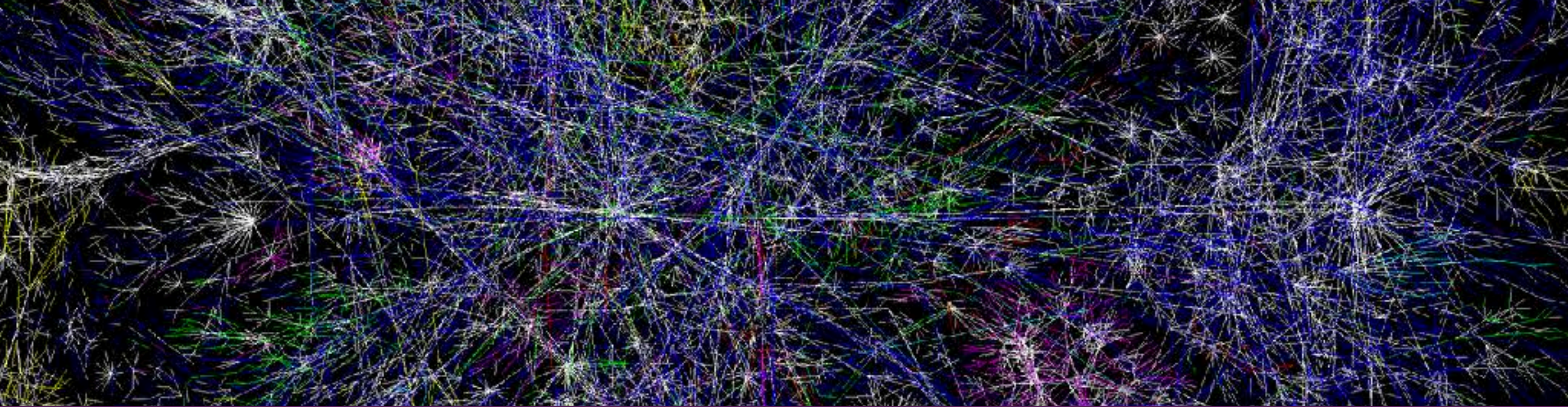




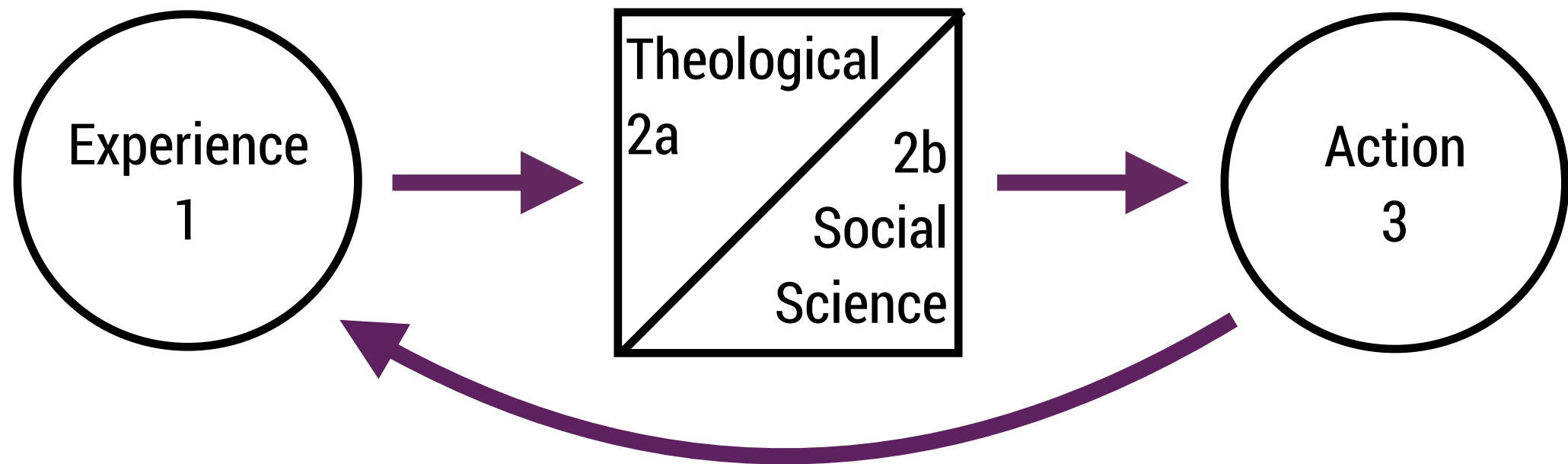
Youth Ministry Leadership in an Uncertain Future



