A Roadmap for American Churches and People of Faith: W.W.J.D. (What Would Jesus Do?)

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Stewardship Calling

CHAPTER 8. Additional Leadership Tools To Consider Using.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – "MBTI."

Among the biggest challenges I discovered in working with over a thousand parishes is effective communication among volunteers, parish leaders, and parishioners. There are often valid differences that are difficult to transcend. However, in many cases, merely understanding each other better and how we each receive and process information and communications would solve many issues. So, what tools and processes can we use to enhance our parish and interpersonal communications?

One such tool I have used extensively is the **Myers–Briggs Type Indicator** ("**MBTI**"), which is a preeminent and well-established personality profile assessment. Everyone experiences sensations, intuitions, feelings, and thoughts; however, generally, one of these tends to be dominant in your personality. Based on Carl Jung's work in the 1920s, Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers examined how seemingly random variation in behavior is actually orderly and consistent due to differences in perceptions, communication styles, and judgments.

Perception involves all the ways of becoming aware of things, people, happenings, ideas, etc. This research led to the development of the MBTI, first published in 1962. MBTI is now the world's most widely used personality tool, with over two million people completing it yearly.

The MBTI can build self-awareness and effective teams through the following:

a. understanding similarities and differences,

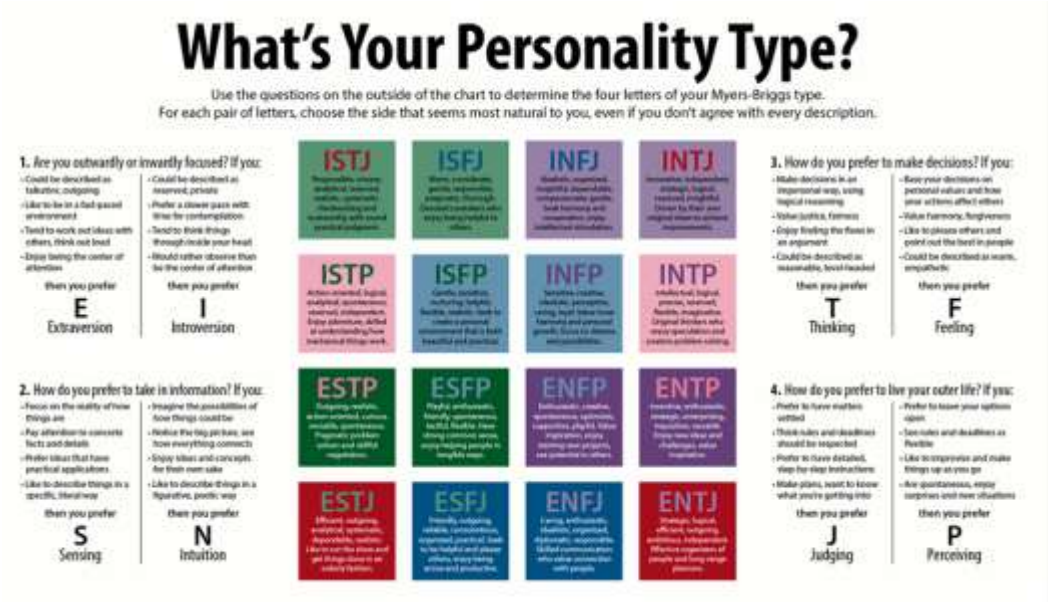
b. presenting common ways to understand and describe differences,

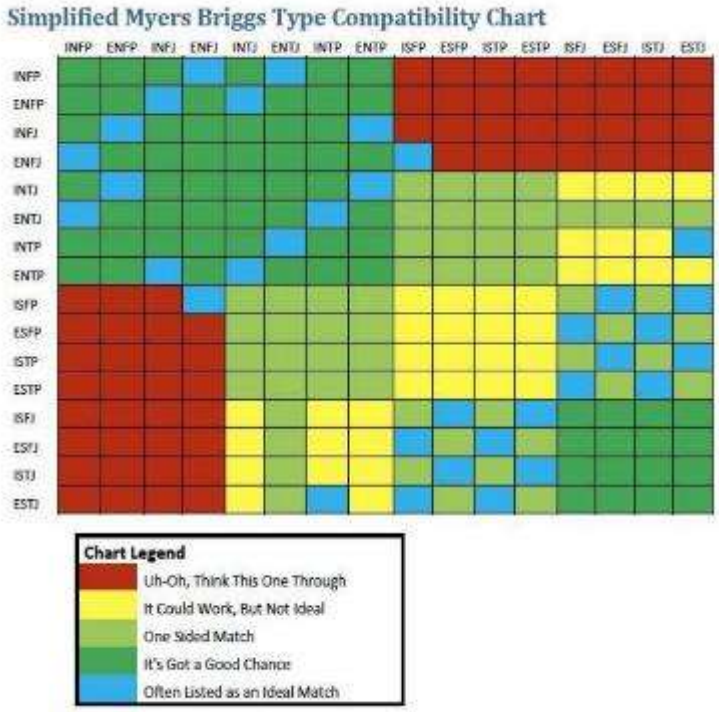
c. understanding the positive aspects of all personalities, and safely exploring overcoming behavioral and communications challenges.

