Why do we need this conference?
One of my mentors said …

“Your system is perfectly designed to yield the results you are now getting.”
Let’s think of the results we are now getting in terms of …

church attendance
interest of younger generations
ability to change with times
collaboration across denominational barriers
agreement on agenda
Let’s think of the results we are now getting in terms of …

- the health of the planet
- the well-being of the poor and vulnerable
- the amount of peace, well-being, safety, reconciliation, and security felt by all people (especially children)
If we want better results, instead of saying, “Try harder,” let’s look at our system design.
At the core of our system is a story ...
Perfect Eden → Fall → Into Original Sin

Perfect Heaven → Salvation → Atonement

Fallen World → Hell
Hades

Atonement, purification

Platonic Ideal

Fall

Into

Aristotelian Real

Aristotelian Real

Hades

Platonic Ideal
This is a “totalizing metanarrative” - an us-them story that legitimates domination, supremacy, racism, enslavement, exploitation, colonization, genocide.
Eternal Conscious Torment in Hell

Christendom

rebellion

barbarianism
heathenism
paganism
secularism
relativism

salvation/atonement/redemption
conquistadores, colonization
civilization, culture war

Eternal Conscious Torment in Hell
is there an alternative way of understanding our story?
Rick Warren, Billy Graham, Charles Finney, John Wesley (or Calvin), Luther, Aquinas, Augustine, Paul, Jesus

Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Moses, David, Isaiah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Mary, Jesus
Exodus: Liberation & Formation
Exodus: Liberation & Formation

Genesis: Creation and Reconciliation
Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and Mercy

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Genesis: Creation and Reconciliation
Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and Mercy

Exodus: Liberation & Formation

Genesis: Creation and Reconciliation

Not a “totalizing metanarrative”-

But a “multi-narrative” that creates a story-space (not a story-line) in which a million good stories can emerge.
Exodus: Liberation & Formation

Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and Mercy

DESTRUCTION

VIOLENCE

DOMINATION

Exodus: Liberation & Formation
Genesis: Creation

Isaiah: Peaceable Kingdom - Justice and Mercy

Destroying the world? Abandoning the world? Healing the world?

Exodus: Liberation & Formation
self

church

world

heaven

self
God’s will on earth as in heaven.

God’s beauty, goodness, truth, justice, peace, joy

self

church

world
Was Jesus’ message an evacuation plan … or a transformation plan?
Here’s how to go to heaven when you die …

or

Here’s how to join God in the healing of the world?
After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news! ...

Follow me!

Mark 1:15 ff
Here’s how to go to heaven when you die …

or

Here’s how to join God in the healing of the world?
Conventional View

Emerging View

The Human Situation: What is the story that we find ourselves in?

God created the world as perfect, but because our primal ancestors, Adam and Eve, did not maintain the absolute perfection demanded by God, God has irrevocably determined that the entire universe and all it contains will be destroyed, and the souls of all human beings – except for those specifically exempted – will be forever punished for their imperfection in hell.

Basic Questions: What questions did Jesus come to answer?

Since everyone is doomed to hell, Jesus seeks to answer these questions: how can individuals be saved from eternal punishment in hell and instead go to heaven after they die? How can God help individuals be happy and successful until then?

Since the human race is in such desperate trouble, Jesus seeks to answer this question: what must be done about the mess we're in?

The mess refers both to the general human condition and its specific outworking among his contemporaries: living under domination by the Roman empire, and divided into various competing sects.

Jesus' message: How did Jesus respond to the crisis?

Jesus says, in essence, "If you want to be among those specifically qualified to escape being forever punished for your sins in hell, you must repent of your individual sins and believe that my Father punished me on the cross so He won't have to punish you in hell. Only if you believe this will you go to heaven when everyone else is banished to hell."

This is the good news.

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2 questions:

From Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope

What are the top global problems?

What does the message of Jesus say to those problems?

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Top Global Problems:

High Noon (20)
United Nations University (15)
Copenhagen Consensus (10)
Millennium Development Goals (8)
PEACE plan (5)
Top Fifteen Challenges: How can …
1. … sustainable development be achieved for all?
2. … everyone have sufficient clean water without conflict?
3. … population growth and resources be brought into balance?
4. … genuine democracy emerge from authoritarian regimes?
5. … policymaking be made more sensitive to global long-term perspectives?
6. … the global convergence of information and communications technologies work for everyone?
7. … ethical market economies be encouraged to help reduce the gap between rich and poor?
8. ... the threat of new and reemerging *diseases* and immune micro-organisms be reduced?
9. ... the **capacity to decide** be improved as the nature of work and institutions change?
10. ... shared values and new security strategies reduce *ethnic conflicts, terrorism, and the use of weapons of mass destruction*?
11. ... the changing **status of women** help improve the human condition?
12. ... transnational **organized crime networks** be stopped from becoming more powerful and sophisticated global enterprises?
13. ... growing **energy demands** be met safely and efficiently?
14. ... **scientific and technological breakthroughs** be accelerated to improve the human condition?
15. ... **ethical considerations** become more routinely incorporated into global decisions?
8 Millennium Development Goals:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.
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1. Hunger and malnutrition
2. Climate change
3. Conflicts
4. Financial Instability
5. Water and Sanitation
6. Subsidies and Trade Barriers
7. Population/Migration
8. Communicable Diseases
9. Education
10. Governance and Corruption