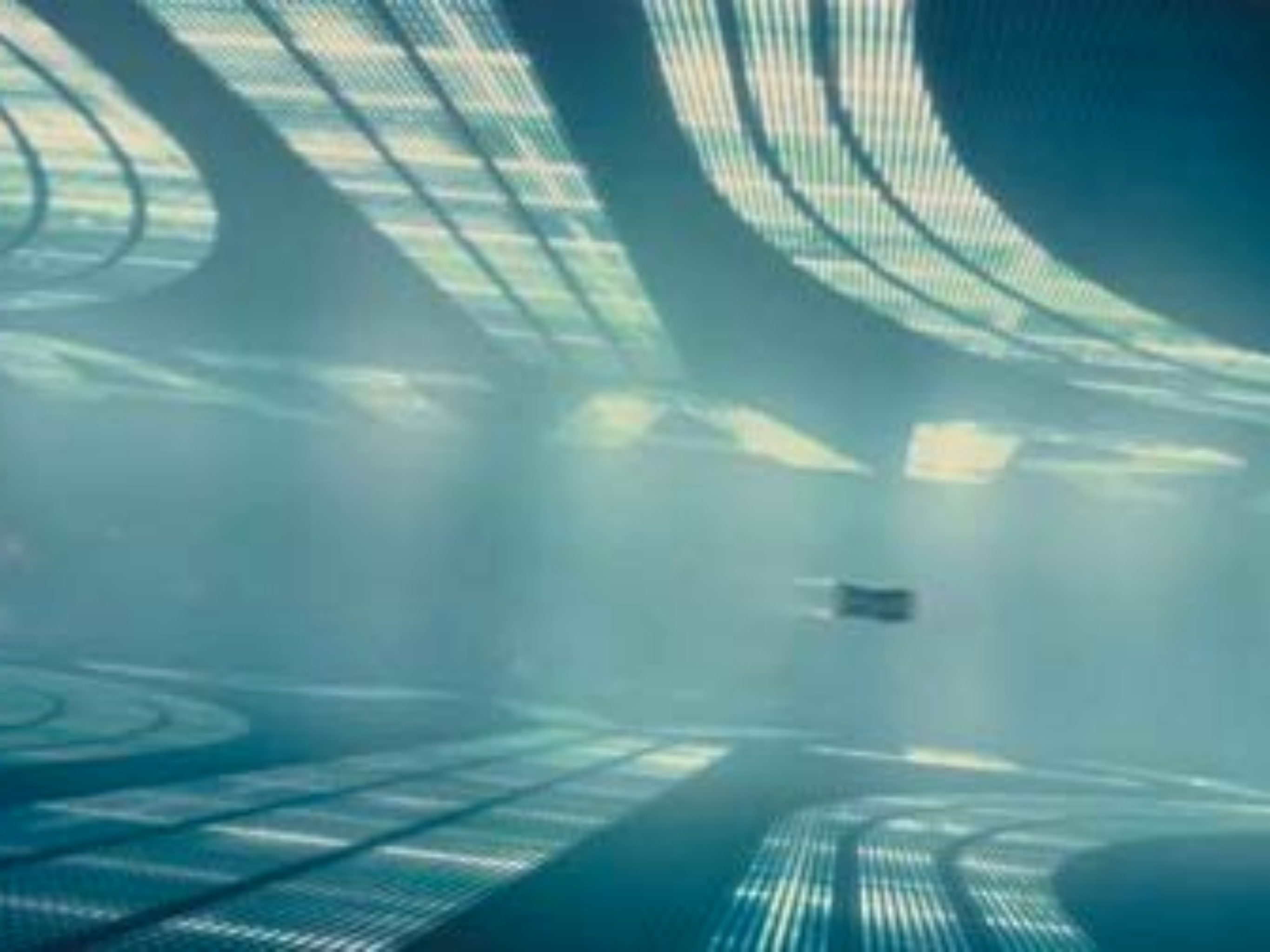
Insights from Complexity theory for training and
equipping youth ministry leaders

Graham Stanton

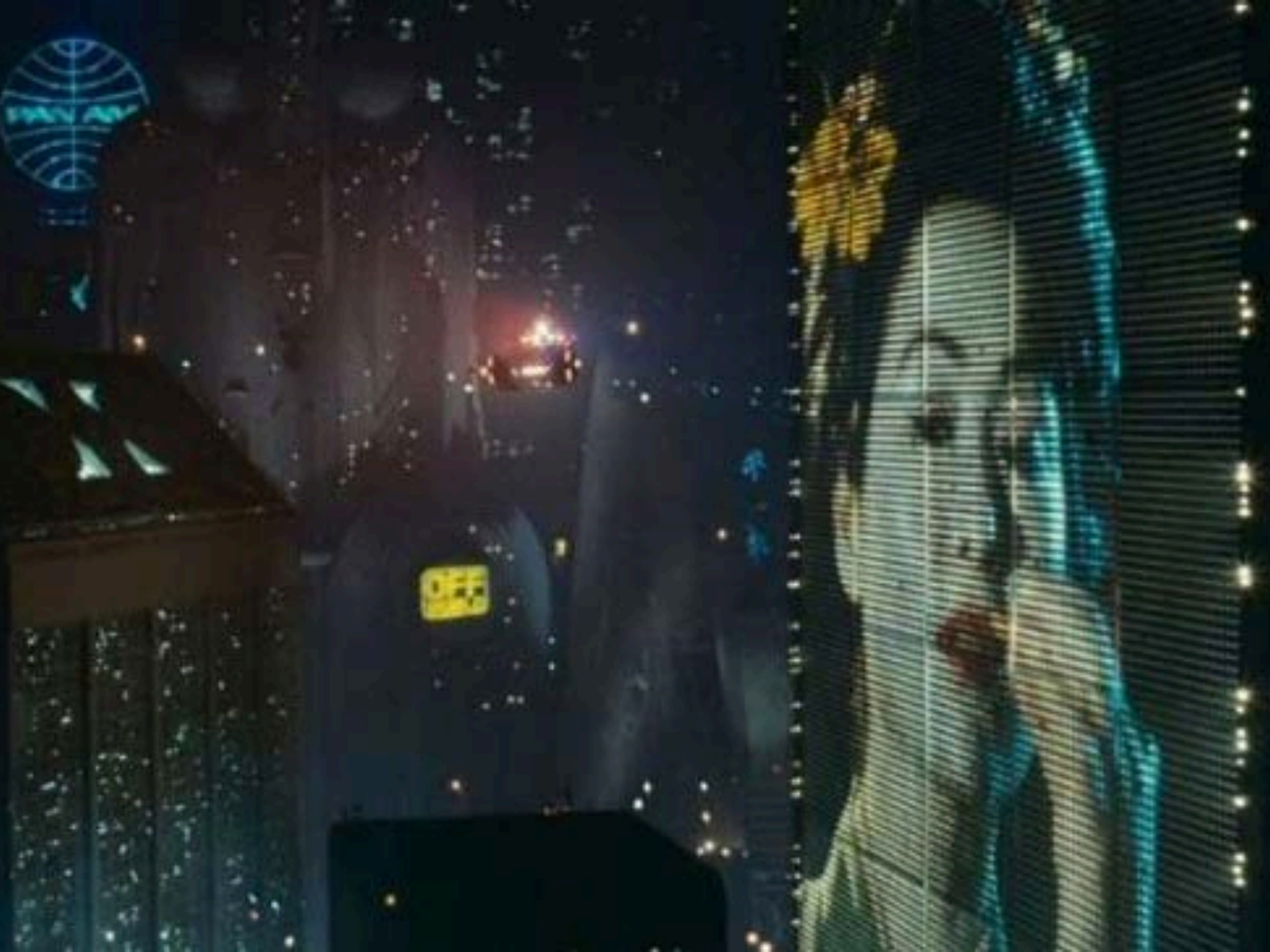
g.stanton@ridley.edu.au



1 - 2b - 2a - 3 - 2a/3 - 3 - 1 - 2a - 3 - 2a - 2a/b - 3







Peering into the Future of Youth Ministry

Equipping Students with the Competencies for the Next 15 Years of Youth Ministry Leadership

- What will be the shape of youth ministry in the future?
- What equipping do our students need in order to be competent practitioners in the future field of youth ministry?