People's personalities fall on a range between two extremes in four dimensions. Whichever end of the range one's personality falls on determines the letter that describes one's personality in that dimension. These results give each person a four-letter personality designation. There is no right or wrong personality style. MBTI is merely an assessment tool to help bring greater self-awareness and improvement into how you process information and communicate.

People fall on a range between being **E**xtroverted or **I**ntroverted, a **S**ensor or an i**N**tuitive, a **T**hinker or a **F**eeler, a **J**udger, or a **P**erceiver, as described in the box to the right.

Given the four-by-four matrix of the range between extrovert and introvert, sensor and intuitive, thinker and feeler, and judger and perceiver, your four dominant personality characteristics will produce a 4-letter personality description. This MBTI chart below briefly describes the 16 personality type attributes (Beech, 2014).





I find the extensive MBTI longitudinal research is very useful in identifying which personality styles work better together and which ones need to work harder or differently to communicate effectively. This does not necessarily mean that any two people are completely incompatible or unable to communicate successfully. Rather, it means they must understand how they and their intended recipient communicate and make adjustments to increase their effectiveness. The chart to the right suggests how various MBTI profiles work together:

For example, I scheduled a ZOOM interaction with someone in a ministry whose MBTI profile I knew. By comparing his and my MBTI profiles, I determined that I would likely be too domineering in our interaction. However, because of this early self-awareness, I

completely changed the way I interacted with him and was able to have a substantially more productive conversation.

Similarly, after using MBTI in a parish council leadership retreat I led, several members understood how they were dominating the dialogue and drowning out the voices of valuable contributors. Several hours after this enlightened MBTI self-assessment, the parish council discussed a critical issue, and the ENTJs started their usual domination of the discussion. One of them remembered the realization from a few hours earlier. He interrupted himself and insisted the two introverts on the parish council speak first. Interestingly, the insight one of the introverts quietly offered at that moment was one of the most powerful ideas shared.

Immediately, every parish council member acknowledged the value of this contribution. MBTI helped them have this epiphany. A parish council that a few months earlier was often at odds and not communicating effectively was able to improve their interpersonal interactions substantially. I strongly recommend that every parish council (or other team) use MBTI (or similar tools) to learn about each other and figure out how they can work together more effectively.

Culture Matters - The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument And The Competing Values Framework.

The **Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument** ("**OCAI**") uses the well-researched "Competing Values Framework" relating to the four diverse Types of Culture in organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Organizational culture can either be internally or externally focused, and it can either be oriented toward creative flexibility or organizational stability.

Just like personalities, there is not a singular universally "correct" organizational culture. Moreover, there is no perpetually stagnant optimal culture. Instead, an organization's environment, team, market, capabilities, competitors, client needs, resources, and other factors will cause an organization's culture to focus at various times, either more externally or internally, and either seek greater agility or stability.

How an organization defines its cultural orientation determines how it prioritizes its resources, teams, activities, and strategies. At its core, the "Competing Values Framework" acknowledges that organizations cannot be at opposite ends of two sets of cultural extremes at the same time (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Instead, they must find an optimal blend somewhere in the range between the internal/external poles and the stability/entrepreneurial poles.

The Competing Values Framework developers examined the cultures of tens of thousands of entities and discovered that the more flexible and responsive the organization, the more effective it can be. The consequence of this realization is that best-in-class parishes assess and prioritize the four different Competing Values as appropriate for their current circumstance. This prioritization does not migrate wildly in the extremes. Instead, the research shows the parishes and other organizations with the

best operational results are those most closely aligned with their shared values. For this reason, I recommend any such analysis begins with a focus on the organization's WHY and Core Values as they explore their current culture and desired future culture.

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument Elements.

