

Dear friends,

I wanted to update you on Project Phoenix.

As you'll recall, Project Phoenix, which aims to [create an experimental prototype faith community](#) for those in their 20s, is being tried in two communities.

- In St. Louis, the effort is being led by the young people on the ground.
- In Los Angeles, TryTank is spearheading a more prescribed method.
- Both designs are based on our research last year, which led us to this point.

St. Louis, MO: Wesley Ragland, Executive Director of *The Happening*, is pioneering a missional community for young adults who are "Spiritual but Not Religious" (SBNR). Here's what he's been up to:

- Addressing a significant demographic shift, with 33% of Americans, particularly those under 30, identifying as SBNR, *The Happening* aims to offer healing and connection through shared spiritual values.
- Drawing from his Episcopal upbringing and professional background in music and education, Ragland orchestrates innovative events blending improv comedy, hip-hop, and group therapy.
- The inaugural event on March 28th, supported by TryTank and Missouri Bishop Deon Johnson, marks the launch of this semi-autonomous community emphasizing radical inclusion, participatory leadership, and sacred listening.
- This initiative represents a new chapter in spiritual engagement, seeking to nourish and unite those disillusioned with traditional religious institutions.
- His full report is attached.

Los Angeles, CA: The Los Angeles initiative, "Being With LA," is a unique faith exploration program. You can see the website we built here: <https://www.beingwithla.org/>

- We built the entire program around the "[Being With](#)" course from the Rev. Dr. Sam Wells and the Rev. Sally Hitchiner in the UK.
- It's characterized by its interactive, conversational approach, focusing on personal stories and big life questions rather than traditional doctrine.
- Supported by the church but not church-driven, it emphasizes discovery over doctrine and values real-world experiences and insights of participants.
- The program is structured around ten sessions, fostering a community where faith and spirituality are explored in a progressive, inclusive environment.
- This initiative aligns with the ethos of radical inclusion and sacred listening, mirroring the values central to Project Phoenix.
- We will start advertising in early February for a launch two weeks later.

What's next: Once we try it out in these cities, we will learn what we can before hopefully expanding our experiment to even more cities.

Let me know what you think.

God bless,

Lorenzo+