

Journey to Inclusion

Fully Engaging Women Clergy in the
Church of the Nazarene



60-Minute Workshop



Interactive Session

Ground Rules for Today



Speak from "I" statements



Listen to understand, not to defend



Anonymized stories only—no naming names



Discomfort = Growth



Focus on systems, not individuals



Civil, respectful dialogue

The Challenge We Face

40%

of newly ordained clergy
are WOMEN



2023 Ordination Data



The Gap

Leadership Opportunities

1.6%

Only 1.6% of large churches (average weekly attendance (AWA)>350) have female lead pastors

80%

of female pastors serve churches with under 50 attendance

95%

of female pastors serve churches with under 100 attendance



A Critical Shift in Thinking

Old Approach



Eliminate Bias

Attempts to remove unconscious bias from individuals (like trying to remove terrain from a map)



Impractical and unlikely – bias is neurologically and morally neutral

S

New Approach



Foster Inclusion

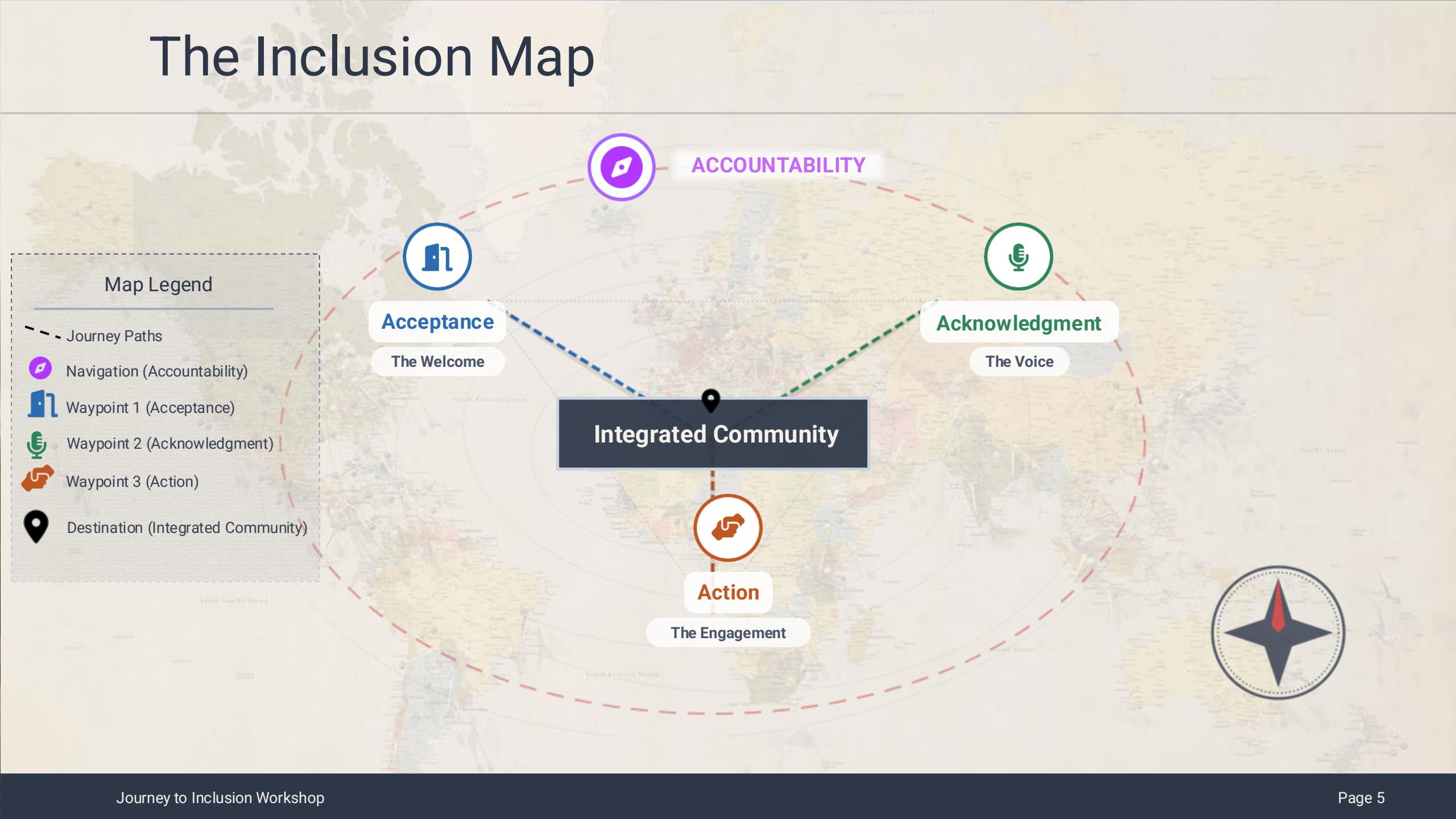
Shifts behaviors from exclusion to active integration (charting a new course)