OCAI is one of the most frequently used tools to assess the culture of an organization (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). OCAI assesses six key "Dimensions of Culture," namely the organization's: 1. dominant cultural characteristics, 2. leadership, 3. team management, 4. elements that bind it together, 5. areas of strategic emphasis, and 6. criteria of success. OCAI parish respondents allocate 100 points among four statements, with the highest numbers assigned to the statement about their organization's culture they believe is most accurate. When one maps a two-by-two matrix (internal vs external and flexible vs. controlling), they arrive at four distinct cultural alternatives. OCAI creators have ascribed the following terms and summary descriptions to the 4 Types of Culture that will be used in this analysis (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

1. "The Clan Culture." ("Collaborative") (high Internal - high Flexibility)

"Clan Culture" organizations are very "people-oriented," highly collegial, and family-like. Mentoring is common, and loyalty, tradition, and consensus-driven teamwork are hallmarks. These cultures try to avoid conflict as they build and empower teams and collaborative partnerships. This culture is common in parishes, non-profits, and educational institutions.

2. "The Adhocracy Culture." ("Creative") (high External - high Flexibility)

"Adhocracy Culture" organizations are the most "dynamic and entrepreneurial." They take risks and are viewed as highly innovative and creative. New ideas, products, and offerings are valued, as are personal creativity and freedom. Organizations with these cultures are transformational change agents who are often viewed as visionaries and for whom uncertainty and "failing fast forward" are comfortable. This culture is most common with technology start-ups and disruptive innovators like Uber, Airbnb, and Pixar.

3. "The Hierarchy Culture." ("Control") (high Internal - high Control)

"Hierarchy Culture" organizations are far more "process-oriented and structured." They are more formalistic with established procedures and structures. High values include stability, smooth operations, efficiency, reliability, and predictability. Progress that is incremental, cautious, and conservative is preferred. This culture is more common in banking, insurance, medicine, the military, governmental employers, and some extremely hierarchical churches.

4. "The Market Culture." ("Competitive") (high External - high Control)

"Market Culture," as the name suggests, is "competitive and results-oriented." Emphasis is placed on winning, achieving goals, and business victories. Objectives focus on being a market leader based on their established metrics and the desire for high customer satisfaction and problem-solving. This culture is frequently found in consulting firms and sales and marketing-driven organizations.

Figure 1 represents the Cameron and Quinn (2011) OCAI Matrix with 4 Culture Types based on the 4 Competing Values.

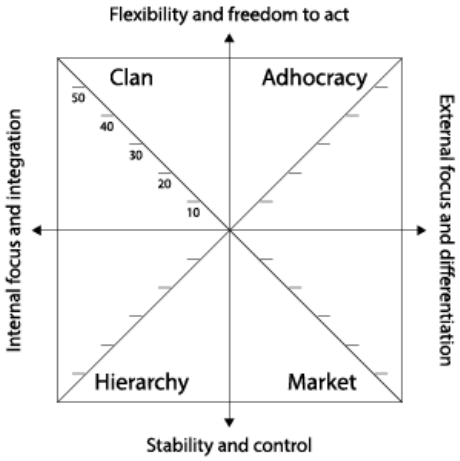
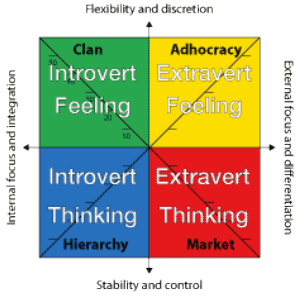


Figure 1. OCAI Matrix with 4 cultural alternatives: "Collaborative Clan Culture" "Creative Adhocracy Culture," "Control Hierarchy Culture," "Competitive Market Culture." These cultural alternatives vary depending on their alignment with the opposite values of external vs. internal focus, and flexibility vs. stability.

OCAI is an ipsative questionnaire in which the sum of each survey respondent's scores in a category adds to a constant value of 100. This "forced choice" scale differs from the popular Likert scale, where respondents score the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement. This ipsative method is often used to compare performance over time, as with the OCAI, where the respondents compare the current culture of their parish/ministry/organization against the preferred culture. One consequence of an ipsative response scale is the inability to compute statistically significant differences in scores.

Parish councils, ministries, and some churches or charitable organizations can benefit from using tools like OCAI that allow the members to identify their current culture and their desired future cultural state and start to map the road to a better culture. Interestingly, research on the integration of the Competing Values framework used in the OCAI tool with the personality traits in MBTI is ongoing. For example, a University of Indonesia study made the following correlations and connections between culture type and psychological type between the MBTI and OCAI tools (Bremer, 2011):

Clan Culture = introvert + feeling
Adhocracy Culture = extravert + feeling
Market Culture = extravert + thinking
Hierarchy Culture = introvert + thinking



S.T.E.E.P.L.E. Analysis.

In three decades of working with parishes, Dioceses, and national churches, I often encountered them dealing with what seemed like insurmountable issues. It most frequently involves facilities (moving, building, buying new land/buildings) and other large strategic matters and expenditures. In most cases, there were high emotional stakes articulated between those who wanted a change and those who preferred the status quo. In such cases, logic often took a back seat to emotional appeals, and other alternatives remained unexplored and unconsidered.

