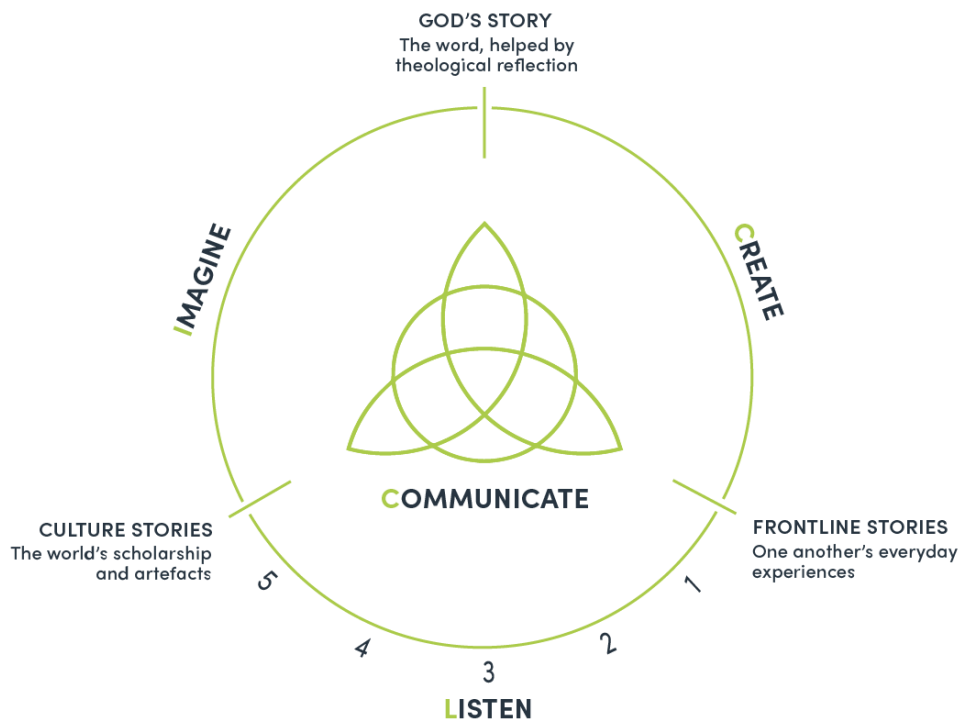


I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.
Therefore, be as wise as snakes and as innocent as doves.
– Matthew 10:16

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
– Matthew 5:9

'Every true disciple is a listener,' says John Stott. So, let's practice 'triple listening' to *one another* on our frontlines, *the world* of our wider culture, and the *word* of God. As we work through these four steps – listen, imagine, create, communicate – we become *wise peacemakers* who join the cultural conversation, growing even more fruitful in the places where God has called us to make a difference.



Listen. *What's going on and why, in my particular time and place?*

Image. *What should be going on, as my frontline is located in the big story of God's mission?*

Create. *How will we respond, seeking shalom, through spiritual practices and healing action?*

Communicate. *How to share the good news, pointing people to Jesus in a way that connects?*



L LISTEN: *What's going on and why?* ... what questions might you ask to gain more insight, and which fields of scholarship might have something wise to say, informing how you make sense of things?

In brief: Describe the situation, prayerfully listening to God's heart for the people involved ...

What do they *love*?

What do they *hate*?

For what do they *hope*?

My questions:

1. _____
2. _____

Our question:

3. _____

- *walk the neighbourhood*
- *hear people's hearts*
- *unearth the ethos*
- *consider an artefact*
- *locate the story*

Key group(s) involved:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

🍀 *Share a story where you were personally involved, that for you is a window into this complex situation*

For your assigned group... _____

Life – when are you really switched on and what makes you *happy*?

Pain – what disappointments do you carry and where do you *hurt*?