Actionable – focuses on behaviors & systems

S

The Inclusion Map





Acceptance: The Welcome



Waypoint 2



Reception in a space previously unavailable



Seat at the table



Physical presence

Physical presence in the room



Road Hazard



OBSERVER

You are visibly present, but powerless and silent.

Missing Path Elements

- Acknowledgment
- Action



Acknowledgment: The Voice



Waypoint 2



Given space to speak and be heard



Participating in decision making



Voice is amplified to others

Road Hazard



TOKEN

Asked to speak,
but not welcomed or impactful.
Idealized representation of entire group

Missing Path Elements



Acknowledgment



Action



Action: The Impact



Waypoint 2



Tangible deeds and visible changes



Policy shifts and resource allocation



Noticeable behavior adjustments



Road Hazard



ISSUE

Treated as a problem to solve, rather than a person to value.

Missing Path Elements

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT
- ACCEPTANCE



Accountability: The Standards



The overarching element that sustains inclusion



Noticing when exclusion returns



Advocating for change



Creating systems that maintain integration



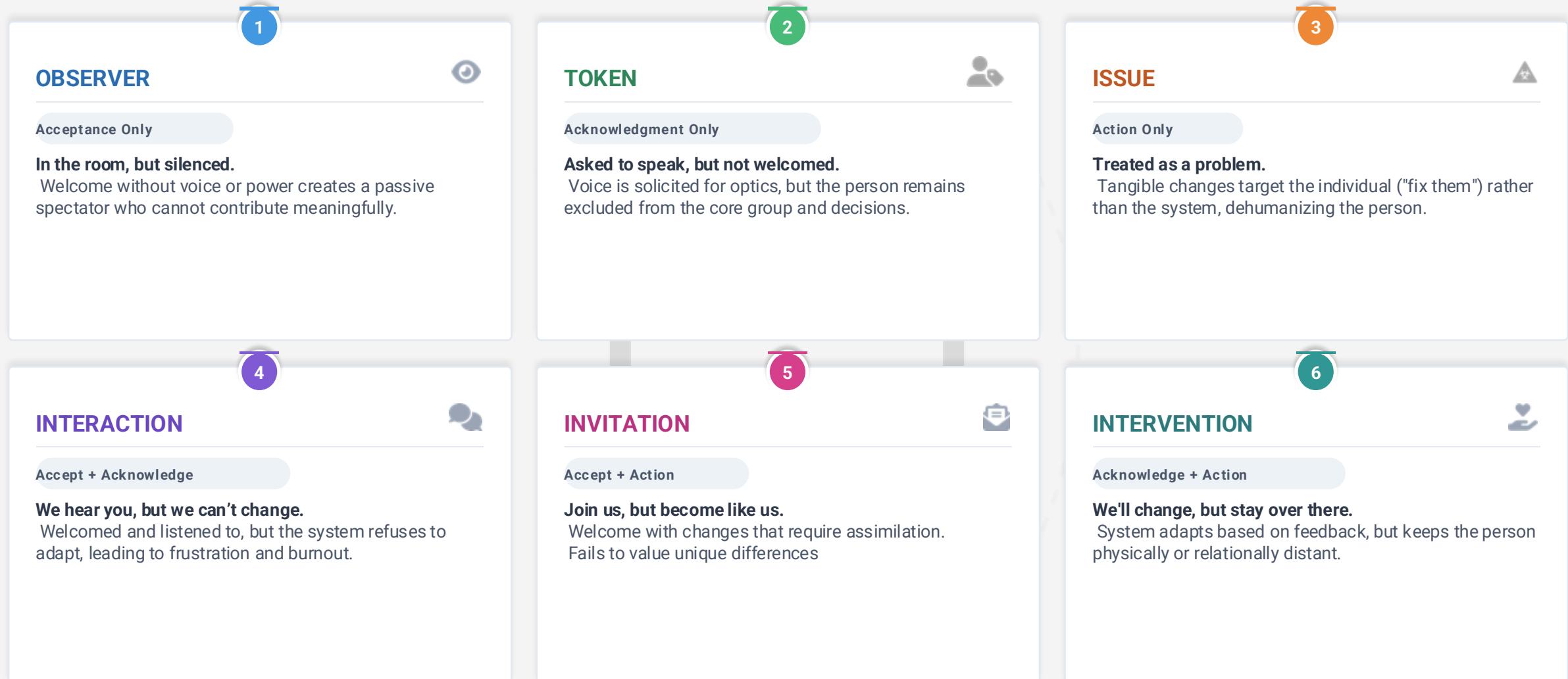
REROUTING



APATHY

Inclusion dissolves over time due to lack of care.

Why Partial Inclusion Fails





The Exclusion Model

Dead End 01



IGNORANCE

Failing to **listen** or understand the unique needs and reality of the outsider.

Dead End 02



INACTION

Knowing about the exclusion but **doing nothing** to change behaviors or systems.

Dead End 03



REJECTION

Actively **keeping someone out** or refusing to welcome them into the core group.

Dead End 04



APATHY

Lack of care or **accountability**, leading inclusion efforts to dissolve over time.