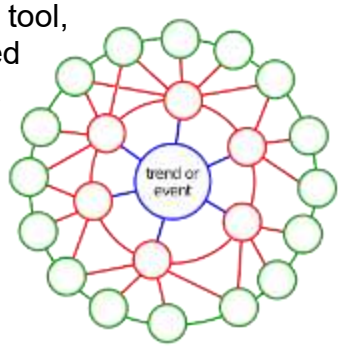
For example, I was working with a parish that had been unable to move on its long overdue need for a larger sanctuary. They had explored some (but not all) options, but both leadership and the parishioners were unable to reach a consensus on their available options. In part, because I was an outside facilitator who was able to be more impartial and comfortable with researching and considering options for change, I used an effective process to challenge that status quo that kept them immobile in a suboptimal position.

A variety of future smart templates and tools exist with which you might be familiar. While the acronyms vary slightly, the concepts are similar. The focus is to identify the future issues and consequences in discrete areas that require thoughtful analysis. Three examples of these types of models include P.E.S.T., P.E.S.T.L.E., and the version I ultimately used with this stuck parish called S.T.E.E.P.L.E. (Stephens, 2021). For those of you more familiar with P.E.S.T.L.E., S.T.E.E.P.L.E. merely adds a look at “Ethical” considerations (Richardson, 2020a.; Richardson, 2020b.; Richardson, 2020c.).

In unpacking the S.T.E.E.P.L.E. model, each letter of the acronym asks us to explore different issues and elements in greater depth (Stephens, 2021).

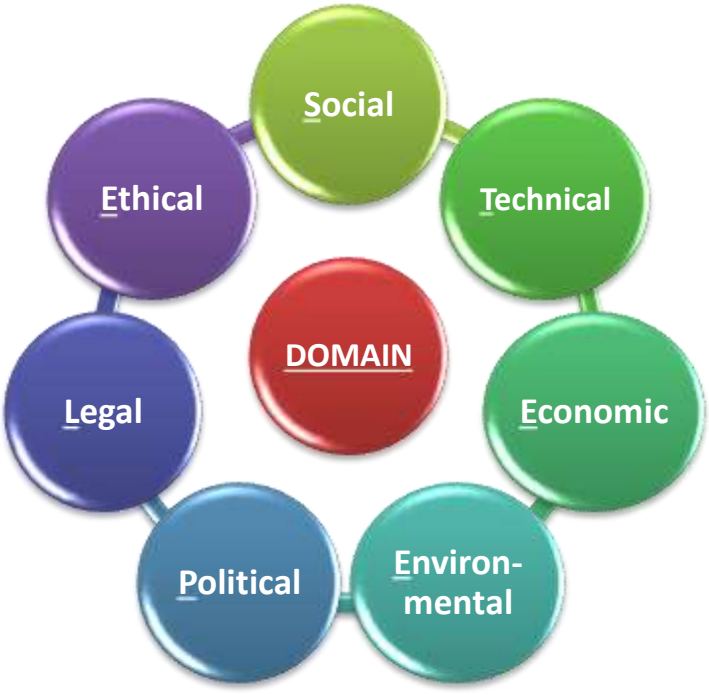
1. **Social** (cultural, demographic, population growth, lifestyle...)
2. **Technological** (innovations, automation, skilled resources…)
3. **Economical** (economy, inflation, interest rates, credit access…)
4. **Environmental** (use consumption, weather, waste, resources…)
5. **Political** (governmental policy, political stability, economy, tax policy…)
6. **Legal** (zoning, courts, health & safety, discrimination, equal opportunity…)
7. **Ethical** (trust, reputation, business ethics, morals, confidentiality…)

In this S.T.E.E.P.L.E. process combined with a Futures Wheel tool, the parish council opens a discussion about a specific topic, called the Domain (e.g., building a new church) and then considers the first and second-order impacts in each of the above seven areas that would result from implementing the future event being considered. When using a Futures Wheel (see picture to the right), the central or decision (**Domain**) is featured in the center, followed by 1st Order and 2nd Order impacts and consequences (Richardson, 2020a; Richardson, 2020b; Richardson 2023c).



The **Domain** trend, event, or decision that drives change in the center (blue circle) lights the fuse to the future. The initial "1st Order Impacts" resulting from the Domain event (red circles) are identified and discussed. The group then considers the "2nd Order Impacts" (green circles) resulting or arising from the 1st Order Impacts. The process proceeds by organizing the parish council's or other group's thoughts about the future Domain event/trend through brainstorming the first and second order impacts. In typical brainstorming, the participants offer their respective thoughts, which are then transcribed in either a first or second-order circle for each of the S.T.E.E.P.L.E. elements.

