



Getting to Know our Neighbors

A Look at Cultural Trends Affecting Spirituality

Current Trend in the DOC

2021

4 CIF vs 54 C/W/R

2022

6 CIF vs 32 C/W/R

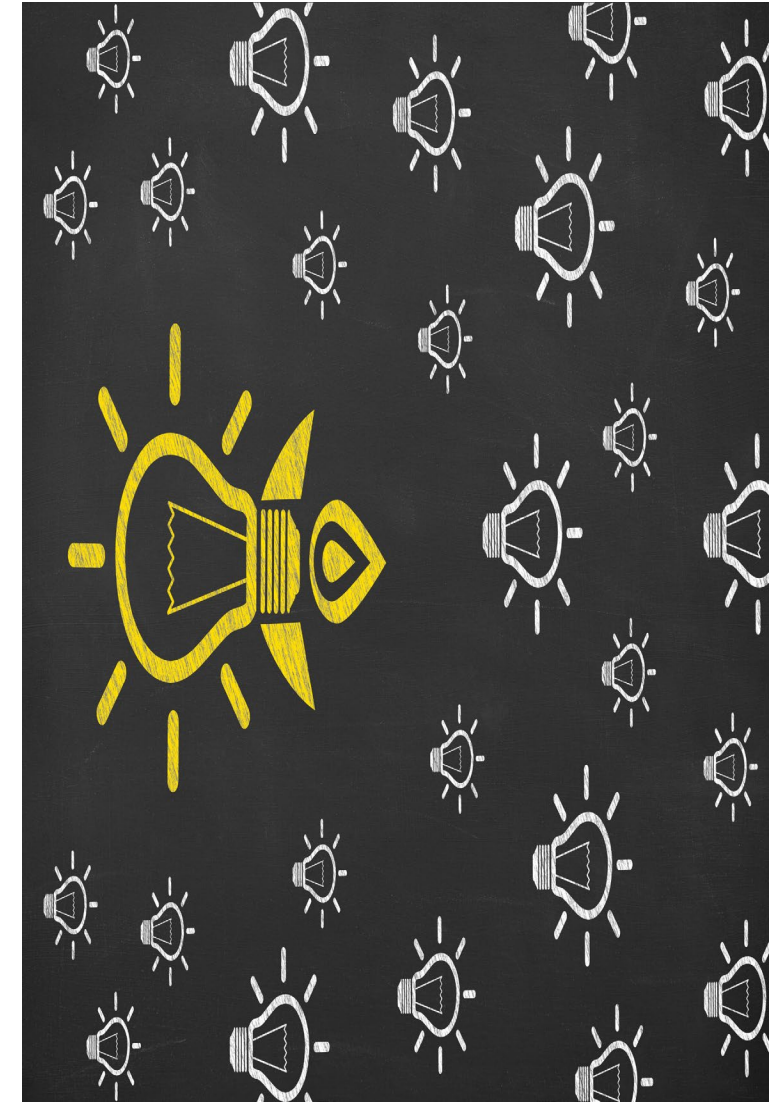
2023

7 CIF vs 118 C/W/R

2024

6 CIF vs 69 C/W/R

All stats were taken from ALEX.



CURRENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHURCH IN US



(Pew Research and American Church Research Project)

