DAVID PATRICK BICKHAM

PROPHETIC INNOVATION:

A FUTURISM OF BEING

WHAT ARE WE WILLING TO RISK IN THIS SPACE OF HOPE?

MARCH 6TH, 2023

DR. KING'S LAST SUNDAY SPEECH

FANNIE LOU HAMER'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY CONVENTION SPEECH

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PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

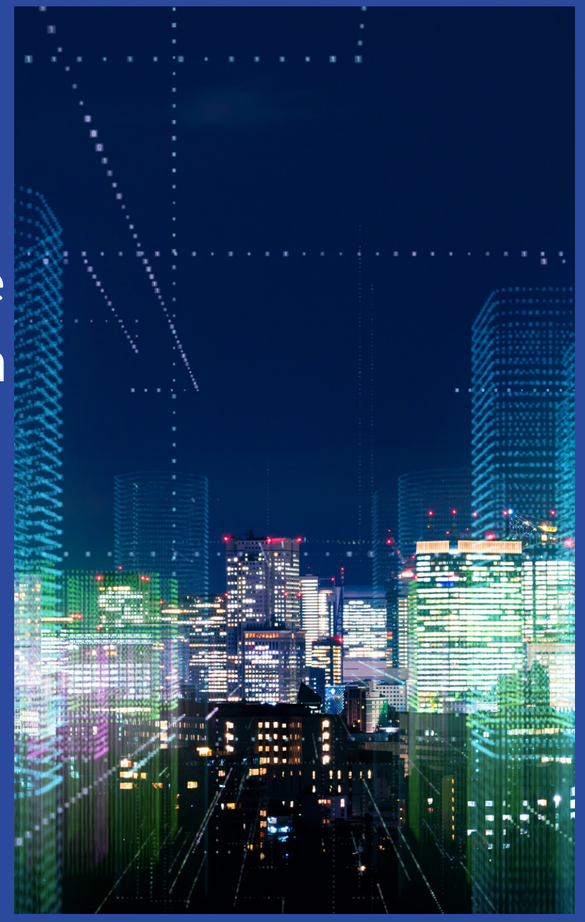
- How do we make prophetic communities innovative? Prophetic Innovation (PI) seeks to answer this and other questions. Some simple definitions help to frame the work. As used in PI, prophetic means both religious and non-religious traditions of organizing for social justice, developing the future, and amplifying historically marginalized voices. These traditions are often culturally resonant and rooted.

- By innovation, PI means the development of breakthrough ideas, solutions, technologies, and audiences and the operation of a community's creativity. Examples of innovation are the development of the iPhone, emerging media and cultural phenomena such as Hip-Hop. PI may be conducted by individuals or groups but must have a communal impact.

WHY PROPHETIC INNOVATION

Many prophetic cities, especially those in the Civil Rights Movement, have had profound national and local impact but struggle because of many reasons to be innovative.