This process provides a method to dispassionately consider future implications of current issues and how they are related to primary impacts (1st Order), secondary impacts arising from the 1st order impacts (2nd Order), and perhaps even tertiary impacts (3rd Order) arising from the 2nd Order. Below is a graphic representation of how a S.T.E.E.P.L.E analysis template can fit around a Domain in a Futures Wheel analysis.



After I took the previously described unaligned parish council through the S.T.E.E.P.L.E Analysis using a Futures Wheel, they brainstormed all the 1st and 2nd Order impacts from the controversial Domain I posed (selling the current church and property and moving to a new location). They began to see there were quite a few additional options, that all had different pluses and minuses. Sensing a breakthrough, I challenged them to look at the building plans they had previously drawn up to solve their space problems and explore every possible alternative solution, including ideas they had never conceived of before.

Once the creative juices started flowing and the traditional Groupthink or Smallthink prior idea limitations were lifted, a new proposal emerged that was previously never considered. I pushed them to explore that new option using the same analytical process. I even helped them model the financial alternatives for that option, given their current situation and foreseeable future finances. As we progressed, it was as if the cloud of confusion and division was lifted, and a new light showed through to an optimal solution they could all enthusiastically support. There was no doubt in my and the parish leaders' minds that the Holy Spirit was present and helped them see what they had previously refused or been unable to visualize.

A parish leader opined that perhaps all the discussions, disputes, and disagreements they had experienced previously were because it was not the right time. But now that the Holy Spirit had opened their eyes, the leadership processes and tools I exposed them to allowed them to see past their divisions and limitations. With a fresh and creative vision, they could better see what they perceived was the will of God.

Indeed, within a short time thereafter, they finalized the new plan and received a positive vote of 100% from the parishioners to proceed with the new vision that was materially better than what they had been stuck on for so long. The enthusiasm after the leadership retreat where I pushed them through the process was so palpable that the priest changed his homily for the next day and delivered one of the most powerful and encouraging homily about getting "Unstuck" that he has authorized me to share with you (Powell, 2024): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nI2r0LfZpc&t=628s.

Let me be clear that I believe all the leadership and other tools and my pushing might have helped. Still, it was all in the hands of the Holy Spirit and Lord to move through these faithful servants in the right season to do what will help this parish fulfill its parish WHY, which is: "*To welcome all on a transformational journey to a life of purpose and salvation.*"

I believe watching Fr. Barnabas preach the above homily from his heart will inspire you to see what is possible when dedicated clergy and laity put aside their differences and lack of future vision and use facilitated processes like S.T.E.E.P.L.E., a Futures Wheel and other leadership tools to finally see clearly what was previously thought impossible. And all of this is for the glory of God and so that this parish can bring people closer to Christ and each other.

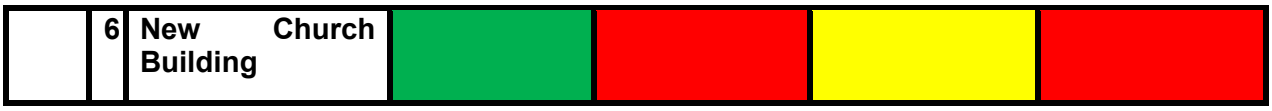
Scenario Planning And Strategic Foresight.

Related leadership tools parishes can use to access any strategic plan or similar long-range Vision they create are called scenario planning and strategic foresight. In scenario planning, one looks at potential future conditions of both high and low extremes and certainty to investigate current strategies' unexamined and unexplored impacts or futures (Chermack, 2020). Since future prediction is impossible, the objective is to stress-test current strategies against possible relevant future outcomes across a matrix of uncertainties (Chermack, 2011, 2020).

Strategic foresight allows organizations to consider future alternatives in a coordinated way to make better present decisions (OECD, 2020, p. 14). A specific tool to consider alternative futures is the exploration of professionally developed "scenarios" based on current trends to safely explore and test the consequences of future alternative states (OECD, 2020, p. 16). These possible futures allow one to examine and improve their current and future strategies. While these professionally developed scenarios can stretch out into a 20-year future horizon, to be meaningful, they should also be relevant to a parish's uncertainties and Strategic Goals (Chermack, 2011, pp. 214-215). By specifically evaluating the parish's key Strategic Goals in the context of four alternative future states, a form of stress-testing of outcomes allows for the examination of potential future results that might suggest specific present changes in strategy.

For example, I applied scenario planning to a parish strategic plan I facilitated, and we discovered that when their six Strategic Goals were assessed against a two-by-two matrix of alternative future scenarios (see Figure 1 below), most Strategic Goals were expected to perform well or be acceptable in all but one scenario. This final scenario resulted in poor performance for all six parish Strategic Goals. The following color-coded assessment using the typical red-yellow-green rubric evaluates how each of the six parish Strategic Goals will likely perform in the four future OECD (2020) scenarios.