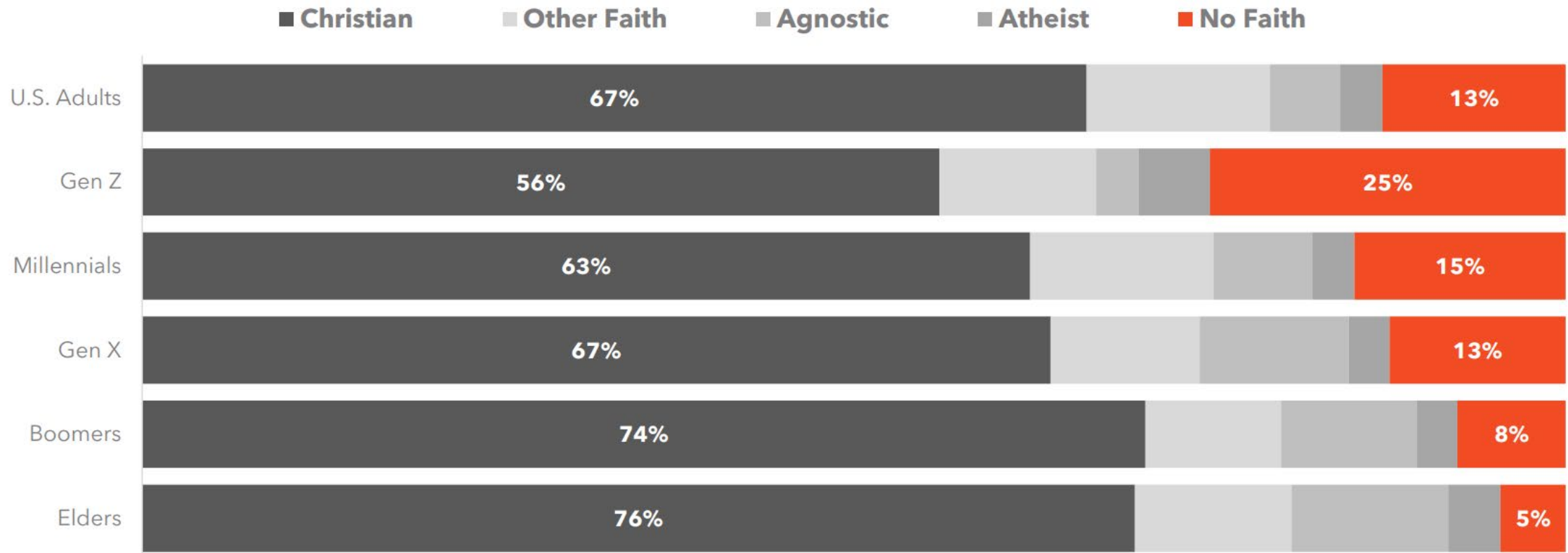
1 in 3

Americans have experienced
religious trauma.

"Percentage of U.S. Adults Suffering from Religious Trauma: A Sociological Study" Global Center for Religious Research,
2022.

Young People Are Opting Out Altogether

Do you consider yourself to be any of the following religious faiths?



THE WORLD IS CHANGING...

49%

WHITE MINORITY

51%

MILLENNIAL & GEN Z

1 in 6

INTERRACIAL
MARRIAGES

16-18

AVERAGE SIZE OF
US WOMAN

52%

GEN Z
LGBTQ+ SPECTRUM

35%

GEN Z
GENDER NEUTRAL
PRONOUNS

1/4

DISABILITY

~30%

NEURODIVERSE



Meet Your New Neighbors

Gen Z and Gen Alpha (NEXTGEN) are markedly different from previous generations. Understanding who they are, how they connect, and what their lives are like. This will be crucial to finding new opportunities for congregations to minister to them.

Gen Z-1995-2009

Gen Alpha – 2010-2024





Cultural Trends

are societal shifts that encompass values, beliefs, behaviors, and practices. They shape or redefine how people interact within a society and influence various aspects like art, religion, politics, or social norms.



Custom Relationships

Authentic relationships are being created over virtual space. Many content creators have deep connections with followers, fans, and communities. Authenticity has become a nonnegotiable in public and personal relationships, so in-person and face-to-face relationships are also important.

DIY Family: The real family is the one chosen. Today's family systems are multigenerational, multicultural, and inclusive of friend relationships.

Friend Zone: Romantic relationships are de-emphasized. NextGen waiting longer to get married. Love plays a stronger role in friendships may supplant traditional romantic relationships.

Intentional Care: NextGen cites their most important relationship as their one with themselves. However, caring for others is both a goal in itself and a reason for society. Many are stepping up and envisioning a future worth working toward together.

<https://cassandra.co/reports>



Networks of Good

Seekers of Meaning: Spirituality and the search for meaning are still a big part of people's lives. Many go to social media due to various religious ideas and practices, allowing them to design their eclectic belief system.

Mindful Impact: New apps such as ThinkDirty and Commons Earth help people manage their social impact through tools to discover sustainable companies, track their carbon footprint, and more.

