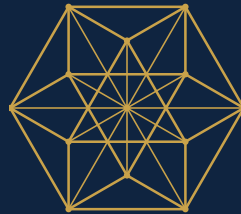


PREPARED FOR YOU, AND YOURS TO KEEP

BGD COLLECTIVE · THE ENTHEOS PROJECT

The Third Nobody Kept

What a connecting church does, what it receives, and what it is never asked to become



You do what you do best. We handle the rest.

DAVID WADE POPE

Founder, BGD Collective / Architect, The Entheos Project

This copy is yours to keep and to share as you see fit.

ONE

The third nobody kept

A person is body, mind, and spirit. Every church in this country teaches that. Most of medicine says the same, in its literature, on the first page.

Then look at what is actually measured.

The body	The mind	The spirit
Medicine took it.	The doctors of the mind took it.	Nobody kept it.
Surgery. Medication. Imaging. Measured, coded, billed, and studied. It works, and it is the best-resourced third of a person in human history.	Psychiatry and psychology. Later to the table, still contested, still short of clinicians. Measured, and measured unevenly.	The church held it, then gave away the tools that reach the body and the brain. No instrument measures it. No registry records it. No payer asks about it.

A person is not a third. The third nobody kept is the one your church has been holding all along.

Since the end of the Second World War, medicine has become extraordinary at the first third and uneven at the second. The third one it does not treat, does not measure, does not ask about.

That is not a criticism of medicine. Medicine gave the spirit away, and the church accepted it.

Then, across the same century, the church gave away the tools that reach the body and the brain. Kept the front door.

Read those two sentences together and the whole problem is visible. Every institution kept a piece. Nobody kept the person. Here is the question this document exists to answer.

What would it take for a church to hold its third on purpose, and be counted for it?

TWO

The person you cannot reach

Every church has one. Usually more than one. He comes in carrying something the sermon does not touch. She has served faithfully for years and has never once felt what other people describe. He has been prayed for, encouraged. Told to surrender, and it has not moved.

They do not tell you. That is the part that costs the most.

Among churchgoers who lost a loved one to suicide, four percent say church leaders were aware of that person's struggles.

Four percent. In ninety-six cases out of a hundred, a family lost somebody and the church never knew there was anything to know.

Sixty-eight percent of churches keep a list of local mental health resources. Twenty-eight percent of the families who need that list know it exists.

The house is in a filing cabinet. Nobody standing at the door has been told.

That is not a failure of compassion. It is a measurement of the silence. The silence is self-sealing. The people who could correct it have learned that honesty is the one thing the room cannot hold.

THREE

What stays exactly the same

This is the question a board asks first. It is answered first.

Nothing about what your church believes, teaches, or does on Sunday changes.

Your doctrine is yours. Your governance is yours. Your pulpit, your membership, your ordinances, your budget, your building, your calendar, your people. None of it is touched, reviewed, approved, or conditioned.

You do not become a clinic. You do not host one. You are not asked to counsel anybody, diagnose anybody, or treat anybody.

You are not asked to become anything. You are asked to keep being what you are, with the rest of it handled.

BGD Collective is attached to no single institution and owned by none. Organizations connect into it, and it connects into none of them. It acquires no ownership of the churches that connect in.

It exists to be common ground that several kinds of organization can stand on together. Each keeps doing what it does best. Does it better for being joined.

FOUR

What a church is never asked to do

Stated as a list, because a list can be checked.

A church is never asked to	Why
Change what it believes, teaches, or confesses	Doctrine is the church's own. It is never reviewed, approved, or conditioned.
Become a clinic, host one, or counsel anybody	The clinic does not become the church, and the church does not become the clinic.
Refer anybody anywhere as a condition of anything	A referral is offered to a person, never required of a church.
Give money in order to be helped	The people the work serves are never charged, and neither is a church for the education.
Share a percentage of anything it collects	Nothing is ever taken as a share.

A church is never asked to	Why
Surrender its name, governance, or independence	Connection acquires no ownership of anything, at any point, in any form.
Carry medical or clinical liability	The clinical dimension is governed separately and is not part of a church connection.
Give up the right to stop	A church may end a connection at any time. What was taught remains theirs.

Those are not preferences. They are the reason a church can connect without a single conversation about what it would have to give up.

Read that list against anything else a church has ever been asked to join.

Which item on it would your board have expected to see missing?

FIVE

The field hospital, and the country he comes home to

Two things do two different jobs. Neither is complete without the other.

The Refuge is a field hospital. It exists to reach the person nobody else has been able to reach, at the moment nothing else has held. It asks one thing of whoever walks in. A desire to be restored. Not right belief. Not having it together. Only the desire to be made whole.

A field hospital is not a place anybody lives. You stabilize a person and then he needs somewhere to go.

Your church is where he goes. Forty years of Sundays. A marriage that holds. A place his children grow up. People who will still be there when he is sixty. A field hospital cannot give any of that.