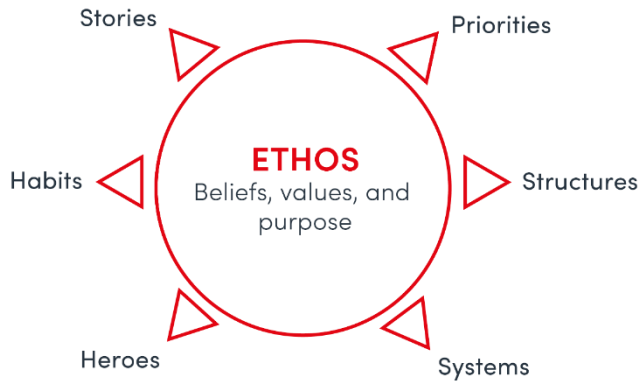
Wisdom – where do you go for guidance and whose voice do you *hear*?

Support – where do you belong and to whom do you turn for *help*?

Purpose – what wounds in the world do you most want to *heal*?

Destiny – what's your picture of the good life and for what do you *hope*?

Moving beyond individual experiences and motivations, how would you characterise the wider *ethos* of the group? To get at the *ethos*, we need to work inwards from what is seen (6-cultural markers), to what is unseen (core belief, highest value, guiding purpose):



• **Priorities** – what is the highest *priority* and measure of success on this frontline?

• **Structures** – what *structures* help this group of people hang together as a tribe, and what roles and responsibilities does each member have so it functions in a healthy way?

• **Systems** – thinking of this frontline as a living body, what *systems* ensure everything works as it should, with key processes directing energy to get things done?

• **Heroes** – who do we celebrate as *heroes*? How is their life praiseworthy from the perspective of this culture?

• **Habits** – what *habits* do we reward and reinforce, or punish to discourage?

• **Stories** – what *stories* do we tell to capture the vision of what should be going on around here? Listen, also, for what goes unsaid. Silence shapes culture too.

What, then, would seem to be the underlying...

Core belief? _____

Highest value? _____

Guiding purpose? _____

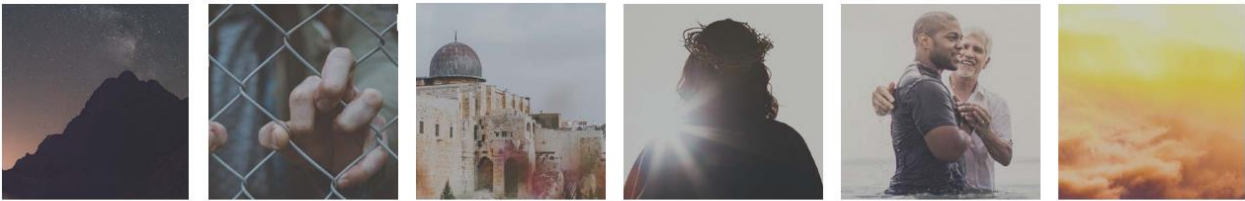


II. IMAGINE: What should be going on? ... what wisdom does the biblical story and theological reflection bring to illuminate this situation?

In brief: What wisdom might God bring to mind from his word, helping you be a peacemaker in your context? Is there a particular *Jesus story* that models the way of the kingdom, and speaks to this moment? Now, recalling the Bible's big story, capturing God's mission in the world, where do you see:

- The good* of creational intent?
- The evil* of cultural idolatry?
- The new* of healing action?

Commit this to the Lord in prayer, asking that he may make you an instrument of his peace.



Creation Corruption Covenant Christ Church Consummation


1. Biblical act & story plot	2. God's model	3. Ethos and way to seek shalom	4. Posture to the culture	5. 6Ms for fruitfulness
CREATION making culture: designed for good	Ground work	Priorities formed: garden together	<i>Direct</i> what's good to God	Make good work
CORRUPTION breaking culture: damaged by evil	Truth work	Structures deformed: expose error	<i>Challenge</i> idolatry & lies	Mouthpiece for truth & justice
COVENANT seeking culture: chosen to bless	Wisdom work	Systems informed: live well	<i>Partner</i> for the common good	Model godly character
CHRIST saving culture: restored for better	Restoring work	Heroes reformed: redeem life	<i>Sacrifice</i> to share good news	Messenger of the gospel
CHURCH embracing culture: sent together to heal	Healing work	Habits transformed: foster wholeness	<i>Unite</i> across dividing lines	Ministers grace & love
CONSUMMATION entering culture: God sets it all right	Creative work	Stories conformed: pre-empt praise	<i>Celebrate</i> signs of God's reign	Moulds culture