Emerging Experience: NextGen digital experience is a new wave. They have learned to integrate the real world with digital features. They view new digital technologies enriching their IRL experience rather than taking away from it.

There is an intentionality to do good in all aspects of life. They seek out companies and organizations that do systemic good. "People ask, 'What does it mean to live a good life and be good to people?' These are deeply religious questions and will have a profound impact on the spiritual sensibilities of an entire nation."

<https://www.inquirer.com/news/religion-coronavirus-god-pandemic-mortality-islam-judaism-christianity-20200801.html>



Designed Self

People are designing their lives to meet their own needs first rather than live into society's expectations. The term Main Character is the idea for people to take creative control over the stories they live and how they identify. With the power of technology, creativity, and imagination have become basic tools for connecting and self-expression.

Intentional Joy: Joy has become a mindset to cultivate even in the face of adversity. Many NextGen find joy in technology through gaming and video.

Rest Advocates: A new trend amongst NextGen is sleepmaxxing. NextGen is recognizing the importance of rest. GenZ is changing the workforce due to the demand for a healthy work-life balance.

Collective Care: Amid the idea of designed self, there is an understanding of self in the midst of community due COVID-19. Collective healing is a topic of conversation, as well as resilience and recovery from a period of illness, loss, and disruption

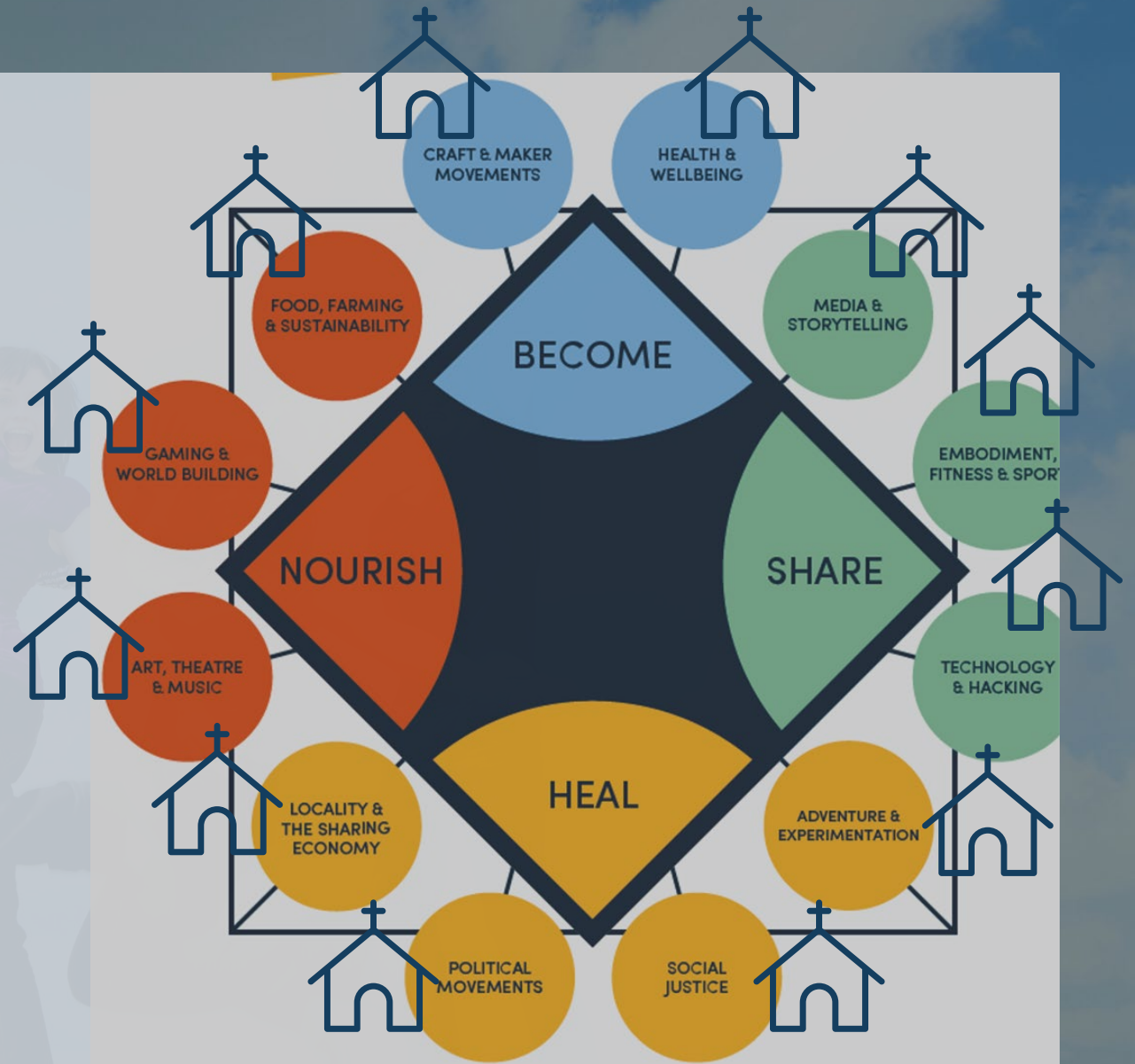


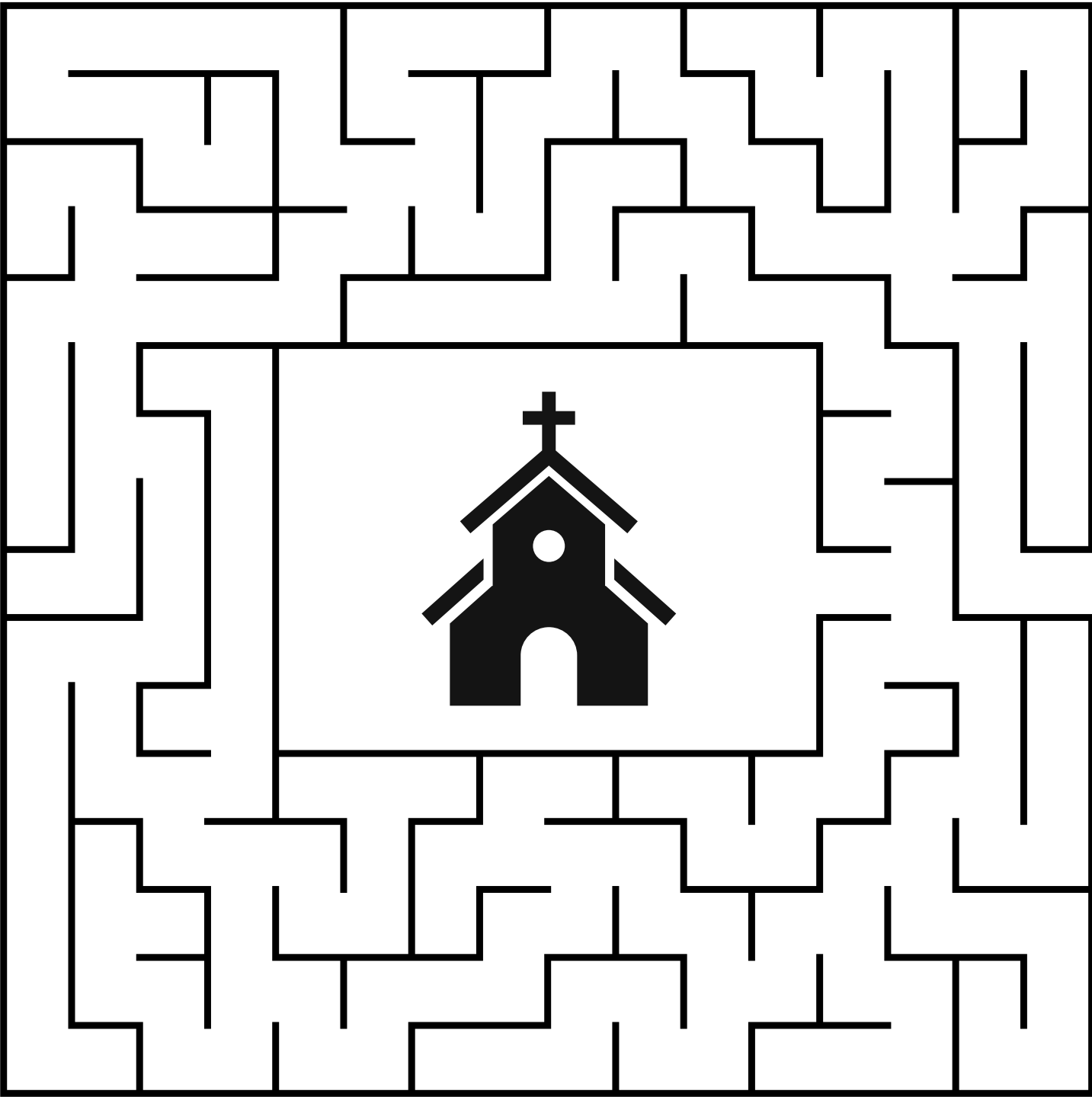
(YOUNG ADULT)