Cynefin Framework

Complex

$C \dots E$ (unpredictable)

Probe - Sense - Respond

Emergent Practice

Enabling constraints

Complicated

$C \dots \rightarrow \dots E$
(knowable)

Sense - Analyse - Respond

Good Practice

Governing constraints

Chaotic

$C \not\Rightarrow E$ (unstable)

Act - Sense - Respond

Novel Practice

No constraints

Simple

$C \rightarrow E$ (known)

Sense - Categorise - Respond

Best Practice

Rigid constraints



THE ART OF FLYING

A FILM BY JAN VAN IJKEN

FULL LENGTH VERSION:
WWW.JANVANIJKEN.COM

The Art of Flying, Jan van Ijken
www.janvanijken.com

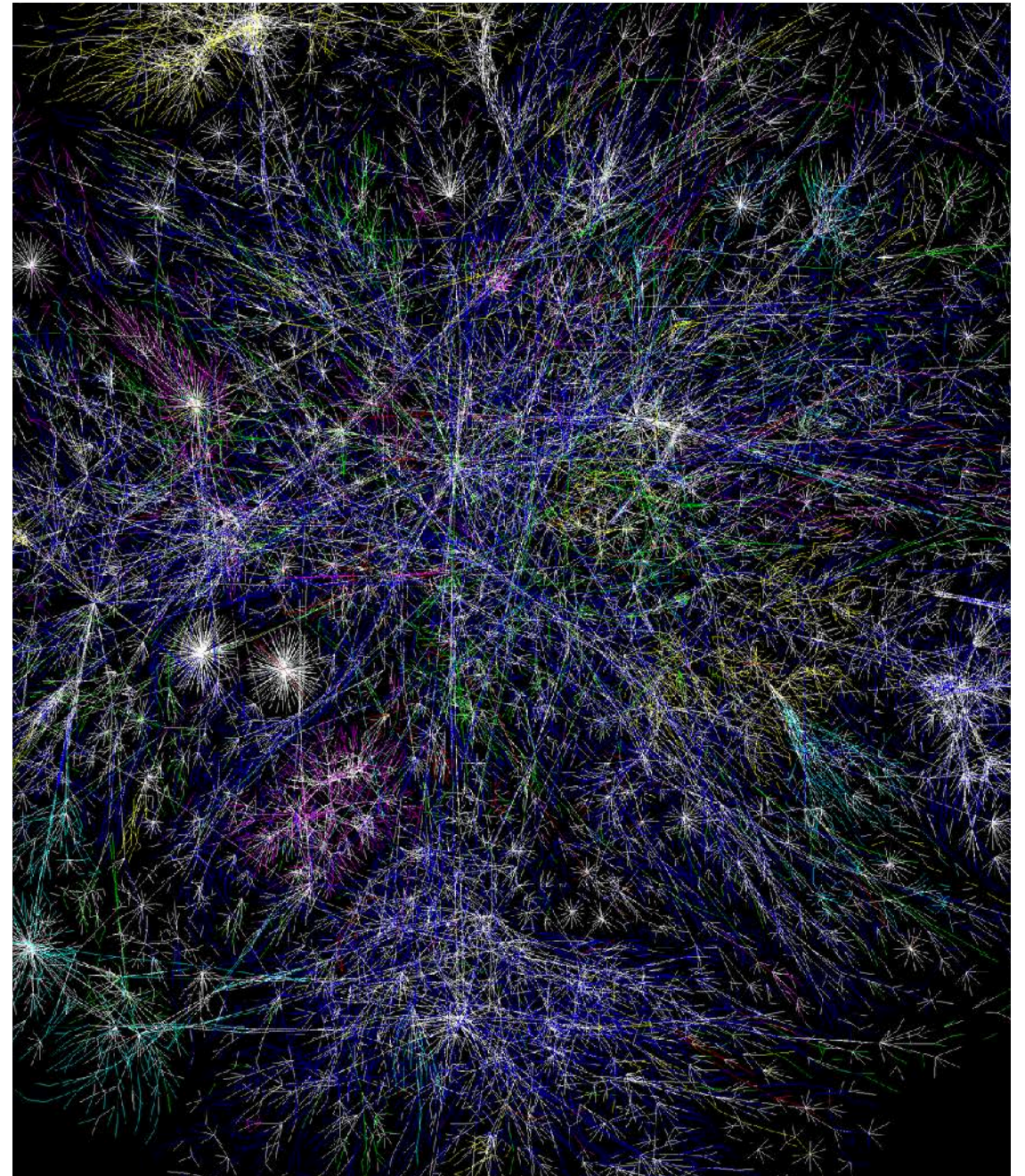
Is Youth Ministry Complex?

...or is it just rocket science?