The Journey from Exclusion to Inclusion





The Journey from Exclusion to Inclusion

Map Legend: The Analogy

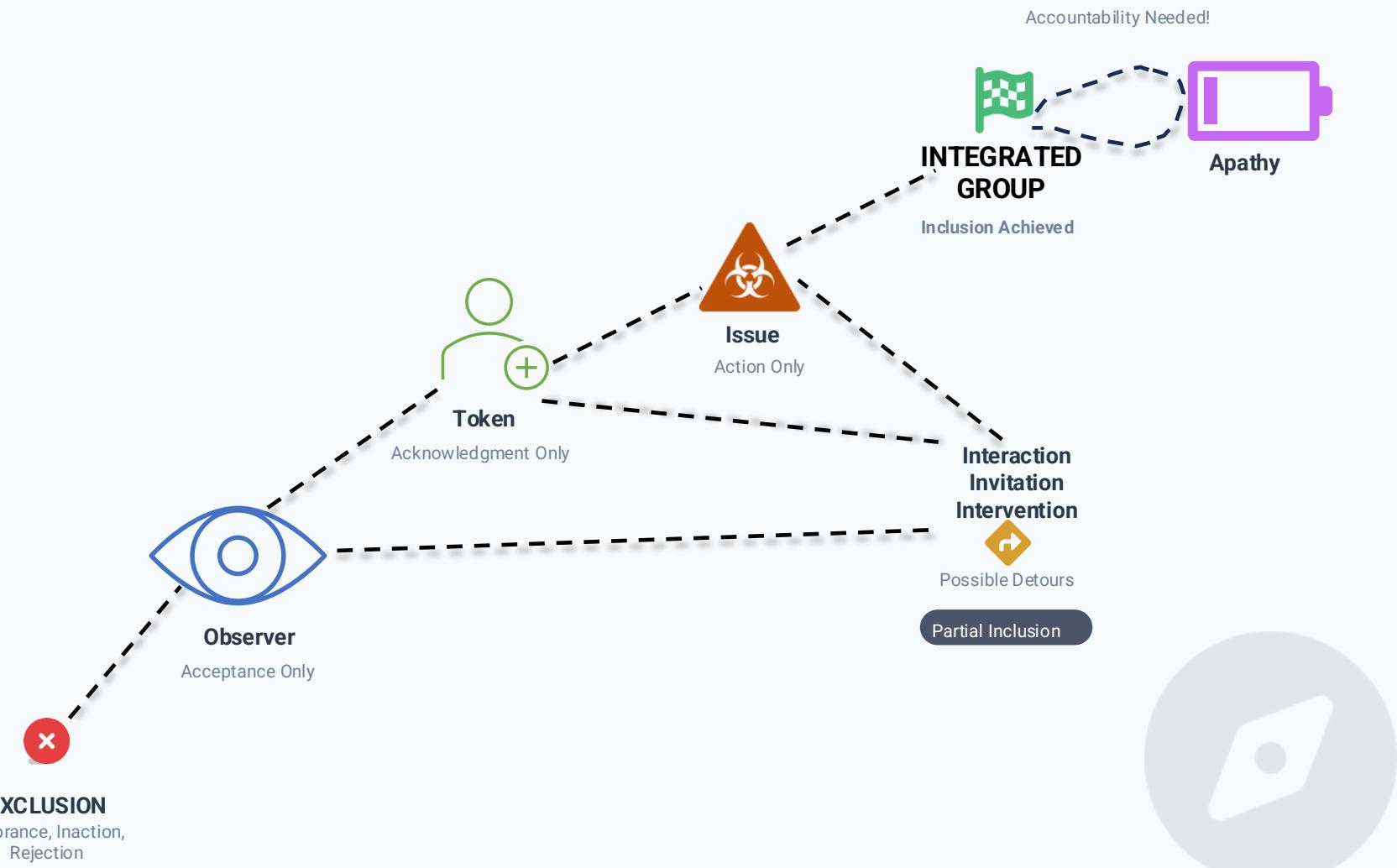
Majority Group
Hairless People

Make all town laws

Outsider
Person with Hair

Needs salons/shampoo

Town banned hair products.
Need for inclusion journey
begins.





Jesus Smashes the Patriarchy



John 4

Woman at the Well

Jesus engages in a deep theological conversation across gender, ethnic, and moral barriers, revealing his Messiahship to her first.

★ Breakthrough: Theological conversation across barriers



Matthew 15

Canaanite Woman

A foreign woman advocates for her daughter. Jesus listens, engages with her argument, and grants her request, praising her great faith.

★ Breakthrough: Persistent advocacy rewarded



John 8

Woman Caught in Adultery



Religious leaders use her as a pawn. Jesus refuses to condemn her, elevates her humanity above their traps, and restores her dignity.

★ Breakthrough: Human dignity over condemnation

How Jesus Modeled Inclusion



ACCEPTED women into spaces they were culturally excluded from



ACKNOWLEDGED their voices, theology, and needs



TOOK ACTION that elevated their status and humanity



Demonstrated that inclusion reflects the **Kingdom of God**

Our Biblical Foundation

“

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28



"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Galatians 5:22-23



These biblical truths are incompatible with exclusion.



Real-World Application

We will navigate through five anonymized scenarios to identify exclusionary patterns and chart a course for inclusive alternatives.

1



The Excluded Resume

Hiring barriers based on gender assumptions

2



The Forced Chaperone

Policing professional boundaries unnecessarily

3



The Pigeonholed Board Member

Stereotyping gifts and leadership roles

4



The Family Question

Inappropriate criteria for ordination/placement

5



The "Troubled Church" Trap