Creation is the story of making culture. God designed everything for good, cultivating a garden of delight aimed at shalom – that is, the responsibility and joy of right relationship with God, neighbour, nature, and self. In the process, God models **ground work**: *building foundations for life*. The world is *formed* with the *priority* of enabling everything and everyone to flourish and work together in harmony.

We're invited to join in with this ground work on our frontlines as we '*garden together*' – understanding our colleagues' priorities, respecting their contribution as fellow image-bearers, whatever their faith or none, and looking for how what they do in the everyday is grounded in and completed by God's good purposes.


-  Imagine your context through the [Creation lens](#). What's **one** key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?
-

Alternatively: How might you join God's **ground work**, gardening together to form priorities that make for a culture aimed at shalom?

Making good work means doing our tasks to the best of our ability, by the grace of God, so that we do work that is good quality and blesses other people.



Corruption is the story of breaking culture. The original goodness of creation remains, but because of our dis-orientation, everything has been damaged by evil. Turning inwards to play God, our best efforts tend to fracture shalom. In the process of addressing our selfish fall, God models **truth work**: *welcoming honesty and justice*. The world is *deformed* in its very *structures*, harming relationship with our creator, our peers, the earth we were tasked with cultivating, and even defacing our own self-image. We're invited to join on our frontlines as we '*expose error*' – not judging, but revealing where things have gone awry and calling for integrity in its place.


-  Imagine your context through the [Corruption lens](#). What's **one** key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?
-

Alternatively: How might you join God's **truth work**, exposing the error of deformed structures that break your culture and fracture life?

Being a mouthpiece for truth and justice is about standing up for what's right and fair on our frontlines.



Covenant is the story of seeking culture – like Israel seeking the promised land, needing godly principles to flourish. God chooses Abraham’s family, and us as his descendants by faith, to bless the world, calling everyone back to their original mandate of loving God and neighbour as they cultivate the planet. In the process, God models **wisdom work**: *showing us how to walk in life’s patterns*. We need to study the way God made the cosmos to be, using this insight to *inform systems* where everything thrives as each aspect plays its part. We’re invited to join on our frontlines by valuing whatever is true, good, and beautiful – irrespective of its source – so that together we might ‘live well’, following ways that work.

-  Imagine your context through the [Covenant lens](#). What’s *one* key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?
-


*Alternatively: How might you join God’s **wisdom work**, blessing others as you inform systems in line with his character, learning to live well?*

Modelling godly character is about how our words, actions, and attitudes reflect the character of Christ to others.



Christ is the story of saving culture. Jesus as God-in-the-flesh brings the story to a climax. He restores us by outloving evil, so we can realign with God’s purposes – the new humanity helping everything flourish, as we were supposed to in Eden. In the process, God models **restoring work**: *leading the lost to freedom and bringing the dead to life*. He radically *reforms* our image of what makes for a *hero*, as an exemplary individual whose righteous way we’re called to imitate.

We’re invited to join in on our frontlines as we too ‘redeem life’ – giving up selfish agendas and trading our comfort so the people around us feel heaven come near and hear good news.


-  Imagine your context through the [Christ lens](#). What’s *one* key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?
-

*Alternatively: How might you join God’s **restoring work**, redeeming life as you embody and share the gospel?*

Being a messenger of the gospel is telling people the good news about Jesus and his kingdom.