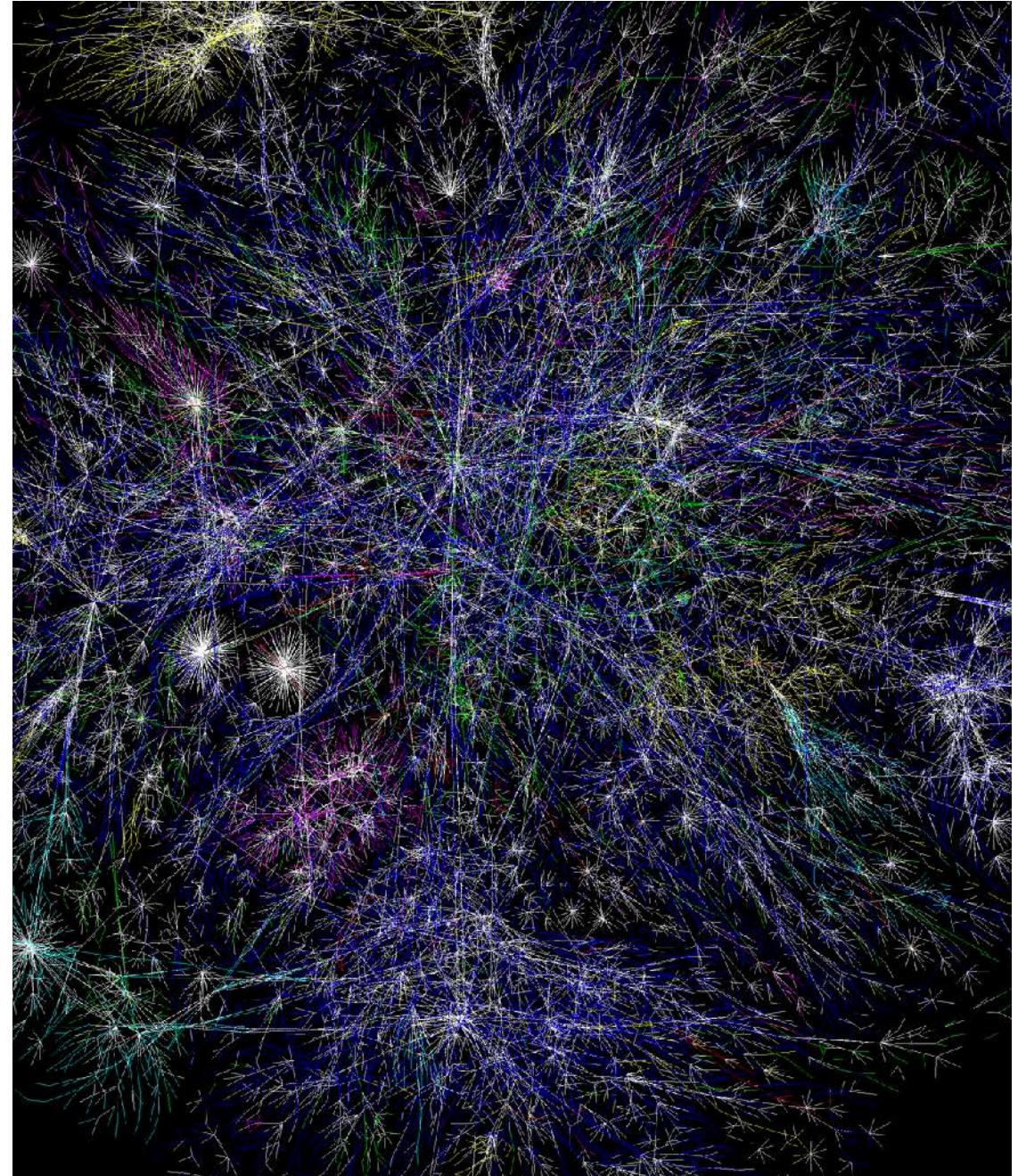
Youth Ministry is Complex

- large numbers of interacting elements.
- non-linear interactions; minor changes can produce disproportionately major consequences
- dynamic system, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, solutions can't be imposed
- history where the past is integrated with the present; the elements evolve with one another and with the environment; and evolution is irreversible.



Youth Ministry is Complex

- leaders function with limited knowledge...
- in organisations that are unpredictable and uncontrollable...
- in a non-linear universe with a fundamental uncertainty



Youth Ministry is Complex

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit”