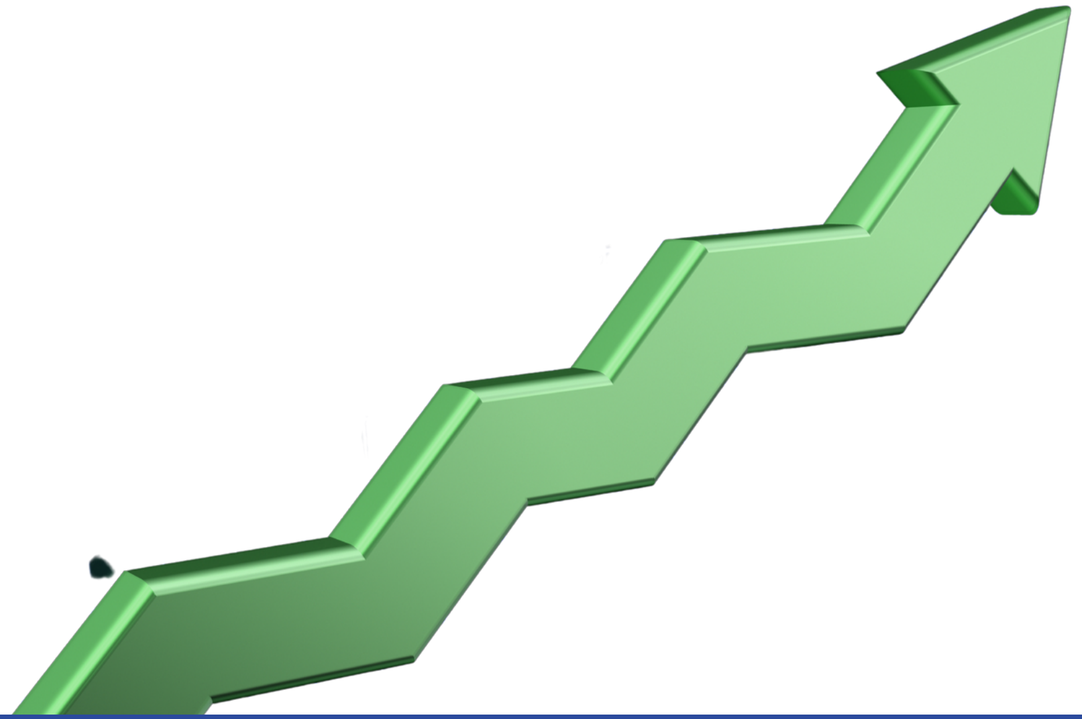
With such a rapid acceleration of technology and globalization, these communities rich in certain assets require a different manifestation of resources, talent, systemic change and futuristic thinking.



SSTEEP INFORMATION/ DATA SCANS

- Spiritual
- Social
- Technological
- Economic
- Environmental
- Political

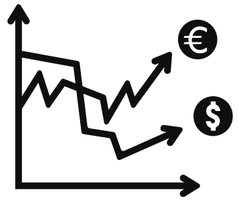
SCANNING INFORMATION



- Hunches and Rumblings
- Signals
- Trends
- Mega Trends
- Counter Trends
- Outlier Sparks