Church is the story of embracing culture. The community of the forgiven is filled with the Spirit, as they're sent together to heal a broken world. In the process, God models **healing work**: *binding community back together*. Where once we found security in sameness and protecting our own, now our *habits* are transformed to seek unity in diversity, where everyone's distinctive gifts are valued and used for peace. We're invited to join in on our frontlines as we 'foster wholeness' – binding up the wounds of the hurt and brokenhearted, and building a friendly family out of strangers and former enemies.

●  Imagine your context through the [Church lens](#). What's *one* key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?


Alternatively: How might you join God's **healing work**, transforming habits to foster wholeness as strangers and enemies become a family?

Ministering grace and love are ways that we channel the grace and love that God has shown to us to others.



Consummation is the story of finally entering kingdom culture, where 'the way we do things around here' truly is heaven on earth. The dead are raised, the unrepentant are judged, and the cosmos is resurrected as the Creator sets everything right. In the process, God models **creative work**: *crafting a new world*.

No-one can fully imagine the glory of what will be, but in the new creation all our stories will find a fitting resolution, *conformed* to the will of God for the flourishing of all things. However, we're invited in the present to join in on our frontlines as we 'pre-empt praise' – looking for and crafting signs in our messy 'now' of a vibrant 'not yet' that one day will glorify Jesus – who makes this do-over possible.

●  Imagine your context through the [Consummation lens](#). What's *one* key principle that should guide any wise response for a church seeking to follow Jesus in this particular time and place?

Alternatively: How might you join God's **creative work**, telling hopeful stories that pre-empt the praise to come when everything is made new?

Moulding culture is what we do when we help shape our frontlines to become more like the places God would want them to be.



III. CREATE: *How might we respond?* ... what principles might help guide our actions, and what [spiritual practices](#) might help us be more Christlike in the process?

In brief: We're called by God to garden his world, cultivating *shalom* through right relationship with God, our neighbours, nature, and ourselves. This takes wisdom. So, pray for discernment to water, weed, and weave with one meaningful action for each...

Water what's good in this place, helping it grow to be fully itself

Weed out what's bad, to limit what threatens shalom

Weave something new and good in this place, bringing healing and beauty, pointing people to Jesus

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Creation, how might you direct what's good to God, and make good work?**

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Corruption, how might you challenge idolatry and lies, and be a mouthpiece for truth and justice?**

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Covenant, how might you partner for the common good, and model godly character?**

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Christ, how might you sacrifice to share good news, and be a messenger of the gospel?**

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Church, how might you unite across dividing lines, and minister grace and love?**

● **Seeking to create through the lens of Consummation, how might you celebrate signs of God's reign, and mould culture?**



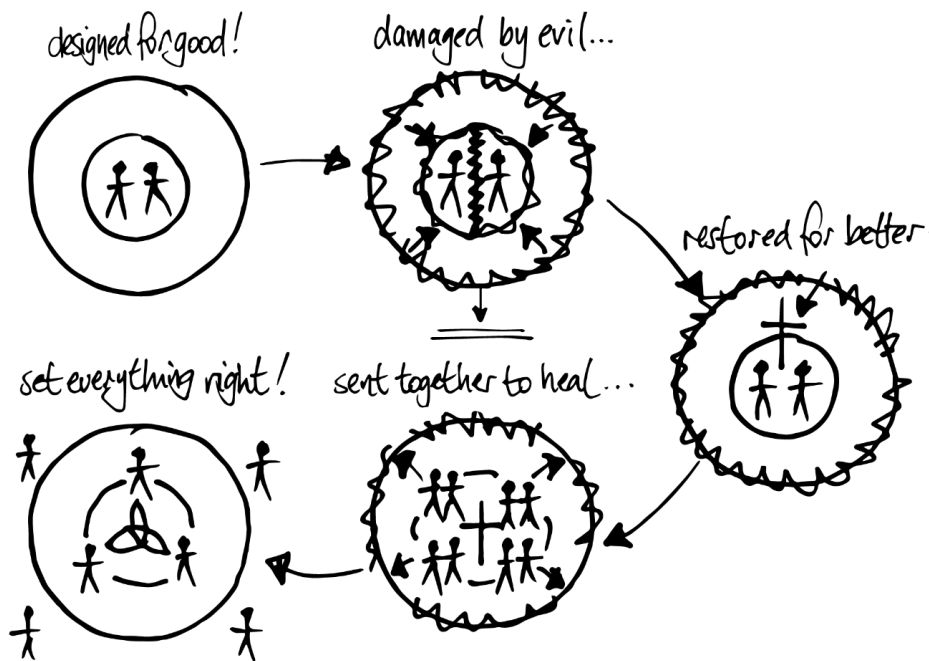
IV. COMMUNICATE: How could we share the good news in this context? ... what might we say to contextualise the gospel in a way that makes sense to our non-Christian neighbours in this place?