SCENARIOS			**Schooling Extended**	**Education Outsourced**	**Schools as Learning Hubs**	**Learn As You Go**
STRATEGIES	**1**	**Tithing**				
	2	**Ministry Engagement**				
	3	**Planned Giving**				
	4	**Youth Religious Education**				
	5	**Adult Religious Education**				



Rubric:

Strategy performs well under this scenario.

Strategy performs marginally under this scenario.

Strategy performs poorly under this scenario.

Figure 1. **Strategic Plan | OECD Scenario Matrix Analysis for Saints Raphael, Nicholas & Irene Greek Orthodox Church. (Marianes, 2024).**

Overall, the juxtaposition of the six Strategic Goals into the future of a proven scenario plan's four education scenarios showed primarily positive results with a few neutral future possibilities. However, this scenario stress test showed an apparent problem with all six Strategic Goals if the "laissez-faire Learn As You Go" educational future scenario that was modeled became a reality. Knowing this in advance allows for the Strategic Plan to be possibly reconfigured to prevent a completely suboptimal outcome if that one scenario becomes reality. There is obviously a lot more that can be said about how scenario planning is implemented; however, this tool is a valuable check and balance to any parish strategic plan and can result in positive alterations to strategies.

Future Smart Strategic Foresight - "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God" (Boom, 2013).

Can we be smarter about the unknown? In its simplest form, Canton (2015) identified **Future Smart** ("**FS**") as a process of anticipating, mapping, and harnessing the unimagined by examining and extrapolating trends to predict the future. Indeed, leadership guru Peter Drucker (2004) famously suggested that "The best way to predict the future was to create it." Humans have the inherent capacity to imagine the future through helpful processes and tools motivated by curiosity, fear, or need (Slaughter, 1993). Six FS steps move from "framing" objectives through "scanning" information to "forecast" alternatives and determining a "vision," "plan," and "actions" to implement the desired future state (Hines, 2006, p. 18).

One relevant technique is called Horizon Scanning. Scanning the horizon involves intentional and systematic research of relevant trends and the threats/opportunities on the horizon that could impact an organization's ability to achieve its objectives (Cheah, 2020). Horizon scanning can begin a process of looking to the future to identify events and results that could occur to serve as an early step in creating strategies (Cuhls, 2020).

For example, The Pew Research Center calculates that in 40 years, if current religious attrition rates continue, 52% of the U.S. population may identify as “NONEs” (with no religious affiliation) while only 35% might identify as Christians (Pew Research Center, 2022). Horizon scanning is described in a straightforward video as a “systematic process of gathering information to identify future risks, opportunities, and developments” (Big Bang Partnership, 2023).

Another example is the research of Streitz’s (2015) data, which concluded that by 2050, 70% of the estimated 9.5 billion earthly inhabitants will live in cities, making these venues the hub of humanity (p. 17). This concentration will require different infrastructure, city design, power and food delivery ecosystems, transportation, and logistics (Streitz, 2015). Other Future Smart analyses suggested this urbanization would facilitate greater cultural differentiation (Cornish, 2004, p.28). What will this Future Smart (**FS**) glimpse of our potentially inevitable path mean for how parishes are planted, organized, and grow to meet the changing human needs?

Drucker (2004) criticized forecasters who focused more on prediction accuracy while ignoring unanticipated future occurrences that ultimately made a profound difference. Thus, a parish or ministry FS process should not merely focus on adaptability and innovation for its own sake. Instead, you should explore how this FS analysis can help you provide better solutions and a higher quality of life due to the availability of greater options, processes, innovations, and results that could benefit all parishioners (Lee and Trimi, 2018, p. 2). This is a unique opportunity for parish leaders to facilitate processes that imagine a better future for the entire parish and its present and future parishioners (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

One perspective defined future literacy as: “the capacity to explore the potential of the present to give rise to the future, focusing on greater awareness of situations and the impacts of change over time” (Miller, 2007, p. 347). Becoming FS (Future Smart) is challenging for parishes because of the various approaches to achieving it juxtaposed against the divergent cultural backgrounds and desires of diverse parishioners and other stakeholders. This leads to the need for a “futures literacy framework” that focuses on parish leaders being cognizant and conscious about the future and examining different parish assumptions and paths that vary depending on present desires and intentions (Benavides-Rincón & Díaz-Domínguez, 2022, p. 3). Honestly, most parishes find it difficult to do this work alone and frequently need outside assistance from FS-oriented facilitators.