The job	The field hospital	The congregation
Who it reaches	The man who cannot come in	The man who can walk through the door
How it works	Goes out and gets him	Receives him and holds him
What it is built for	The barrier below what welcome can reach	Worship, sacraments, a gathered body
How long it holds him	Until he is stable enough to be moved	Forty years of Sundays
What it cannot give	A life afterward	A way to reach the one who never arrives

BGD Collective is the connective tissue between them. It holds three things and only three. The recognition that these are one problem rather than three. The standard that keeps every connected organization honest. The record itself.

It connects a hurting person to the help the pulpit alone was never meant to give.

SIX

One person, one Sunday, step by step

A board kills what it cannot picture. Here is the picture, in the plainest terms available.

Somebody walks into your building on a Sunday carrying something nobody in the room can see.

The moment	What your church does	What the connection does
He walks in	Receives him. Nothing conditional. He does not have to be better first.	Nothing. This is yours and it always was.
He says it out loud	Sits with him. Learns his name. Does not send him away.	Nothing. Still yours.
He needs what a pulpit cannot give	Walks him to somebody who does know, warm rather than cold.	The doors are already named, already warm, already expecting the call.
The barrier is deeper than a room can reach	Keeps holding him. Keeps him in the body.	The field hospital does the part that is not a church's job.
Weeks pass	Does what a church does. Sunday. A meal. A person who checks.	With his consent, one reading. Not a snapshot. Read across time.
Thirty, ninety, a hundred and eighty days	Still there. That is the whole contribution and it is the largest one.	The record shows he is still held, and your church is why.

Read the left column again. Every one of those is something your church already does. Most of the rest it would do gladly, if it knew where to send somebody afterward.

Nothing in the left column is new work. What is new is that the right column exists.

One question worth sitting with before the next section.

How many people has your church already walked with to the fourth line of that table, and then run out of anywhere to send them?

SEVEN

What connection delivers

Four things, named separately so none of them swallows the others.

One. The education, already written, tailored to your church.

It is not a promise of a curriculum. The works exist and are complete. A rendering was written specifically for the faith community, in its own voice. The position it holds is the one your leadership would demand. Scripture first, always.

What arrives is a fitted set. Teaching for your leaders. Participant material for your people. A community-facing presentation ready for your space. Access to a recorded teaching library.

Two. Evaluation and strengthening of the work you already do.

A structured look, together, at the part of your ministry that already meets this population. What already works is named and honored first. Nothing is imposed. Your people are trained to carry it. It becomes yours rather than ours.

Three. The symbol of connection. Public recognition that your church is connected to the architecture and held to its standard. That tells a family searching at midnight that your door is part of something whole rather than one number on a list.

Four. The network in your own community. This is the part most churches do not have and cannot build alone. Somebody in your pew needs the free clinic, the trauma counselor, the housing help, or the recovery room. Those doors and yours keep their own walls, joined by named, warm doors rather than standing blocks apart.

Warm, named, mutual pathways. Not a phone number and a hope.

EIGHT

What arrives, and when

Comprehensive means you can put your finger on every item. Here is the schedule.

When	What arrives, item by item
At connection	The tailored teaching set, fitted to how your church already runs. Leader guides. Participant material. A community-facing presentation customized with your own community's picture, ready for your space. Access to the recorded teaching library.
Through strengthening	Training that puts the teaching in your leaders' hands, so it is yours rather than ours. The fitted integration into groups and ministries you already run. The connected-pathway agreements linking your door to the others in your community, named and warm. The system view of the whole network, on one page, for your wall.
Ongoing	The symbol of connection and the standard behind it. Scheduled maintenance that keeps the teaching alive across new people and the pathways warm. The record, consent-first, measured as agreed with you, never published about your church without you.

The source works are finished. The fitted forms named above are what tailoring produces for you, with you, at each phase.

NINE

The record, and who holds it

This is the part that has never existed. It is the reason a church should care about connecting rather than simply borrowing a curriculum.

Every payer and every agency now asks for outcomes. The field cannot supply them for this population, because no instrument reads the whole person.

With consent, the reading is taken across time, never as a single snapshot.

That is the reading that catches the person whose pain score improved while everything else was collapsing. That person is the one every system loses.

	What happens	What it means
ONE	Someone is held	A person walks in. Your people do what they already do. Nothing about that changes.
TWO	The reading is taken	With consent, one reading, taken across time.
THREE	It enters the record	An independent registry aggregates it. Not published about your church without you.
FOUR	The whole gets stronger	The record answers the question nobody can answer today. Is the person still held at thirty, ninety, a hundred and eighty days?

It compounds the longer it runs. Nothing is bolted on afterward.

The question the record answers is the one nobody can answer today.

Is the person still held at thirty days? At ninety? At a hundred and eighty? Not whether they were handed off. Whether they are still held.

Now the governance, because a board will ask and it deserves a precise answer.

The question a board will ask	The answer
Who owns our people's data?	Nobody owns a person's data but the person. Every reading is consented, individually, and consent can be withdrawn.
Who holds the record?	BGD Collective would be the source of record. That does not move and it is not delegated.
Who operates the data environment?	An established clinical research partner would operate it, with hospital-level readiness, established data governance, and decades of regulatory experience. Operator and holder are different roles, and the distinction is written into the arrangement rather than assumed.
What gets published about us?	Nothing about your church without your agreement. What is measured is agreed with you before anything is measured.