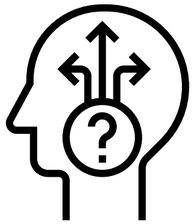
VUCA

Volatility

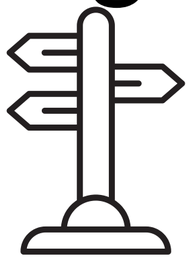


Complexity

Uncertainty



Ambiguity



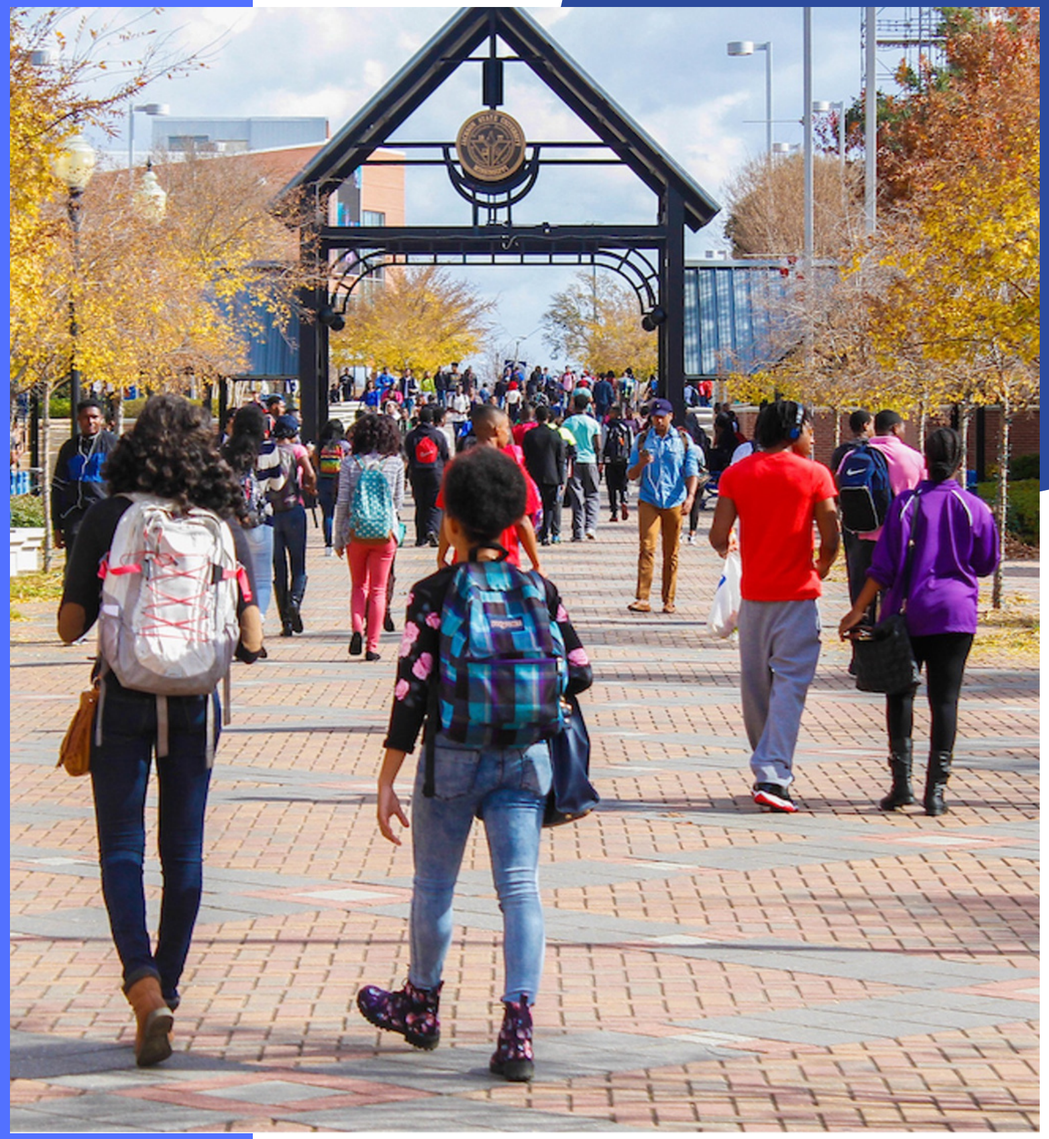
10 PILLARS OF PI

1. Culturally Resonant Foresight and Insight

- Honoring ways in which communities perceive and define the future
- Honoring lived experience and not just technical expertise
- Using Western and non-Western traditions of foresight
- Navigating contradictions of various foresight traditions
- Deploying speculative and alternative/preferred futures
- Using strategic foresight along with other forms of foresight

EXAMPLE

African and African-American cosmologies often honor their ancestors, those who have died but established institutional, familial, communal and other foundations for the future. For example, most of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities were established between 1867-1880 and have social change as part of their historic and current missions.



10 PILLARS OF PI

2. Transgenerational impactful (current and future)

- Sacrificing and envisioning for the next generation
- Including all generations in the decision-making and futuring
- Building, curating and mining the designs, legacies and tactics of previous generations, including prophetic and innovative traditions; ancestral
- Recognizing each generation has different factors, modalities, patterns, etc.

EXAMPLE

The non-profit organization, Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color (COSEBOC), uses a program called Sankofa, which engages boys, men and elders in rituals like drumming, storytelling, character formation.