Strategic Foresight is about anticipating, mapping, and creating desired futures. Framing objectives by scanning information to forecast alternative future visions with plans to achieve them is critical. While the future cannot be perfectly predicted accurately, the discipline of FS studies focuses parish leadership on providing examination, exploration, and mapping to partake in creating a more desirable parish future (Slaughter, 1993, p. 372). Thus, focusing on the present is predicated on seeking possible futures by “developing and interpreting stories about possible, probable and desirable futures” (Miller, 2007, p. 347).

While only God knows the future for you or your parish, He has given you tools and processes to begin to identify the foreseeable challenges, issues, and opportunities

you must address. By using Future Smart Strategic Foresight processes, parish leaders can better predict and prepare for the future. Data analysis of trends presents an early warning system, which is why parish leaders must constantly scan the horizon and assess how current trends will alter their future realities.

Not every leader is blessed with inherent gifts of strategic foresight. This is why the FS six-step process calls for someone to begin by "framing" objectives through "scanning" information to "forecast" alternatives and ultimately determine an optimal "vision," "plan," and "actions" to implement the desired future state. The Section on Strategic Planning/Positioning in Chapter 7 of my Roadmap helps provide a parish process to execute these essential steps. To demonstrate how this can be applied, in Chapter 13 of my Roadmap, I actually perform a Strategic Foresight analysis of Orthodox Theological Seminaries, which helps describe why they are currently challenged and thinking too small. If you are not gifted with the ability to apply Strategic Foresight and examine and analyze trends, then please, for the sake of your parish, recruit those who are. The future of your parish might hang in the balance.

Annual Leadership Retreats.

Throughout my Roadmap, I underscore the necessity of annual leadership retreats for parishes and all ministries. Each year, there may be new parish council members, ministry leaders, or clergy who need to be grounded in the basics of the parish (e.g., its WHY, Core Values, Mission, Vision, Strategic Goals, financial situation, etc.). In addition, there are at least seven critical benefits of an annual parish leadership retreat:

1. Spiritual Renewal. Remembering that a parish is not like any other business or even non-profit, the annual retreat must begin as a journey toward spiritual formation, growth, and advancement for the parish leaders. This can include understanding their roles as Christian Servant Leaders and the more tactically important aspects of enhancing their prayer life, liturgical and sacramental commitment, time learning Holy Scripture, and prayerfully applying everything in pursuit of God's desires for the parish. The (preferably offsite) annual retreat provides this time to step away from the whirlwind of daily life and pressures and recommit to a personal spiritual journey of theosis.

2. Team Building & Relationship Strengthening. Every team needs time to bond better and learn how to improve interpersonal communications. This is especially critical for parish council members who are not full-time and have only sporadic interactions. Finding the time and using techniques to increase the Servant Leadership foundational attributes of love, trust, and humility are critical for a high-performing team. Learning to interact, communicate, and even disagree more effectively is especially important for part-time parish council and ministry teams.

3. Vision Assessment Casting & Alignment. If a parish has a Strategic Plan, the annual retreat is a perfect time to review the WHY and Core Values and assess whether parish leadership has always been acting consistently with those true North principles. Progress toward the achievement of the Strategic Goals in the Plan is also a perfect topic for review and discussion. If anything is behind schedule, then a remediation

plan is beneficial. If the parish or ministry does not have a Strategic Plan, then the annual retreat must be the time to assess a Vision for at least the year to come and identify specific goals to achieve and a plan to accomplish them. Alignment (or recommitment) toward a common purpose and Vision is an essential leadership function at least annually.

4. Strategic Problem-Solving. Inevitably, there are several critical issues the parish is facing or will face in the foreseeable future. This is a time to present the data and Strategic Foresight analysis of these issues and engage in a discussion about alternatives to ameliorate any problems. This allows the parish council team to learn how to work better together to address challenges. If they can use the Futures Wheel or S.T.E.E.P.L.E. Analysis or some other tool to tackle the big issues cooperatively and collegially, they will be better prepared to handle the inevitable "tyranny of the urgent" issues they will face throughout the year. Learning how to brainstorm and reach a consensus is a valuable skill high-performing teams need to use with excellence.

5. Personal Development & Training. If Socrates was correct in saying that all he knew was that he knew nothing, then the annual parish leadership retreat is a perfect time for professional development, as well as Servant Leadership and ministry management training. I strongly recommend that time be devoted (with an appropriate presenter) to educating the team on the most effective leadership techniques, processes, and strategies. This is also the time to introduce other personal development training such as how to (a) disagree agreeably and productively, (b) keep first thing first and prioritize what's critical, (c) how to live a better Christian life while executing your parish responsibilities and living life, (d) needed relevant parish tactical skills (e.g., reading financial statements, welcoming newcomers, participating in ministries, etc.). The opportunities for leadership training, workshops, and learning to enhance skills are endless and add value to an annual retreat.