John 3:8



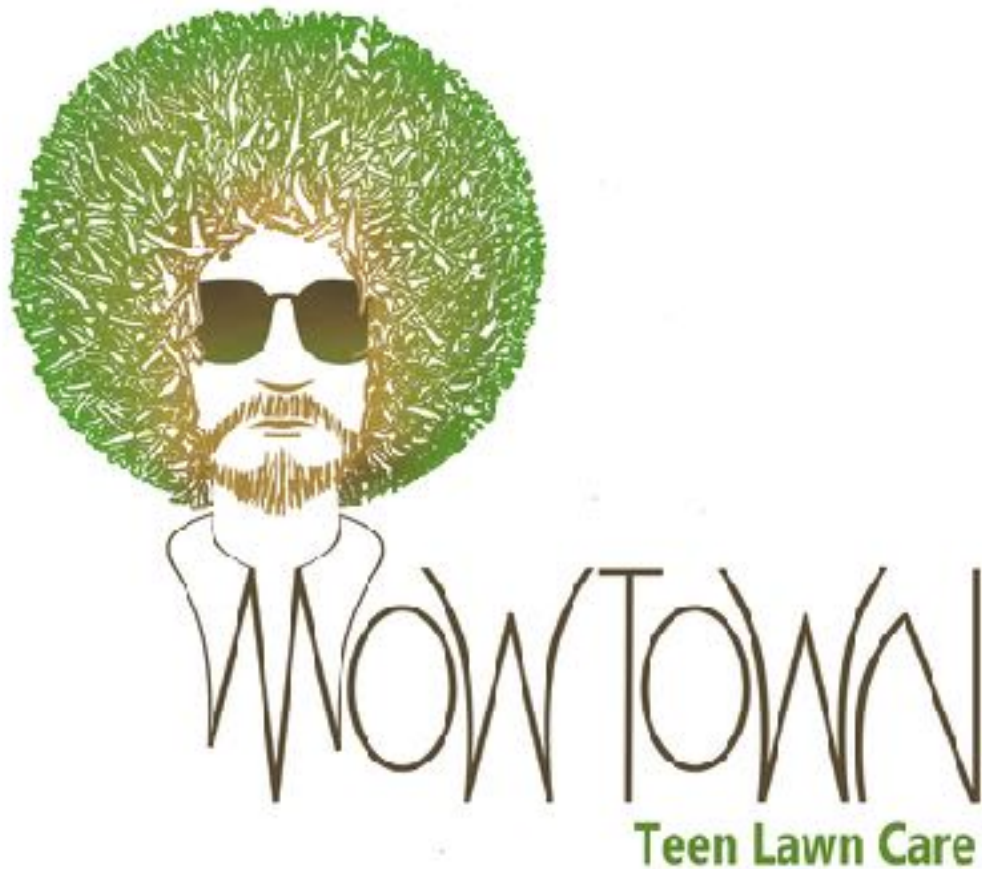
Safe-to-fail Experiments

vs Fail-safe Strategies



Safe-to-fail Experiments

- Entrepreneurial Youth Ministry



...within enabling constraints

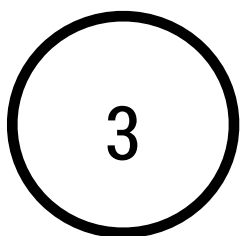
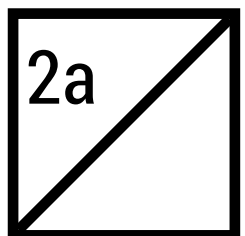
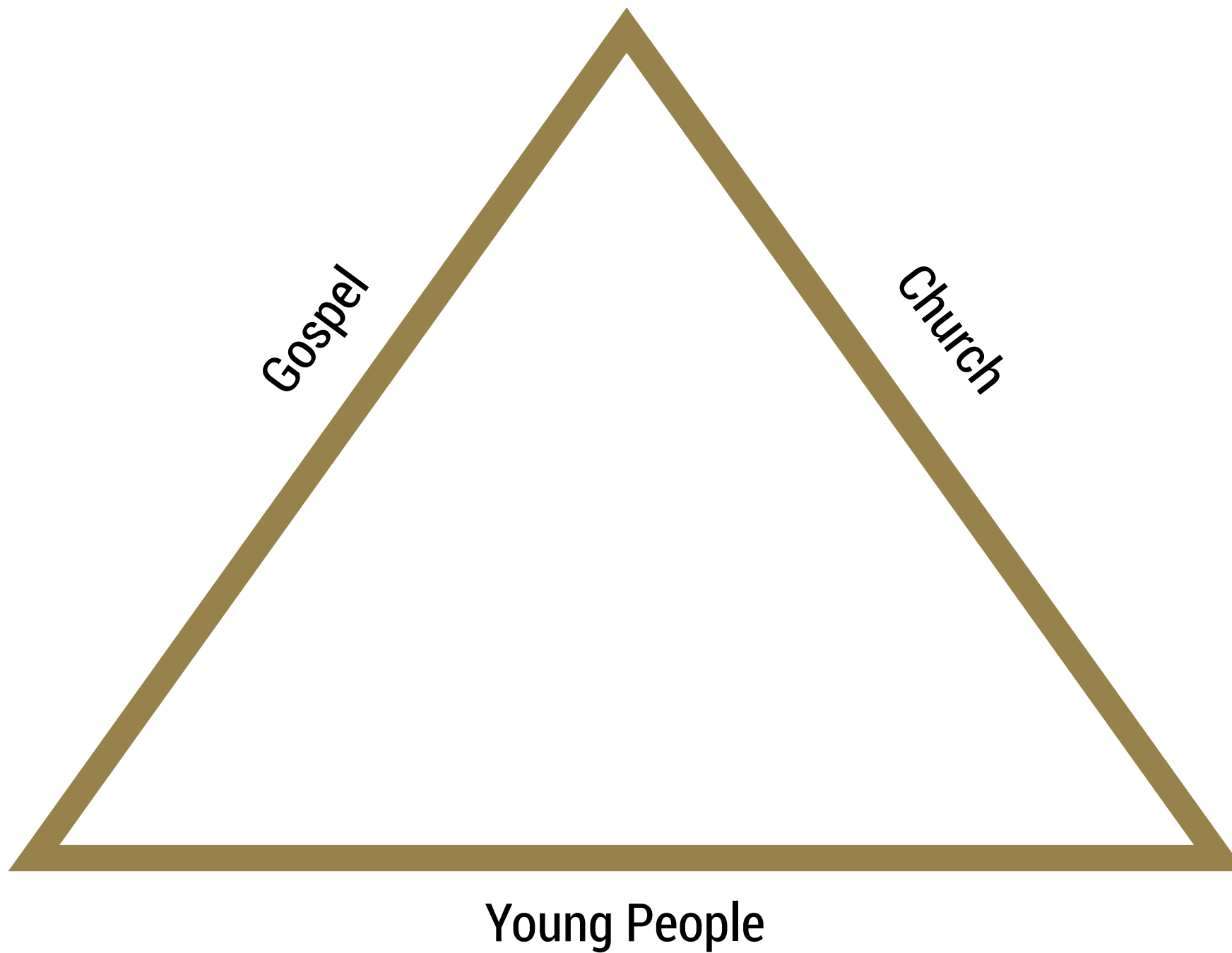


Enabling Constraints

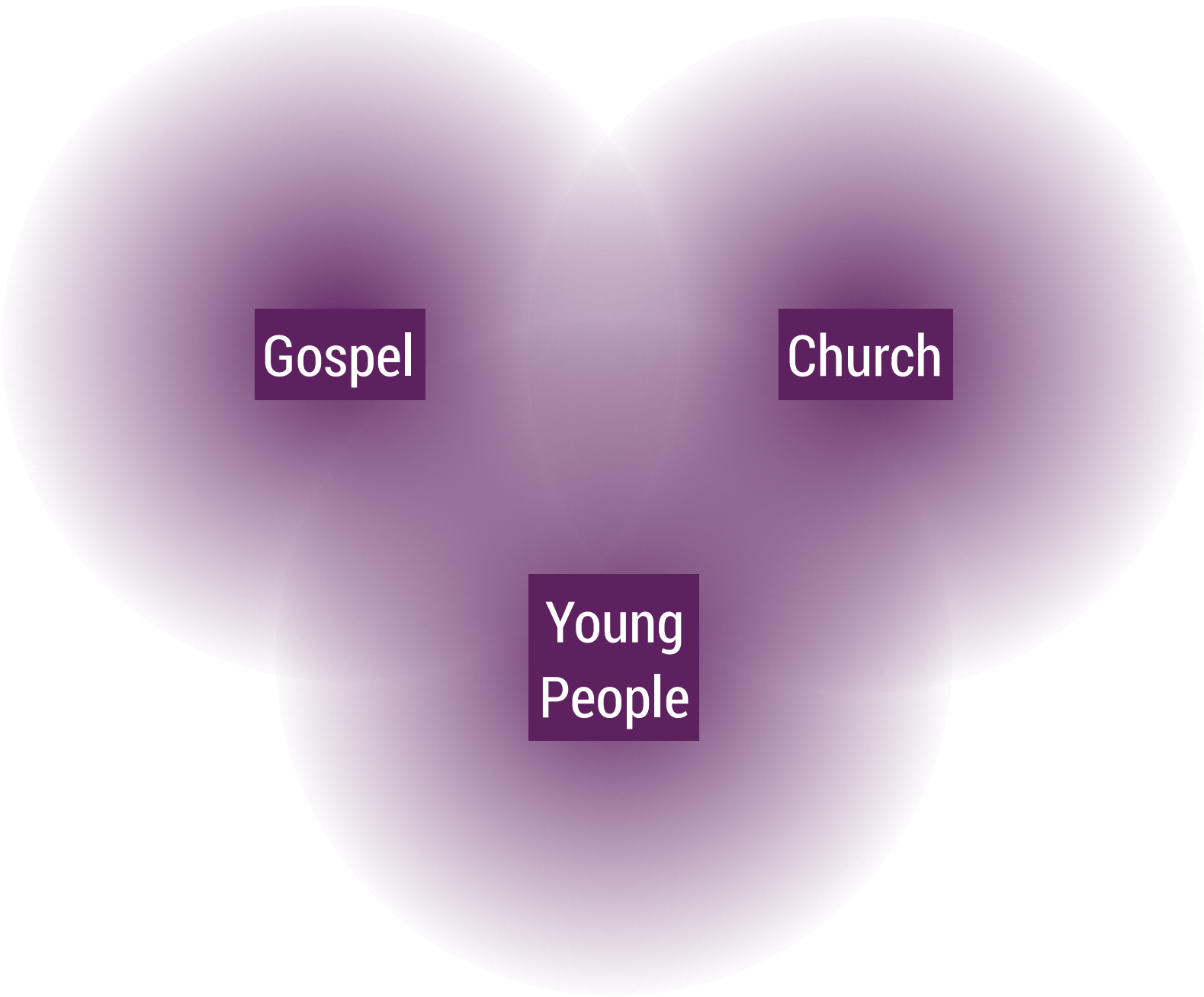
“Youth Ministry is a ministry of the gospel undertaken by the church for and with young people.”



