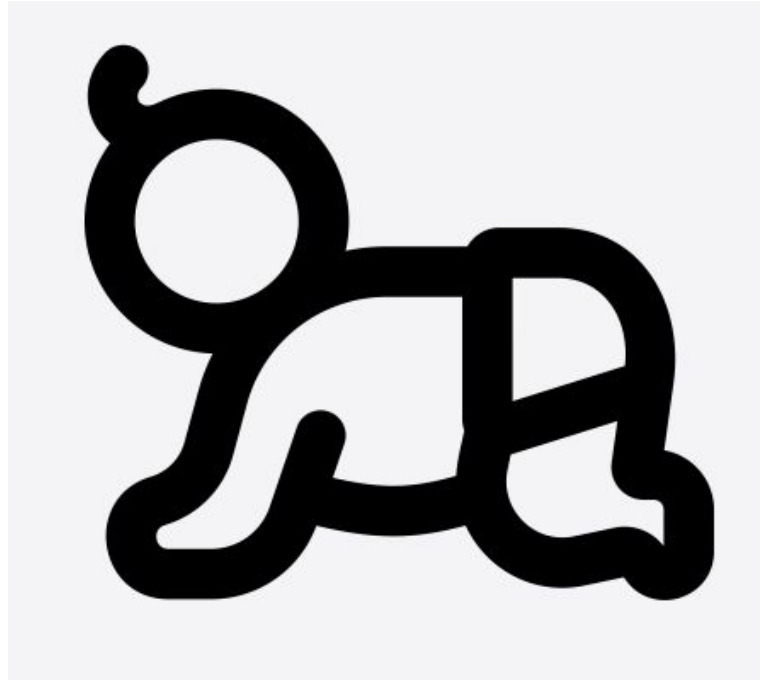


**GREEN HOUSE**

## BABY STEPS

### Initial small, “doable” action

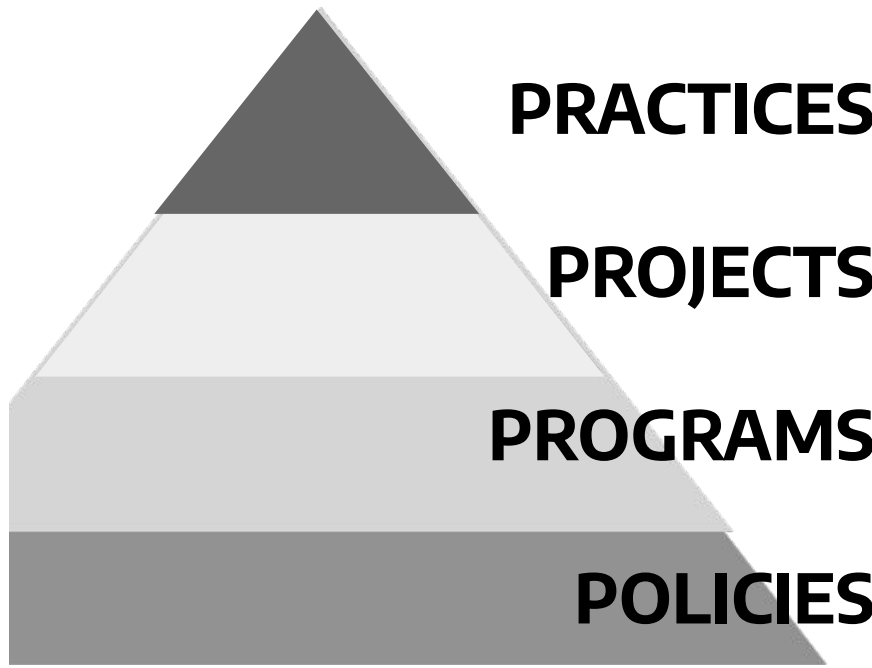
- for my team
- for my school or parish



## FIRST STEPS FOR STRATEGIZING & PLANNING

- Pick one or two Big Ideas, and do a brainstorm on how these concepts or principles can be used to **improve** or **innovate** your approach to youth ministry for the youth that you are serving.
- Make sure to do the following:

AUDIENCE & CONTEXT	What kind of youth are you ministering to? Fundamentalist Tendency (Blind Believer), Relativist (Spiritual Seeker), etc.
BIG IDEA(s) TO APPLY	Which one or two concepts or principles may help?
REASON(s) & DESIRED IMPACT	Why these Big Ideas? What do you hope to achieve?