Systemic placement bias based on gender



Scenario 1: The Excluded Resume



The Situation

A church board refuses to interview or even consider an experienced female pastor's resume solely based on gender assumptions.



Path Forward

- 💡 Implement **blind resumes** (names removed) for initial screening to focus solely on qualifications.
- 💡 Establish **objective criteria** for the role before reviewing any candidates to reduce subjective bias.
- 💡 Provide **scriptural education** for board members on women's ordination prior to the search process.

/// Identified Roadblocks





Scenario 2: The Forced Chaperone



The Situation

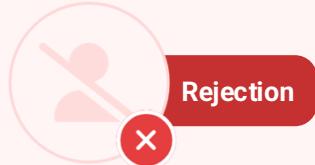
A District Superintendent mandates a third-party chaperone for two pastors of different genders intending to carpool to a conference, preventing confidential professional dialogue.



Path Forward

- 💡 **Consult both pastors** directly to ensure they are comfortable with the driving arrangement.
- 💡 **Offer a chaperone** as an optional resource only if requested by either party.
- 💡 **Trust clergy** to set appropriate professional boundaries that make sense for their own contexts.

/// Identified Roadblocks





Scenario 3: The Pigeon-Holed Board Member



The Situation

A gifted female pastor is appointed to a board but immediately assigned to be the recording secretary, despite inexperience in that area and regardless of her actual leadership strengths.



Path Forward



Invite people to participate based on their **actual strengths and professional gifting**, not gender stereotypes.



Rotate administrative roles among all members so no single demographic always bears the secretarial load.



Create **term limits** for leadership opportunities to ensure broader participation and diverse voices.





Scenario 4: The Family Question



The Situation

A female ordination candidate is asked when she is planning on getting married or having kids and how that will affect her career plans.