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Rick Warren’s PEACE Plan

1. Plant churches to combat spiritual emptiness
2. Equip servant leaders to combat corrupt leadership
3. Assist the poor through humanitarian aid (poverty)
4. Care for the sick to combat disease
5. Educate the next generation to combat ignorance
On September 25th 2015, countries adopted a set of goals to **end poverty**, **protect the planet** and **ensure prosperity for all** as part of a **new sustainable development agenda**. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.
SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS  CORRUPT LEADERSHIP  
POVERTY  DISEASE  IGNORANCE  HUNGER  
AND MALNUTRITION  CLIMATE CHANGE  
CONFLICTS  FINANCIAL INSTABILITY  WATER/
SANITATION  SUBSIDIES/TRADE BARRIERS  
POPULATION/ MIGRATION  COMMUNICABLE  
DISEASES  EDUCATION  GOVERNANCE/ 
CORRUPTION  HUNGER  EDUCATION  
GENDER INEQUALITY  CHILD MORTALITY  
MATERNAL HEALTH  ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY  ETHNIC CONFLICTS  
TERRORISM  WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION  
ORGANIZED CRIME NETWORKS  ENERGY  
DEMANDS  CLEAN WATER  POPULATION  
GROWTH  AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES
FOUR GLOBAL CRISSES
Conventional View

Emerging View

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Jesus says, in essence, “Other people and groups — including your own religious leaders — are leading you farther and farther astray. I have been sent by God with this good news – that God loves humanity, even in its lostness and sin. God graciously invites everyone and anyone to question and reject what they have been told and instead follow a new path. Trust me and become my disciple, and you will be transformed, and you will participate in the transformation of the world, which is possible, beginning right now.”

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4 Crises: Planet Poverty Peace People
Conventional View

Emerging View

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Planet - we’re sucking out resources faster than the planet can replenish them, and we’re pumping out toxins faster than the planet can detoxify them.

Poverty

Peace

People
**Planet**

**Poverty** - a smaller and smaller percentage of people are accumulating a larger and larger share of the world’s wealth and opportunities, leaving more and more people farther and farther behind.

**Peace**

**People**
The Human Situation: What is the story that we find ourselves in?

Conventional View

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People

Planets

Poverty

Peace - an unstable planet and growing gap between rich and poor intensify tensions between races, religions, nations, parties, regions, etc., with catastrophically dangerous weapons in play.
Conventional View

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Planet

Poverty

Peace

People - In times of stress, humans scapegoat vulnerable people to vent their frustrations and fear, leading to suffering and genocide.
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That would be a Faith 365!

Sundays would matter …

to equip us for Monday through Saturday:

families … neighborhoods … jobs …
professions … politics … social media … recreation … education …
buying, saving, investing, spending …
affecting all of life, every day!
Faith for the Planet
Faith for the Poor
Faith for Peace-making
For for the common good of all People
WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE?
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Faith for the Planet

Sundays:

Mondays - Saturdays:
Faith for the Poor

Sundays:

Mondays - Saturdays:
Faith for Peace-making

Sundays:

Mondays - Saturdays:
For the common good of all People

Sundays:

Mondays - Saturdays:
Our God, whose love makes us one family,
May your unspeakable Name be revered.

Here on earth may your commonwealth come...

On earth, as in heaven, may your dreams come true.
Give us today our bread for today.
Forgive us our wrongs as we forgive.
Lead us away from the perilous trial,
Liberate us from the evil.
For the kingdom is yours and yours alone, 
the power is yours and yours alone, the glory 
is yours and yours alone, 
Now and forever. Amen.
Conventional View

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How did Jesus respond to the crisis?

Jesus says, in essence, “If you want to be among those specifically qualified to escape being forever punished for your sins in hell, you must repent of your individual sins and believe that my Father punished me on the cross so He won’t have to punish you in hell. Only if you believe this will you go to heaven when everyone else is banished to hell.” This is the good news.

**Other people and groups—including your own religious leaders—are leading you farther and farther astray. I have been sent by God with this good news—that God loves humanity, even in its lostness and sin. God graciously invites everyone and anyone to question and reject what they have been told and instead follow a new path. Trust me and become my disciple, and you will be transformed, and you will participate in the transformation of the world, which is possible, beginning right now.” This is the good news.

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1 Of course, there are many modern western non-religious ontologies and framing stories, plus Eastern ontologies and framing stories—both religious and irreligious.

2 This reflects a Calvinistic Evangelical protestant version of the message. The popular Roman Catholic version might say, “You must believe in the teachings of the church and follow its instructions, especially those regarding sacraments.” The popular mainline or liberal Protestant
Living God, we honor the original inhabitants of this land, from the Cahokia Mound Builders of pre-colonial times, to the Missouri and Osage tribes, to the Cherokees who passed through this region on the Trail of Tears.
We lament the injustice done to them by French, English, and American colonizers.
We seek to learn and cherish the unique story of this place - in war and peace, in disease and resilience, in struggle and celebration.
We honor the struggle of all people seeking justice and peace, and we seek the courage and wisdom to heal the wounds of the past and build a better future together. Guide and empower us in this healing work, living God. Amen.