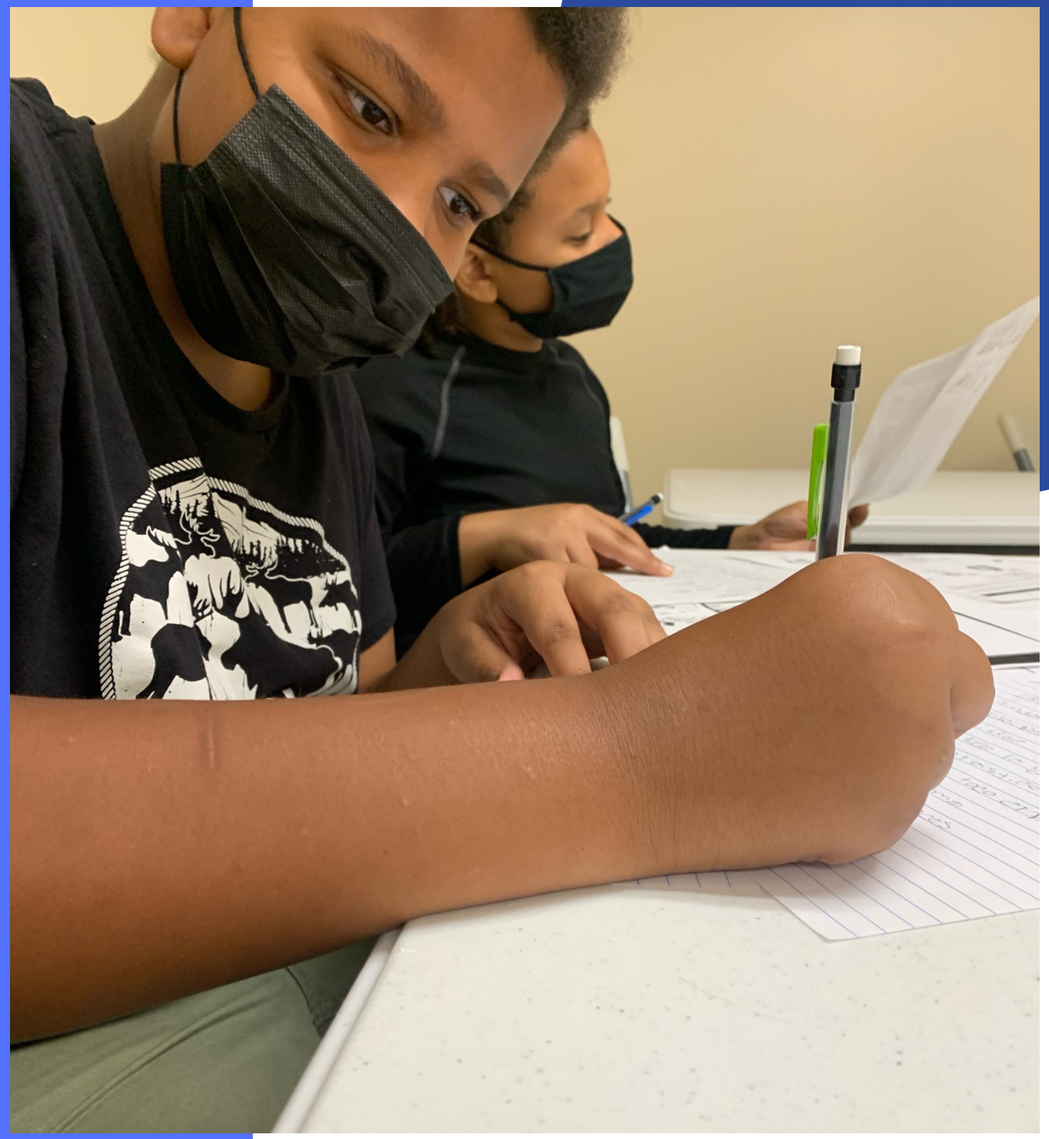
10 PILLARS OF PI

3. Ensuring that each generation benefits collectively and individually, including owning the financial/commercial engines and intellectual properties derived from PI

- **Monetizing and compensating those with lived experiences as experts**
- **Developing community-based innovation and technology hubs**
- **Creating scientific and artistic methods and intellectual practices based on cultural practices**
- **Financing futurists and innovators**
- **Creating individual and collective forms of wealth such as credit unions**

EXAMPLE

Organizations that hire professional futurists can also retain community citizens with lived experiences. Communities may develop funds that support innovation, creativity, and futuristic thinking. Traditional resources such as youth development funds can be used to promote teens as futurists. (The Young Futurists Project of the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation [Jackson, MS] is one example of the use of traditional state funding and philanthropic resources.)



10 PILLARS OF PI

4. Recognizing the ineffable/intangible

- Acknowledging spiritual attributes such as faith, prayer, worship, praise, performance
- Honoring the interior world and cultivation as well as external realities and public learning futurism
- Honoring beauty, restorative play, imagination, and creativity
- Recognizing and healing the effects of trauma, including the deeper unspeakable archaeology of trauma, that is, the tapped and untapped acts and conditions of trauma over time

EXAMPLE

The spiritual architecture of Kingian and Gandhian nonviolence fuels historical and contemporary protests and movements, including aiming for a Beloved Community.