**PRACTICES**

WAY OF PROCEEDING  
HOW WE WORK AND  
DEAL WITH EACH OTHER

**PROJECTS**

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES  
OR EVENTS

**PROGRAMS**

SET OF ACTIVITIES  
AND EVENTS  
WITH A COMMON GOAL

**POLICIES**

OUR BASIC APPROACH,  
DIRECTIONS, VALUES,  
BELIEFS ABOUT THE YOUTH  
AND OUR MINISTRY

**FIRST STEPS FOR STRATEGIZING & PLANNING**

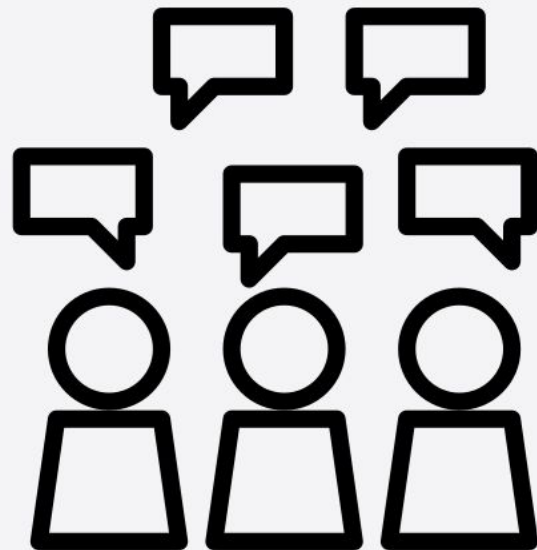
WHAT TO IMPLEMENT	What initial “baby steps” can you take this year?		
	STOP	CONTINUE	START
<b>PRACTICES</b>			
<b>PROJECTS</b>			
<b>PROGRAMS</b>			
<b>POLICIES</b>			

<b>AUDIENCE &amp; CONTEXT</b>	What kind of youth are you ministering to? Fundamentalist (Blind Believer), Relativist (Spiritual Seeker)...
<b>BIG IDEA(s) TO APPLY</b>	Which one or two concepts or principles may help?
<b>REASON(s) &amp; DESIRED IMPACT</b>	Why these Big Ideas? What do you hope to achieve?

<b>WHAT TO IMPLEMENT</b>	<b>What initial “baby steps” can you take this year?</b>		
	<b>STOP</b>	<b>CONTINUE</b>	<b>START</b>
<b>PRACTICES</b>			
<b>PROJECTS</b>			
<b>PROGRAMS</b>			
<b>POLICIES</b>			

<https://t.ly/5K5Uu>

**PLENARY DISCUSSION**  
**Questions & Comments**  
**about the Process**

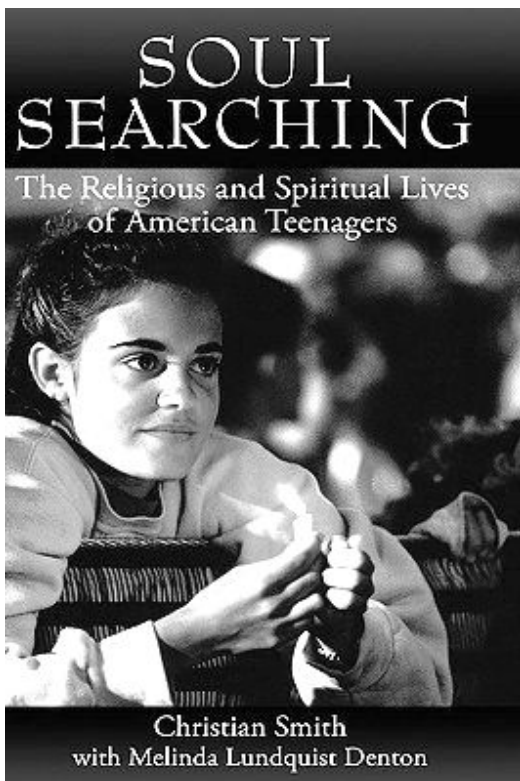
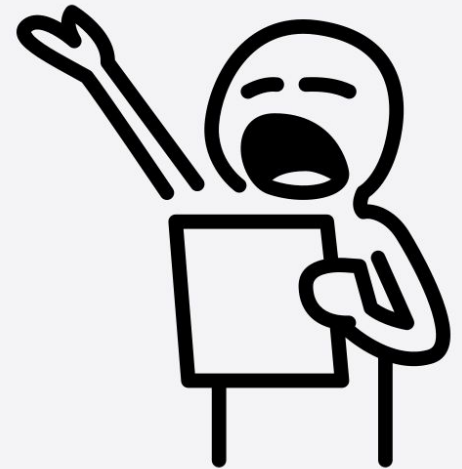


# Metaphors for Catholic Youth Ministry



A NURSERY  
FOR THE  
*SENSUS FIDEI*

A STAGE REHEARSAL  
FOR THE PRACTICE  
OF THE *SENSUS FIDEI*



**“The single most important  
social influence on the  
spiritual lives of adolescents  
is...  
???”**

“Grandparents and other relatives,  
mentors, and **youth workers** can be  
very influential as well.”

C. Smith & M. L. Denton (2009), p. 261

# Pins of Light

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