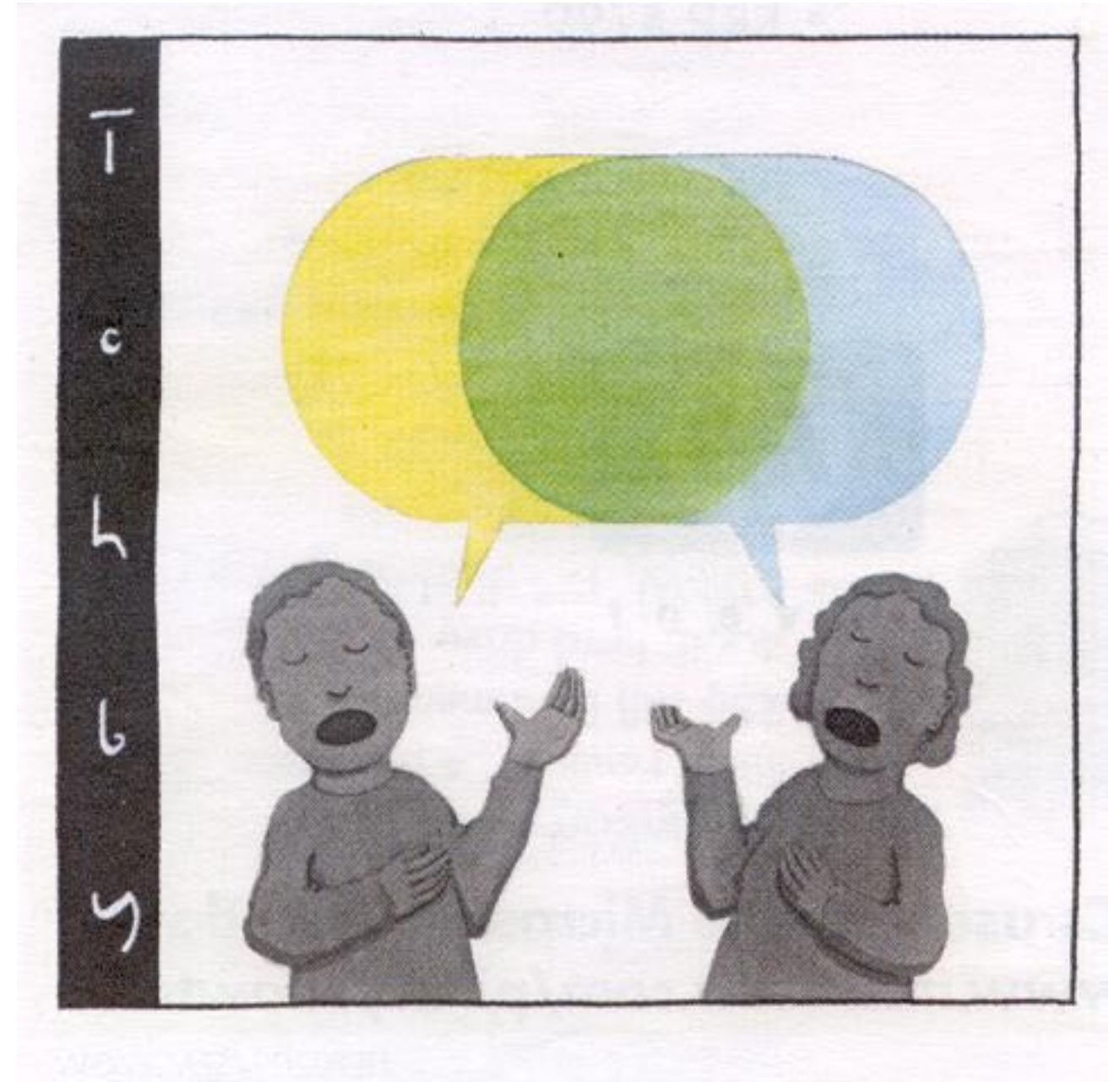
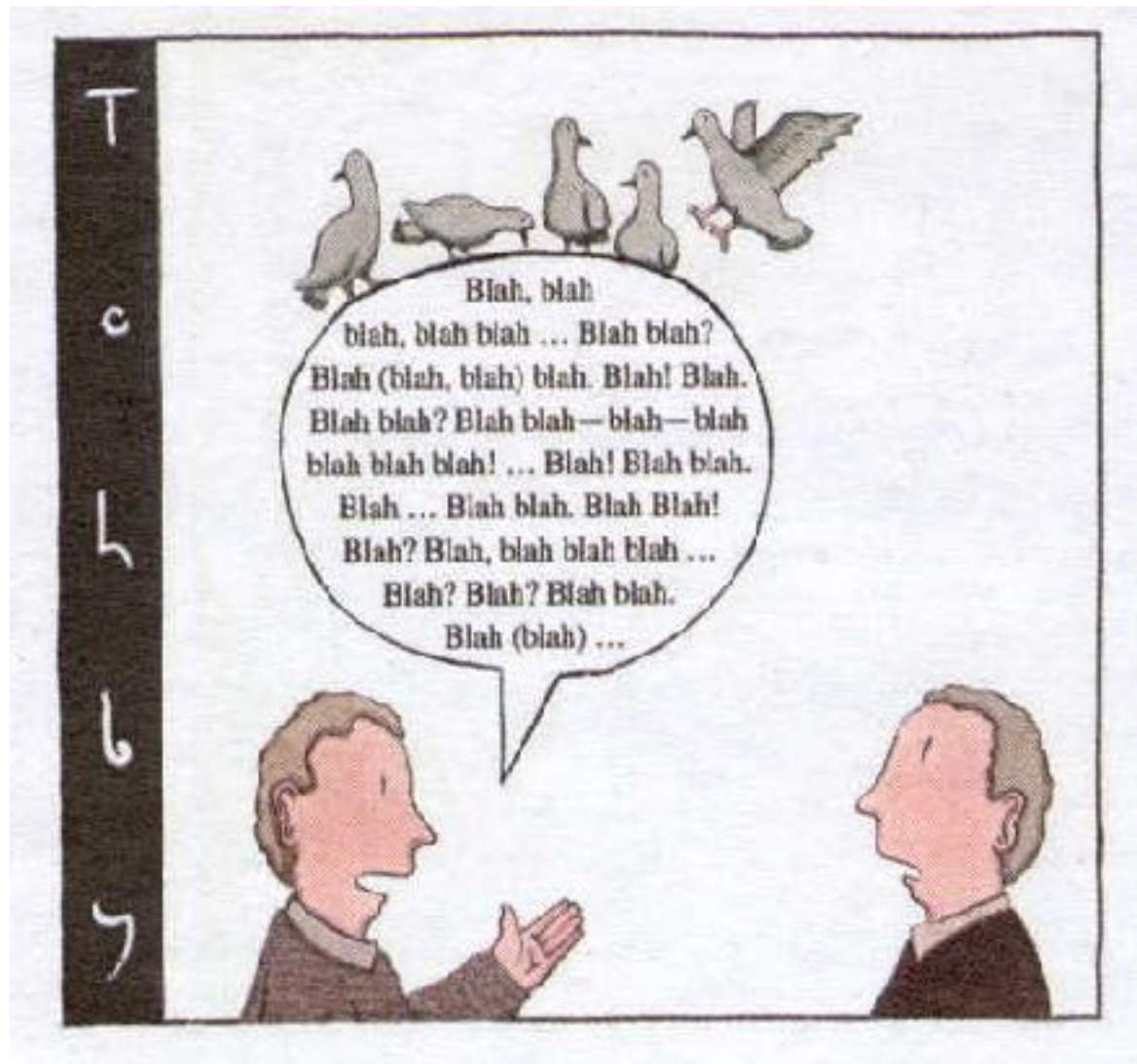
Enabling Constraints