In brief: Pray back through this situation. Why is Jesus good news to your neighbours, worth sharing about? And how does the gospel and your particular kingdom response...

- Affirm what they *love*?
- Challenge what they *hate*?
- Satisfy their deepest *hope*?

🗨️ How can I point people to Jesus, with good news that connects in my context?

- (1) their *happiness* taps into how God designed them for good
- (2) their *hurts* are a window into how they've been damaged by evil
- (3) their sources of *help* they *hear* shadow how Jesus wants to restore them for better
- (4) their passionate purposes and preferred causes mirror how in the Spirit we're sent to *heal*
- (5) their *hope* for a good life foreshadows, however imperfectly, when God sets everything right.



Jot one key point for each of the gospel aspects below, that truly offers good news to your neighbours. As the kingdom comes near through your action, how does this speak to this group's deepest desires?

- We were **designed for good**, to love God and our neighbour as ourselves as we cultivate the world. ... So how does your response speak to:

Life – when are you really switched on and what makes you *happy*?

- And yet, we're **damaged by evil** as we make good things into gods and rebelliously define life against the Creator's grain. ... *So how does your response speak to:*

Pain – what disappointments do you carry and where do you *hurt*?

- Thankfully, God chooses the least of humanity as a pipeline to bless the world, entering in through Jesus to **restore us for better**. By abandoning our rebellion and aligning with the crucified Saviour to walk his way of grace and peace, we are forgiven and invited to join this mission of restoration. ... *So how does your response speak to:*

Wisdom – where do you go for guidance and whose voice do you *hear*?

Support – where do you belong and to whom do you turn for *help*?

- We're **sent together to heal** the world as a foretaste of when **God sets everything right** in a cosmic resurrection, where only the eternally stubborn are shut out. The garden becomes a garden city, and we party together. ... *So how does your response speak to:*

Purpose – what wounds in the world do you most want to *heal*?

Destiny – what's your picture of the good life and for what do you *hope*?



🌱 To see this process modelled concerning our digital age, see our 'Rage Against the Machine' [event/guide](#) and blog series: '[Part 1: Christlike living in a high-tech world](#)' (listen + imagine); '[Part 2: What Do We Do Now](#)' (create + communicate).

🌱 To see this process modelled concerning engaging the LGBTIQ+ community, see our 'Following Jesus in a Sexular Age' [event/guide](#) and blog series: [Listen](#), [Imagine](#), [Create](#), [Communicate+](#).

NEXT STEPS...

What were your key insights gained through this process of practical theological reflection?

What are two key actions you could take in your capacity as a church leader to bridge the divide with the groups in your community, while remaining faithful in practice and truthful in action?

What are two key actions you personally could take as a wise peacemaker on your frontline, reweaving love of God, neighbour, nature, and self?

What first step will you make in response to this transformative theological reflection?
Alongside your community of discernment, commit this to the Lord in prayer.



YOUR MUSINGS ...

Triple Listening



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Being a wise peacemaker

Listen: What's going on and why?

Imagine: What should be going on?

Create: How will we respond?

Communicate: How to share the good news?



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