



Beyond the covid crisis: Leading in complexity

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CROSSLANDS

Leadership is a
profoundly theological activity!

*“Now we all find out what
I really stand for”*

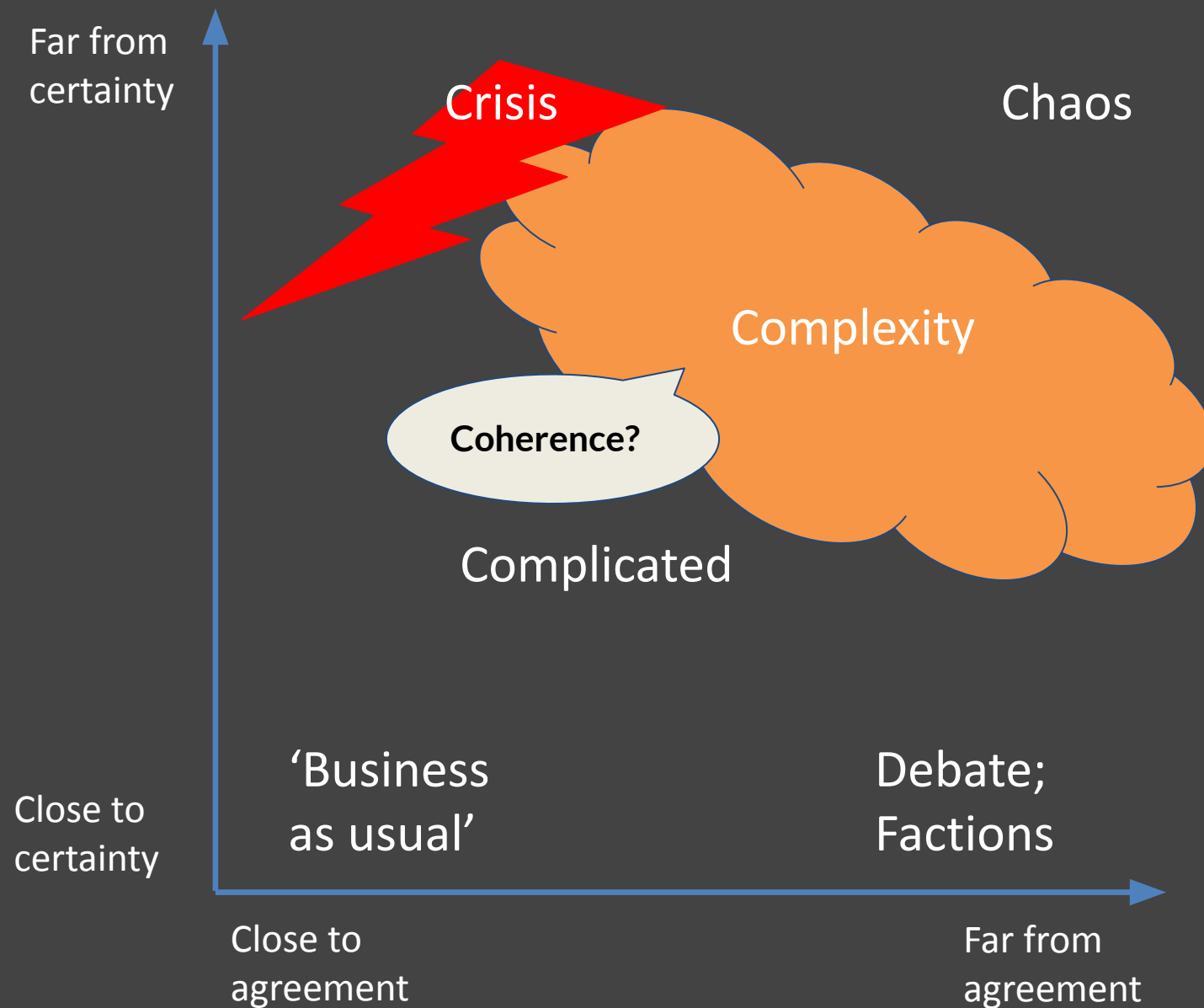


Here's what we'll cover

In general:

A grid or a lexicon for describing, organising and evaluating what you're probably already seeing and doing.