Enabling Constraints



Dialogical Leadership



<https://unforgottenbytohbyriddle.wordpress.com/>

Dialogical Leadership

- Focus on Conversation
 - ▶ “a move to thinking in terms of complex response processes shifts the focus of attention from the long-term, big-picture, macro level to the details of the micro-interactions taking place in the present between living humans in organizations” (Stacey, 2012)

Dialogical Leadership

- Ask how things could be otherwise
 - ▶ “develop fresh approaches and open up new possibilities” (Stacey, 2012)
 - ▶ “giving meaning to what is happening, telling others how things might be rather than how they are” (Weick, 1995)

Dialogical Leadership

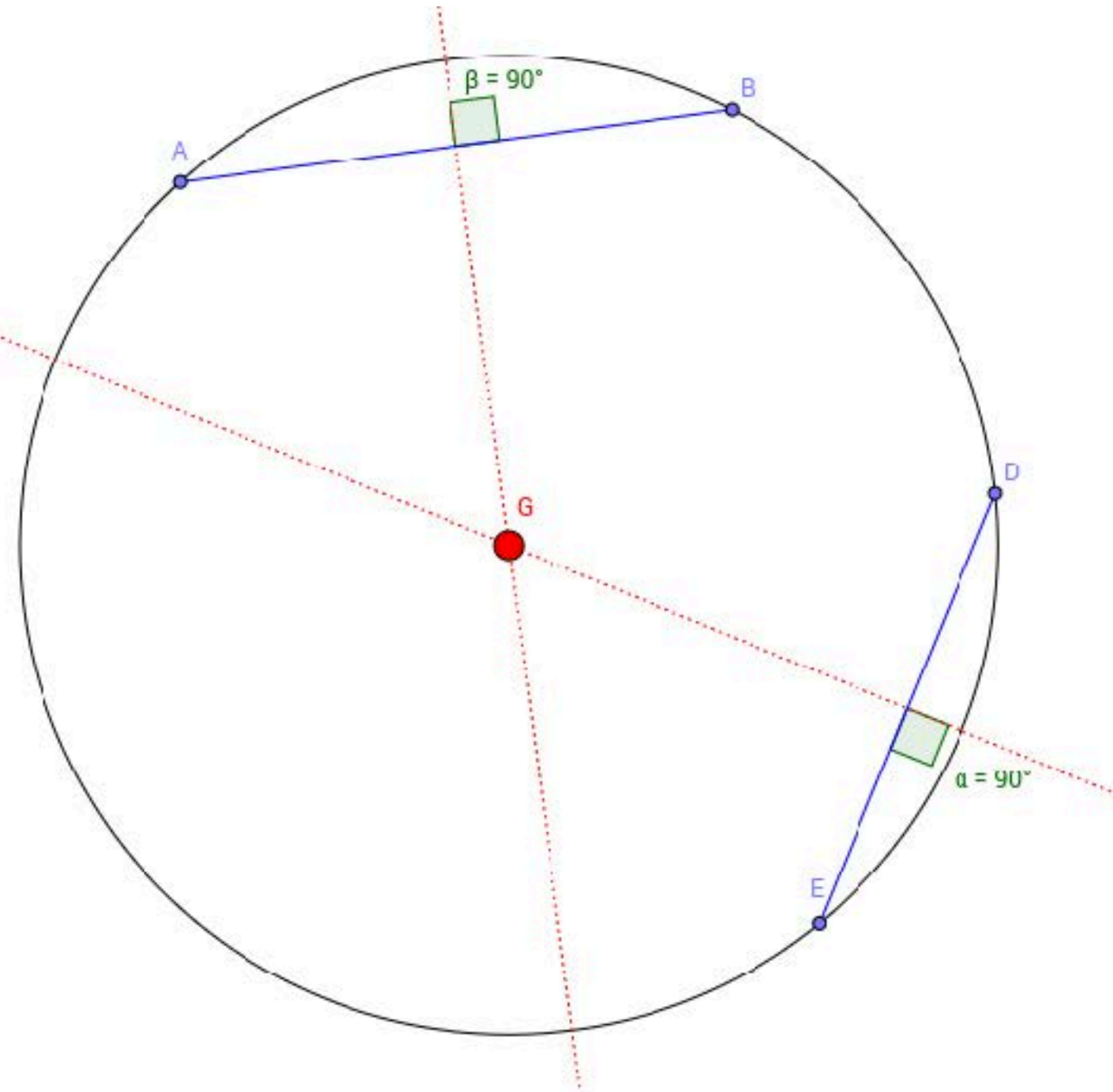
- Gathering in confusion
 - ▶ “in a changing world the need to ‘make sense’ of experience is vital. Gathering helps do this. If you can’t make sense - how do you set an agenda to achieve that - gathering in confusion without a structure to solve it may solve or at least alleviate” (Shaw, 2002)

