



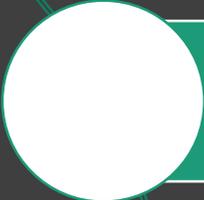
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# Christianity and Conservation Agriculture in Kenya

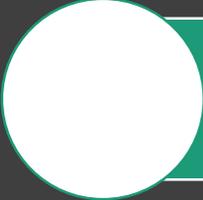
21 March 2024

Peter Rowe, PhD Student, Geography

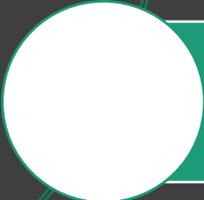
# Outline



Research overview



Historical context



Christianity and conservation agriculture in the contemporary scene- Farming God's Way (FGW)



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# Acknowledgements

- Research partner: John Gitau, Kijabe
- All participants: FGW farmer/trainers training attendees, CSI staff
- University of Edinburgh: Sam Staddon, Barbara Bompani, Clare Barnes



# Research Overview

## Broad aims:

- Put conservation and development literature in conversation with contemporary Kenyan Christianities
- Take faith seriously and show relevance of faith for contemporary conservation and development scholarship

## Narrow aims:

- Explore the ways in which faith shapes adoption decisions and expectations in FGW





JL Krapf, CMS missionary to  
Kenya, 1844

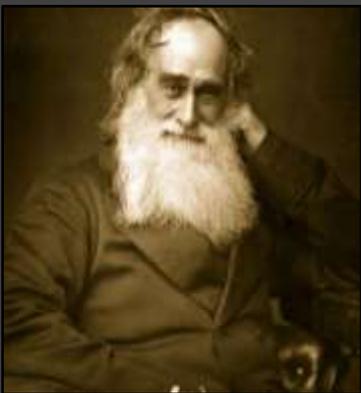
*'They [Africans] must be led  
to see with their own eyes  
that the people who follow  
the Christ whom we preach  
to them really understand  
better than they...  
how to cultivate the  
soil'*

- Travels, Researches, and Missionary  
Labours During an Eighteen Years'  
Residence in Eastern Africa (1860)



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# Christianity and agriculture in Africa: A timeline of entanglements



1816

FEBRUARY  
5TH

Crew of Dutch "7  
Provinces" mutiny  
after pay cuts



1858

APRIL  
7TH

Hugh Martin and  
Timothy Gray's  
musical "High  
Spirits" opens at  
Alvin Theater, NYC



1926

JUNE  
17TH

British rock band  
Led Zeppelin begin  
their last European  
tour



Present Day

JANUARY  
15TH

Hans Luther forms  
German  
government



1844

MARCH  
6TH

Cuban coup d'état  
took place in Cuba



1901

MAY  
7TH

Bill Shoemaker wins  
Kentucky Derby  
with Lucky Debonair

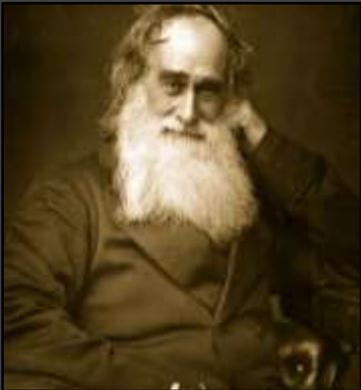


1963

JULY  
18TH

Billy Joel's album  
tops US charts,  
featuring "It's Still  
Rock 'n' Roll to Me"

# Christianity and agriculture in Africa: A timeline of entanglements



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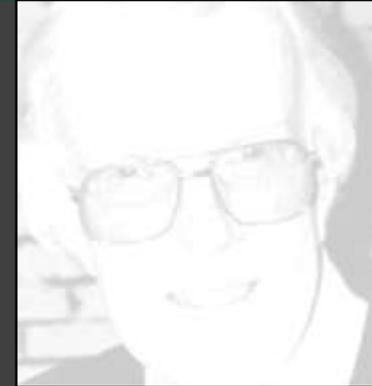
Robert Moffat, LMS missionary to Cape  
Colony (South Africa)

'Civilisation must originate and depend on  
the culture of the ground'



MAY  
7TH

Bill Shoemaker wins  
Kentucky Derby  
with Lucky Debonair



1963

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# Christianity and agriculture in Africa: A timeline of entanglements

David Clement Scott, COS  
missionary to British East Africa  
(Kenya)

Endeavoured to 'make agriculture  
the means of salvation for Africans'

JANUARY  
15TH

Hans Luther forms  
German  
government



1901



1926

MAY  
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Bill Shoemaker wins  
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Rock 'n' Roll to Me"



# Christianity and agriculture in Africa: A timeline of entanglements

Emory Alvord, ABCFM missionary to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)

'Before we can successfully preach to him [Africans] the Gospel of Christ, we must first preach to him the Gospel of the Plow'