1. The dynamics of uncertainty (*It's not all bad*)
2. Ladder of Abstraction (*It's not all uncertain*)
3. Metaphors: Magnets and Salad Bowls (*Important tensions; valuable 'containers'*)
4. Some Simple Frameworks
5. Posture of a leader amid complexity
6. Q&A



Levels of agreement and certainty have a dynamic relationship:

- Loss of certainty will expose differences that were hidden
- Loss of agreement will give rise to new uncertainty

Complexity brings great potential for new possibilities to emerge.



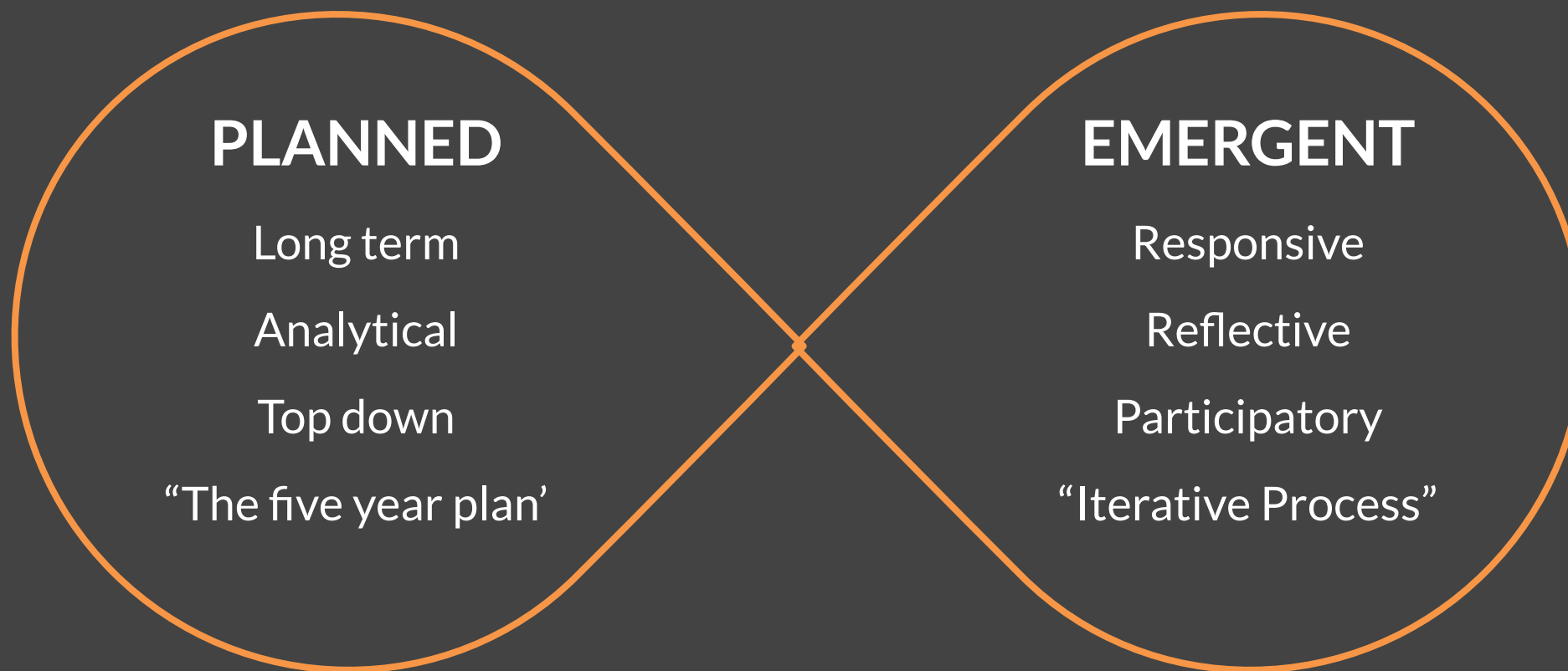
Increasing coherence in communities

1. **Inquiry:** understanding the rounded reality, seeing possibilities and generating new options. A posture of “not knowing”.
2. **Patterns:** developing the capacity to see, understand and influence patterns. Integrating variations into a healthy whole, rather than forcing standard answers.
3. **Simple rules: a baseline of** shared standards and expectations enable adaptive decision making without anarchy.

(This describes, in part, a pattern seen in Acts - e.g. Antioch, Acts 11)



How do we approach strategic planning?





Ladder of Abstraction





Biblical Worldview includes...

1. The nature of God
2. The nature of authority
3. The story of redemption
4. The problem of the heart
5. The context of community
6. The perspective of eternity



The Ladder of Abstraction





Polarities: important tensions



Action	AND	Reflection
Safety	AND	Risk
Confidence	AND	Humility
Structure	AND	Freedom
Fast	AND	Slow
Innovation	AND	Tradition
Parts	AND	Whole
Unity	AND	Diversity
Stability	AND	Change

1. Seeing polarities is a good start!
2. *Active* maintenance – keep checking the balance and interplay



Tight AND Loose... CONTAINERS help patterns to form

Daily check-in

Survey

Future event

Great question(s)

Simple rules

Catchphrase

Evaluation



Lead with good process...

You don't have to know
'the answer'

(there probably isn't a
simple right answer, but
there will be the pieces of
the jigsaw)



Principles

- Tight on ends, flexible on means (road map, not rail track)
- Provide a visible, participatory process.
- ‘Simple rules’ (principles and policies): Boundaries enable freedoms.
- Meaningful measures: What to keep focused on.