Youth Ministry Leadership in an Uncertain Future

- Youth Ministry is Complex:
 - Therefore Youth ministry requires
 - *bounded innovation*
 - *through meaning-making conversations*
 - *within communities of mutual concern*

Communities of Mutual Concern

- Relational Dynamic
 - ▶ Radical Fringe
 - ▶ Conservative Centre



Youth Ministry on the Radical Fringe

Cultural Shock-absorber

- “Youth ministry has often served as a kind of protest movement, calling into question practices that, to young people, seem transparently problematic” (Dean, 2010b)



Youth Ministry and the Conservative Centre

Theological and cultural ballast

- “a creed to believe in... a hope to hold on to” (Dean, 2010a)
- “there has been a renewed interest in the catechetical process for youth” (Sedwick, 2016)



Communities of Mutual Concern

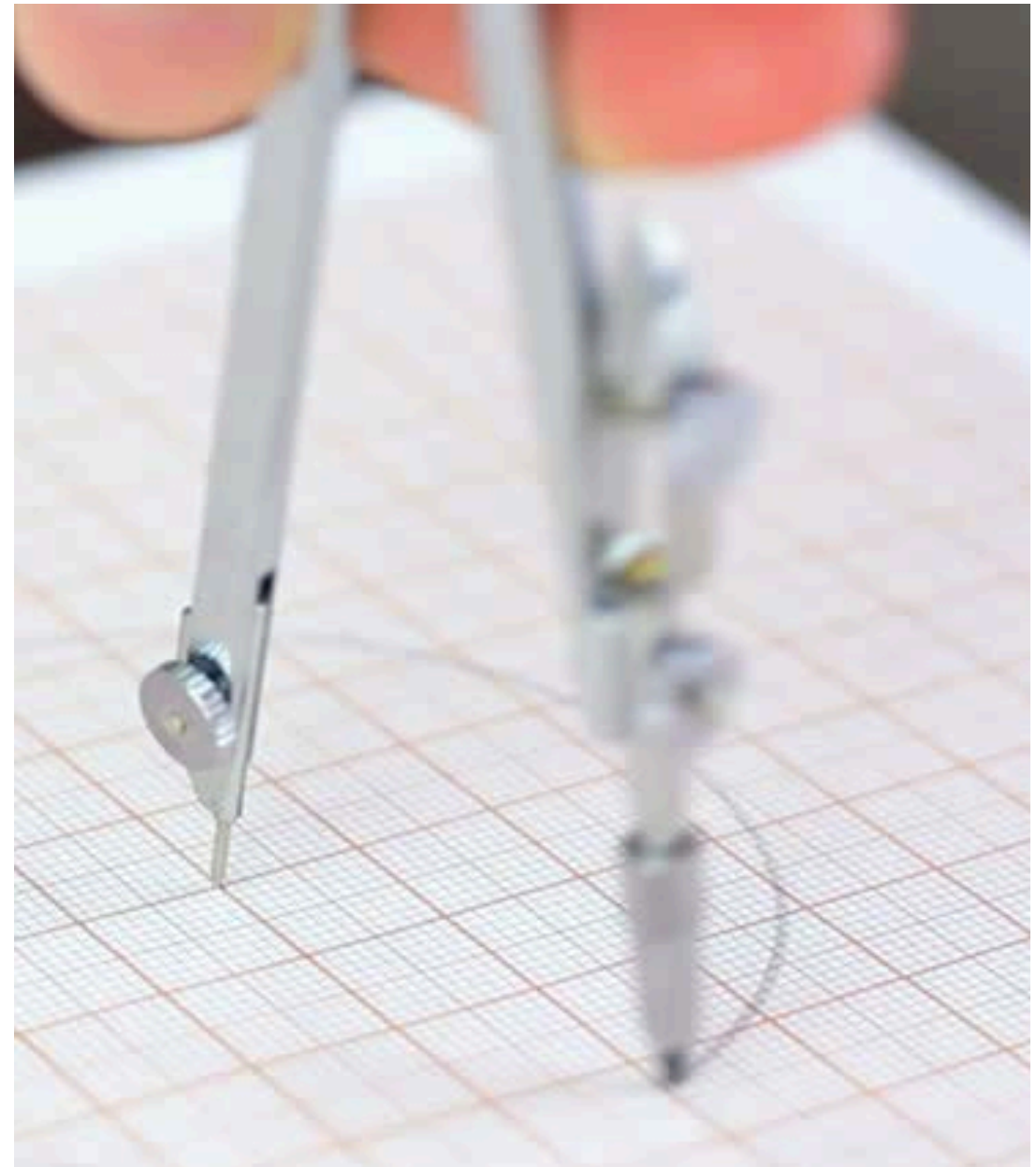
Church - Youth Ministry

Seminary - YM Department

YM Teachers - YM Students

Youth Ministers - Teenagers

Christian Teens - New Converts



Centre and Fringe in Partnership

1 Corinthians 12:15-16; 21

“Now if the [fringe] should say, “Because I am not [in the centre], I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the [centre] should say, “Because I am not [on the fringe], I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body...

The [centre] cannot say to the [fringe], “I don’t need you!” And the [fringe] cannot say to the [centre], “I don’t need you!”



Youth Ministry Leadership in an Uncertain Future

- Youth Ministry is Complex:
 - Therefore Youth ministry requires
 - *bounded innovation*
 - *through meaning-making conversations*
 - *within communities of mutual concern*

Complex Youth Ministry in a Simple Universe

- Colossians 1:17 “all things hold together in Christ”
- Romans 10:13-15 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?”

Non-anxious anxiety

- “holding anxiety” (Stacey and Mowles, 2015)
- Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”

Hold anxiety in peace

- “holding anxiety” (Stacey and Mowles, 2015)
- Philippians 4:6-7 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”

Hold anxiety in peace



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