10 PILLARS OF PI

5. Cosmopolitan, global but local

- Informing the future with Social, Technological, Educational, Environmental, and Political (STEEP) global trends
- Ensuring that local communities and individuals benefit for futures work
- Recognizing the futurism of different cultures

EXAMPLE

A SSTEEP analysis reveals that a local school system has a very narrowly focused school curriculum, which is not preparing students for the future of work and citizenship. Parents, youth, and education futurists partner with the school district to develop a new set of values to guide the new curriculum that can meet both local, state, and global demands over the course of a student's matriculation.

10 PILLARS OF PI

6. Just, equitable, and well

- Ensuring that well-being is an implicit and explicit goal of futures work
- Addressing systemic to individual levels of inequity
- Ensuring that just conditions and policies persist
- Ensuring all members of the community are part of the future
- Leadership and pastoral support, respite, and restoration

EXAMPLE

A local coalition of funders, residents, non-profit organizations, and activists develops a 10-year health and wellness plan, including ensuring the wellness of creatives, non-profit leaders, and activists. The plan valorizes well-being and not just the maintenance of chronic illness.

10 PILLARS OF PI

7. Institution building and disrupting

- Building institutions and infrastructures that support future thinking and PI in communities of color
- Supporting prophetic voices, outliers, and futurists (financially, networking, other)
- Using strategic foresight and traditions of foresight to disrupt and enhance each other
- Using PI to impact policies, programs, and practices

EXAMPLE

A legacy civil rights organization establishes a futures/innovation hub to help it think about its future, especially mobilizing youth technologists, creatives and activists and the roles of emerging technologies in social justice.

10 PILLARS OF PI

8. Prophetic Technologies

- Approaching omniscience through Artificial Intelligence
- Transhumanism and Body, Mind, and Technology Integration
- Quantum Physics and the Fifth Industrial Revolution
- Sentient technologies and Imaging Technology Innovation as Religion

10 PILLARS OF PI

9. Prophesying to the Prophets

- Increased Questioning of Automatic Religious Authority
- Internal and External Critique from Christian and Non-Christian Voices
- Transparency: Access to Profiles, Decision-Making and Voice
- Youth, Young Adult and Non-Cis Male Leadership
- Proliferation of Technology, New Media and Other Ministries
- Prophetic Innovation and Futurism Labs
- Communities of Learning, Policy, and Prophetic Leadership

10 PILLARS OF PI

10. Prophetic, Futuristic and Innovative Labs

- Immersive, experiential, hands-on environment
- Exploration, imagination, speculation, and "prophetic problem-solving."
- Interdisciplinary, including arts, culture, entrepreneurship, and technology
- Beautiful aesthetics, design, and accouterments
- Policy simulation
- Always emerging technologies and ideation
- Learning space for the whole community, including policymakers
- Six labs in Mississippi

Potential Christian Faith Signals and Trends

- Universal Virtual Church and Lessening “Membership”
- Diminution of the Cis Male Dominated Leadership
- Closing of Traditional Brick and Mortar Churches
- Increased Spirituality and Diminished Formal Religiosity
- Demand for Prophetic Social Justice Voice
- Rise of Prophetic Technologies, including Quantum Physics
- Call for Ethical, Moral, and Legal Boundaries for Technology Acceleration
- Impacts of Climate Change, Disasters, and Environmental Injustice
- Mobilization as First Responders
- Rise of and Counter-Rise to Conservative Evangelicalism

Potential Church Signals and Trends

- Rise of Christian Church Schisms
- Rise of Violence and Call for Kingian Nonviolence
- Increased Emphasis on Congregational and Clergy Wellbeing

CHRISTIAN FAITH SIGNALS AND TRENDS

- Rise of Economic Castes and Innovation/Futurism Hierarchies
- Opportunity for Intergenerational Collaboration of Values and Cultures
- Opportunity for Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Missiology/Mission Work by Non-Americans in USA

PRACTICES

- Partner with strategic foresight facilitators to work with communities, leaders and organizations
- Develop grants informed by strategic foresight and PI, including both traditional and innovation/foresight-focused funding opportunities
- Convene thought partnership/leadership gatherings around PI
- Curate resources and connections
- Write articles on PI
- Speak to groups in small settings and conferences