6. Encouragement & Motivation. Serving in parish leadership is time-consuming, challenging, and often tedious. In addition, it can include receiving criticism and judgment. Yet, it is an excellent opportunity to use the skills, talents, and gifts God has given you to improve the parish's health and effectiveness as it brings people closer to Christ and each other. Thus, adequate time must be spent to ensure that parish leaders are rejuvenated and re-focused on the critical life-changing good they are accomplishing as they also prepare themselves for their II Corinthians 5:10 Moment and a hopeful "good account before the awesome judgment seat of Christ." I call my retreat "Igniting The Flame" because that is what I hope to do with parishes and parish leaders to whom I minister. Once we remember that we were called to be "the light of the world," then all the light-dimming efforts of the serial arsonists and "nattering nabobs of negativism" can be ignored as we refocus on bringing forth the light of Christ.

7. Dreaming. An annual retreat is a time for future vision and creative visioning. Dreaming about the things the parish could do and starting to brainstorm how it can achieve those dreams and change lives is a productive way to reorient the leaders to the future and out of the muck of the "tyranny of the urgent." It is highly motivational and valuable to invest time in letting the Holy Spirit motivate the team with new and creative ideas and ways to serve the parishioners and community at large. Making sure this time

is spent outside the box of the traditional prison of old thoughts and low expectations can be uplifting and reinvigorating.

There are many other advantages to an annual parish council or leadership retreat. There is no limit to creativity when creating an agenda. However, the habit of gathering at least annually to revisit the past year and envision a brighter future briefly is a powerful reminder that we serve a much higher calling and a big God who can overcome every obstacle and lead us on a path of glory and righteousness.

Regrettably, most seminaries provide insufficient leadership training for their clergy graduates. Moreover, volunteer parish council members have widely varying leadership skills and rarely have formal non-profit or servant leadership training. Drs. Kouzes's and Posner's decades of research (Kouzes & Posner, 2017) concluded that a (church) leader's job is to be constantly focused on the future and inspire the necessary change of culture, operations, and actions required to achieve the consensus shared WHY, Mission, and Vision with a plan to drive transformation. Best-in-class leadership is a foundational element that must be strengthened to address the other root cause challenges.

Data and research show the invigorating and empowering results of synergies between parish council team numbers and competent true Servant Leaders. Thus, Servant Leadership training and deployment are always central to reversing the previously noted negative trends for Christian parishes in America (Hunter et al., 2013). Servant leaders inspire servant followers. This interrelationship is an essential interdependent antecedent and outcome for stakeholders and their organizations.

Ultimately, the perhaps inconvenient facts undeniably confirm that followers do not serve leaders they do not respect or trust and will not pursue a Vision they cannot see. Collaboration, service, and symbiosis are all relationship characteristics that require parishioners and parish leaders to work together toward their consensus WHY, Core Values, Mission, and Vision (Chaleff, 2009).

My Stewardship Calling trifecta of "**S³**" (**S**ervant leadership, **S**tewardship & engagement, and **S**piritual formation and religious education) solutions and WHY Discovery process discussed in my Roadmap focus on enhancing the Servant Leadership understanding and relationship to help build a consensus around a shared transformational Vision and plan supported by the requisite engagement, generosity, and stewardship to fuel success.

For the parish leadership retreats, I typically include sessions devoted to all the following elements, which I have explained throughout Chapters 5-8 of my Roadmap:

1. the Four Pillars of High-Performing Cultures,
2. the Five Habits of High Performing Teams,
3. the Five Dysfunctions of Teams,
4. the Four Universal Promises of Leadership,
5. the Six Elements of Servant Leadership,

6. the Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders,

7. the Top Four Qualities People Want In Their Leaders,

8. Effective communication through Understanding of Myers Briggs Personality Types,

9 vital team building and interactive exercises, and

10. Helping team members find their optimal stewardship calling as servant leaders learning to embrace the excellent leadership wisdom of St. John Chrysostom, who wanted leaders to discern the gifts of others and help them use them fully to benefit mankind. Having regular leadership development training and retreats facilitates this critical objective. Regardless of what you choose to prioritize and address at your leadership retreats, their value is only limited by your creativity and dedication.

From this extensive discussion of the many and diverse sets of tools in Chapters 5-8 of my Roadmap, I hope you understand you are not alone in your parish Servant Leadership journey. Proven successful approaches and tools exist to assist you in every step of the way. However, the most critical understanding is that your parish leadership work is Godly work to which you have been called. This should be among the most vital work you do as it will help you on your journey to theosis and help prepare you for your II Corinthians 5:10 Moment. Besides, can you think of anything more wonderful than bringing people closer to Christ and each other?