The question a board will ask	The answer
What if we stop?	The connection ends. What was taught remains yours. Nothing further is collected. No outcome is promised in this document. The record is built after connection, never asserted before it.

A document that promised a church results before the work began would be the kind of document this work refuses to write.

TEN

What this means for your church, specifically

Three things, and the third one is the reason this document was written.

One. The person you could not reach has somewhere to go. You did not have to become a clinic to send him.

Two. Your people stop carrying what they were never trained to carry.

Picture a leader sitting with somebody in crisis at eleven at night, with no idea where to send them. That is a leader on the way to burning out. That is a real cost and most churches pay it quietly.

Three. What your church does for a person becomes visible.

An instrument is designed to measure the third medicine does not measure, and a registry is designed to record it. Which means the thing your church has been doing for two thousand years, that no payer asks about and no study counts, becomes countable.

That is not a small thing. That is standing. A funder, a hospital system, or a county body asks what the faith community contributes to this crisis. The honest answer today is a story. After the record exists, the honest answer is a number. The story behind it.

ELEVEN

If you already have a recovery ministry

Many churches do. Some have run one for twenty years, and run it well.

Nothing here replaces it, competes with it, or asks it to change what it teaches.

An existing ministry is the strongest possible starting point, because the hardest part is already done. Somebody in your building already believes this population belongs there.

What connection adds to an existing ministry is the two things it almost certainly does not have. The doors in your own community, named and warm rather than photocopied. It adds the record, so that twenty years of faithful work finally has a form a funder can read.

If your ministry is working, connection makes it count. If it has stalled, connection tells you where.

TWELVE

The arrangement, and who pays

A church is never charged.

Now the part that matters more than the figures.

The direction of the ask is a settled principle of this work.

The cost of this population's fragmentation is carried by systems far larger than a church budget. Hospitals, counties, courts, and payers absorb it every day. The funding conversation belongs with them. Where a church serving this population cannot carry an arrangement, the funding discipline exists for exactly that. Funders who exist to support education and integration for this population carry it on the church's behalf.

A church is never asked to divert money from its own ministry in order to be helped.

THIRTEEN

Where this actually stands today

Radical Transparency is one of the three disciplines that govern this work. It means the work says what it does, does what it says, claims nothing it has not built. Here is the honest state, on the face of the document rather than discovered later.

What	Where it stands
The teaching	Complete and written. Three books, a twelve-step formation pathway, a recorded library, and the community presentation. It exists and can be handed over.
The Refuge	A church. Statement of faith, covenant, and an eldership. It is the field hospital half and it is standing up first.
BGD Collective	Being formed as a Georgia nonprofit. The documents are drafted and counsel-ready. Until the determination letter is in hand, a church whose giving policy requires a qualified charity should wait, and that is said here rather than discovered later.
The record	The instrument and the registry design are built. The record itself begins when the first connections do. There is nothing to report yet, and nothing is claimed.
The medical half	Real, designed, and later. It follows the church and the Collective as a natural progression rather than a launch. It is governed separately and it is not part of a church connection.

The order of the work is deliberate. It puts the church first.

The Refuge first, because a church that receives people is the proof. Then the Collective, because connective tissue has to have something to connect. Then the medical half, in time, as a natural progression of the work rather than a launch.

A church that connects now is not joining something already running. It is among the first. That is a different kind of standing than joining later.

FOURTEEN

What happens next, only if you want it to

If what you have read is worth a conversation, the next step is exactly that. A conversation, at your table, on your terms.

Bring your hardest questions. The work answers them plainly or says honestly what is not yet settled. There is no proposal attached to this document, no timeline, no follow-up sequence. If the answer is no, this document remains yours, with respect.

The people in your pews are the point. Any church serving them well is already doing the thing this work exists to honor.

One last thing, and it is the whole of it. Every person who gets buried the way people get buried has to walk past a church to get to the ditch. That has always been true and it will not change.

What can change is what happens when they walk past yours.

A church cannot be everything. It was never asked to be.

It was asked to be a refuge. That is the oldest job it has, and it is the one nobody else in this country is positioned to do.

Say only what is true. Aim every word at restoration. Claim nothing that has not been built. That is the standard this work is held to, and it is the standard a connected church is held to as well. It is the whole of the arrangement underneath the arrangement.

Prepared for your review. Nothing in this document commits your church to anything. Every figure is from Lifeway Research, 2014 and 2018. No outcome is promised here; the record is built after connection and never asserted before it. The clinical dimension of the wider work is governed separately and is not part of a church connection. Nothing here is medical advice. If you or someone in your congregation is struggling with thoughts of suicide or self-harm, the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline answers all day, every day. Veterans can dial 988 then press 1.

The third nobody kept is the one your church has been holding all along.

BY GOD'S DESIGN.