Domains

of Meaning, Purpose, Belonging

- Health/wellness
- Media/storytelling
- Embodiment/sport
- Technology/hacking
- Adventure/experimentation
- Social justice/activism
- Locality/placemaking
- Start ups/social entrepreneurship
- The arts
- Gaming/world-building
- Food/farming/sustainability
- Craft/maker movements
- Others?

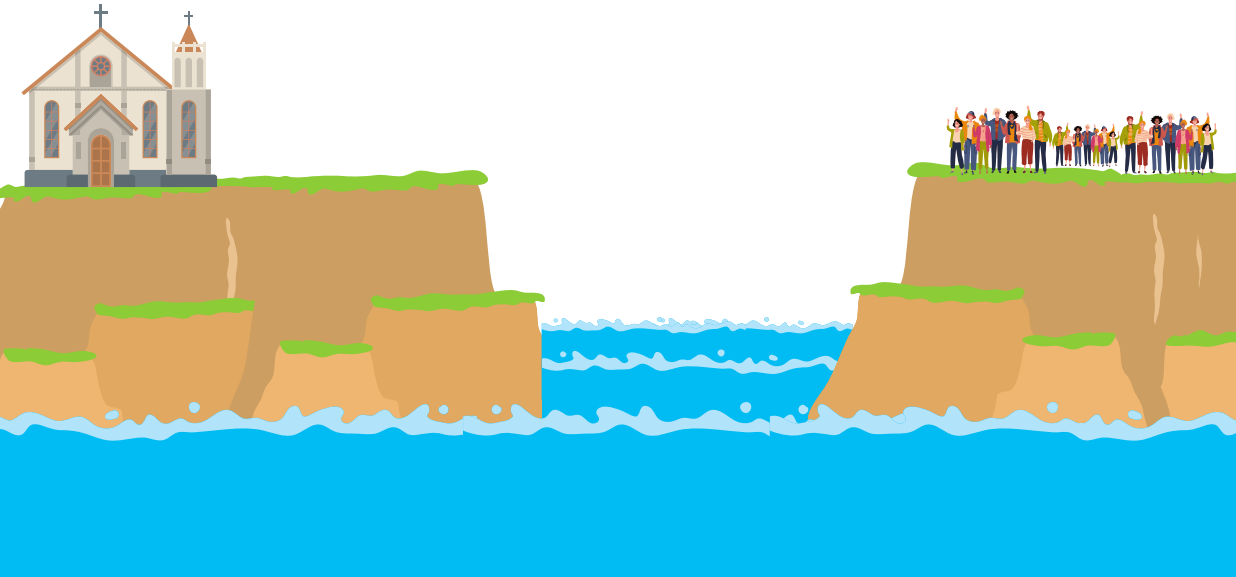




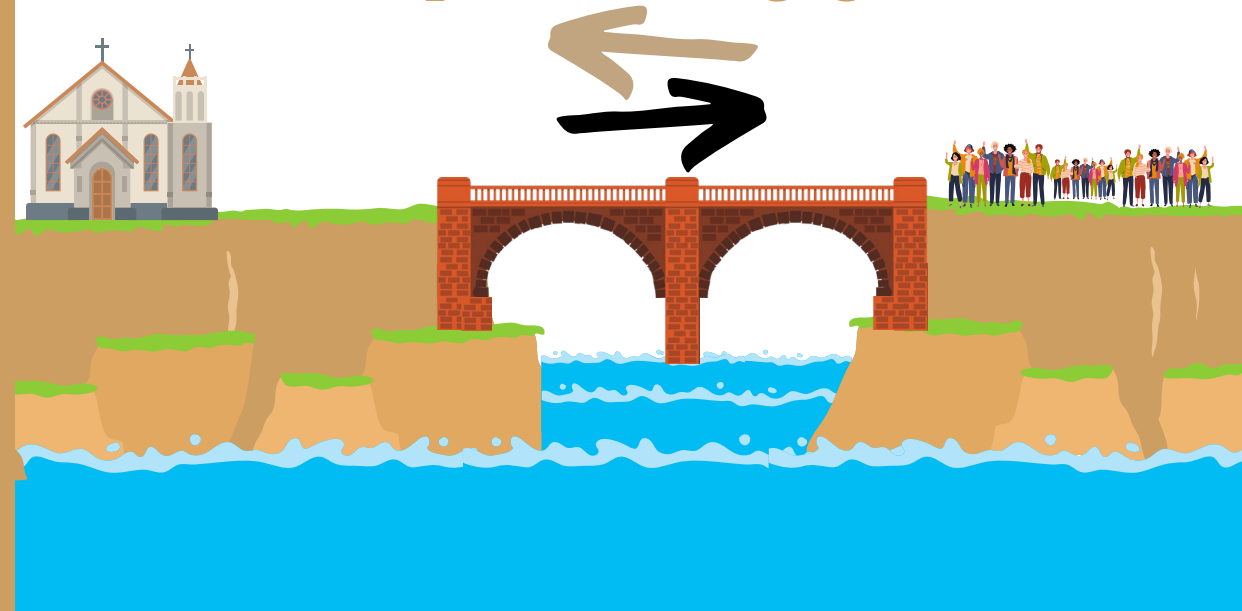
ALL ARE
WELCOME!