Path Forward

- 💡 Standardize **interview questions** to focus strictly on gifts, graces, and calling for all candidates
- 💡 Affirm that opportunities will be offered based on **merit and calling**, not marital status.
- 💡 Provide training to ministry boards on **appropriate and legal** questions to ask during ordination interviews

/// Identified Roadblocks





Scenario 5: Church in Trouble



The Situation

A District Superintendent only offers female pastors roles in struggling churches, labeling those who decline as "troublemakers" while withholding opportunities in growing churches.



Path Forward

- 💡 Create **objective placement criteria** for ALL church sizes to ensure fair opportunities for every pastor.
- 💡 Establish an **intake process** for pastoral resumes and maintain a list of interested pastors of all genders to present to thriving churches
- 💡 Provide training to ministry boards on **appropriate and legal** questions to ask during ordination interviews
- 💡 Combine smaller churches into **circuit rotations** with district funding to support sustainable ministry.
- 💡 Provide **robust mentoring** and support for ALL pastors assigned to struggling congregations, regardless of gender.

/// Identified Roadblocks





The One Commitment Framework

↳ Research Insight

Studies show that organizations who make just **ONE commitment and implement it**, make a substantial difference in the culture of inclusion.

1% Bias Creates exponential harm on the journey.

1% Inclusion Propels us exponentially forward.



What's YOUR one commitment?

Small course corrections create massive change.



One Commitment Options

Choose a waypoint on your map. Here are eight concrete, impactful actions you can take to chart a course for inclusion.



Propose **blind resume process** for pastoral searches



Invite a **small church pastor** to preach at a district event



Audit ballots and nomination reports for gender representation



Reach out to **mentor or sponsor** women clergy



Lead a **Bible study** on women in ministry



Interrupt the next biased comment in a meeting



Hold leaders accountable for **gender equity** in various spaces



The Church of the Nazarene's DNA

1908

Origin Point



Mary Lee Cagle

Advocated for explicit language in the Manual affirming God's call on women to preach, ensuring clarity from the start.

The Advocacy



Phineas Bresee

Argued for a gender-neutral "apostolic privilege," believing specific affirmation was unnecessary because the call was obvious.

The Decision



The Result

Women's call was made **invisible** in founding documents. Without explicit protection, cultural bias eventually eroded their leadership roles.

Unintended Consequence



True North

Our heritage is rooted in advocating for the poor, the hungry, and those on the margins.

**This is who we are.
Let's live it fully.**

Why Accountability Is Essential

Without Accountability

⌚ A "thing we tried once"

⚠ A temporary initiative

🎭 Performative rather than transformative

With Accountability

⟳ Systems change permanently

⟳ Exclusion is noticed and corrected

🛤 The journey continues



Your One Commitment Today

Chart your course (5 minutes):

1

What is ONE specific action you will take?

Mark your destination...

2

What is your timeline? (When will you do this?)

Set arrival time...

3

Who will hold you accountable?

Your co-pilot...

4

How will you know you succeeded?

Arrival confirmation...



Share Your Coordinates

—

Turn to the person next to you and share your One Commitment. Speaking your destination out loud increases the likelihood of arrival by 65%.

 Begin The Journey



A Prayer for the Journey

*God of the margins,
You have always called the overlooked.
You elevated Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan
woman, the Canaanite woman.
Help us to honor **ALL** whom you call.
Give us courage, wisdom, and persistence.*

Amen.



Inclusion Is a Journey

 Not a Destination: A Recurring Commute

Waypoint 1: Welcome women clergy into ALL spaces where decisions happen.



Waypoint 2: Listen to, value, and elevate their unique voices and insights.



Waypoint 3: Change systems and policies, not just add individuals to broken structures.



ACCOUNTABILITY

The Navigation System:
Notice and advocate immediately when exclusion attempts to return.

--- Commute Path



Additional Resources

Navigation Tools



Church of the Nazarene Manual

nazarene.org/manual →



Harvard Implicit Association Test

Scientific tool to uncover hidden biases. Take the "Gender-Career" test.

implicit.harvard.edu →



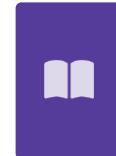
Women Clergy Resources

[USA Canada Clergy Council](#) →

[Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy](#) →



Guidebooks for the Journey



She Leads

By Robbie Cansler

An examination of how God uses women throughout scripture



The Making of Biblical Womanhood

By Beth Allison Barr

How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth. Historical analysis.



Thank You

Journey to Inclusion Workshop

You have reached a milestone, but the journey continues.



Email

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Connect

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