- Use of Metaphor: exploring and communicating meaning.
- Foster community: belonging matters more than ever.



Examples of participatory processes

- ‘Rapid test’ approach:
 - Many small experiments
 - Rapid test, feedback, learn
 - Iterate and build
 - Embed what works; drop what doesn’t
- GROW model
 - Goal
 - Reality
 - Options
 - Will



Leading complexity

- Asking questions before knowing answers
- Relationships before structures
- Reflection before reaction
- Constructive dissent, not destructive consent
- Collective intelligence, not individual genius
- Identify and understand 'positive deviance'
- Negative capability, not heroic activity
- Empathy, not egotism

Source: Adapted from Grint, K "Wicked issues and clumsy solutions"



Posture of a leader amid complexity

Knowing AND Not Knowing

Confidence AND Humility

Learner AND Teacher

Energy AND Rest

Communication: many times and in various ways!

(Assume much less understanding or agreement than in more 'normal' times)

Thankful...Joyful...Prayerful...Hopeful



‘Not knowing’ is okay...

Hymn:

I cannot tell how He will win the nations,
How He will claim His earthly heritage,
How satisfy the needs and aspirations
Of east and west, of sinner and of sage.

But this I know, all flesh shall see His glory,
And He shall reap the harvest He has sown,
And some glad day His sun shall shine in splendor
When He the Savior, Savior of the world, is known.



For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

(2 Cor 4)





QUESTIONS?

OR Discuss:

- What are the few vital things to be tight on? How are these being communicated and strengthened?
- What are the things you need to be intentionally flexible about right now? How are you communicating that freedom or flexibility?
- How are you doing at observing and sense-making (“not knowing”)?
- In which areas do you need to be leading rapid learning cycles?
- What are the most significant ‘polarities’ (vital tensions) in your context? How healthy is the interplay between them right now?
- What are some of the most important ‘framing’ questions that could act as helpful ‘containers’ for our church or ministry right now?
 - *SUGGESTION: Framing questions often start something like “How could we ...?”*