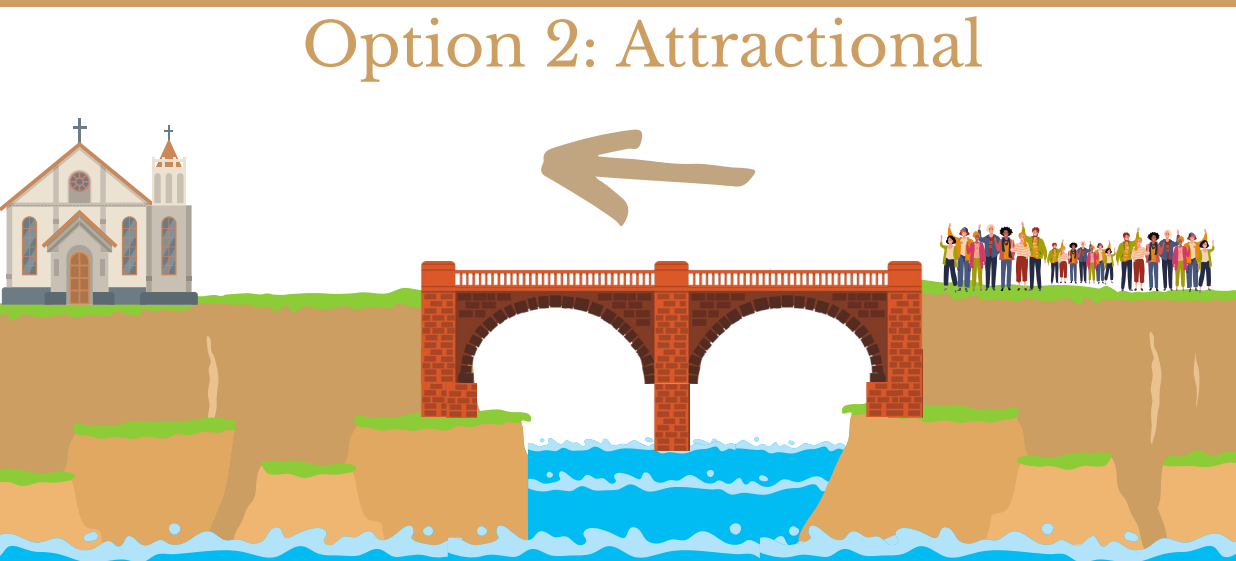
Option 1: Pray and Wait



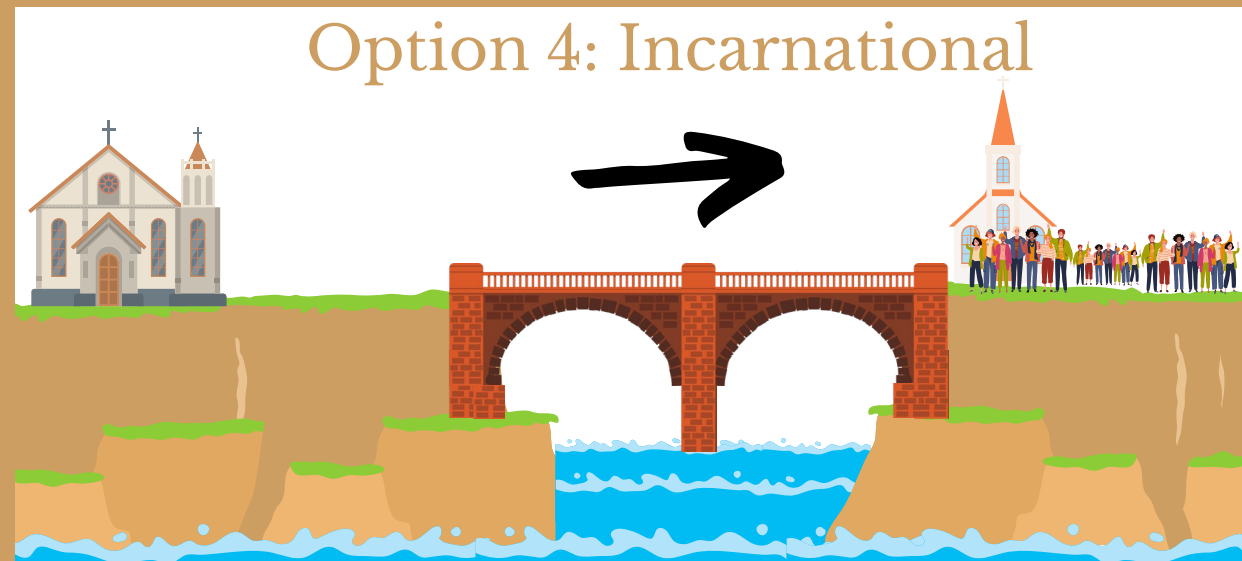
Option 3: Engaged



Option 2: Attractional



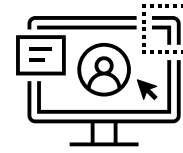
Option 4: Incarnational



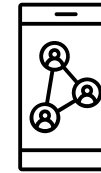
Ministry Opportunity

SOULCRAFT DESIGN LABS

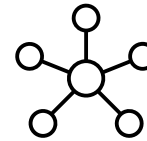
What we know within religious institutions is that NextGen is less formal and more tolerant of differences in belief. As online communities mature, expect modern spirituality to favor meaning over tradition as it becomes more fluid, communal, and empowering. NextGen is finding deep meaning in daily life, whether it's a fitness program with an encouraging community or mindfulness exercises initially pursued for mental health. The church has an opportunity to help NextGen tap into their creative selves to design their IRL religious experience. We must consider ourselves as design studios to help people craft their souls.



How can congregations continue to seamlessly integrate the digital and physical in experiences, practices, and congregational environments?



What new approaches to messaging, imagery, celebration, and connection resonate with NextGen across the spiritual spectrum?



How can we champion IRL connecting by offering both analog and digital experiences that inspire people to create stronger social networks around activities and possible digital disconnection?



How can we help people find new ways to care for each other by creating a culture of care and compassion that will live through generations?