1010

1044

1050

1901

1926

1963

Present Day

JANUARY  
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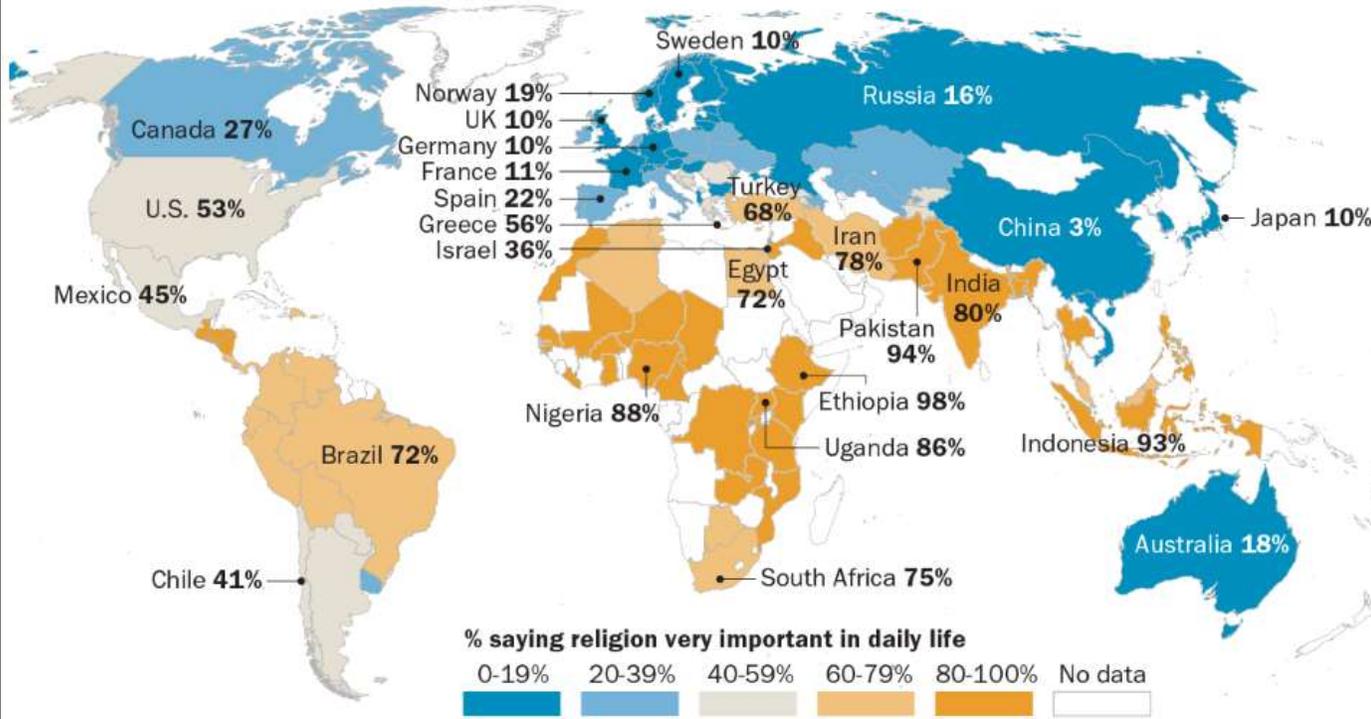
JULY  
18TH

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# Contemporary Global Religious Landscape

## Religion is very important to people in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Latin America

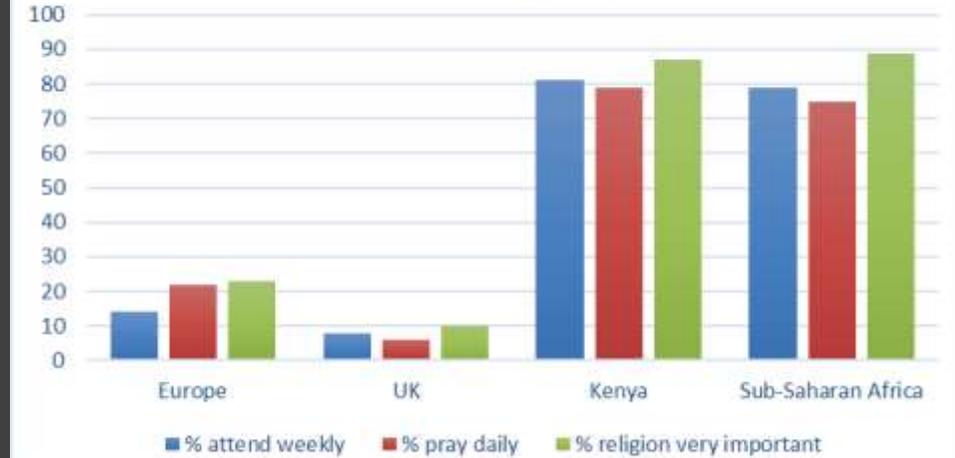
% who say religion is very important in their lives



"The Age Gap in Religion Around the World"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Faith in Everyday Life



The secular gaze of western-led 'conservation and development' does not correspond with the decidedly spiritual worldviews of the vast majority of people where 'conservation and development' happens

# Christianity and agriculture in Africa: A timeline of entanglements

Grant Dryden, Farming God's Way

'Farming God's Way is not just a technology but a well-balanced Biblical, management and technological solution in the agricultural domain, to equip the poor to come out of poverty, with what God has put in their hands and to reveal the fullness



1816

Crew of Dutch Provinces' mutiny after pay cuts

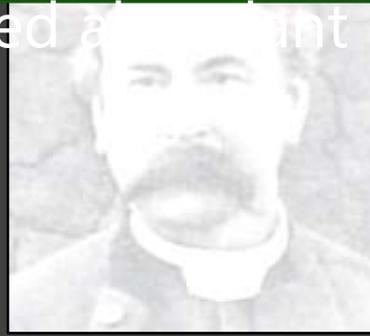
JANUARY 15TH

Hans Luther forms German government

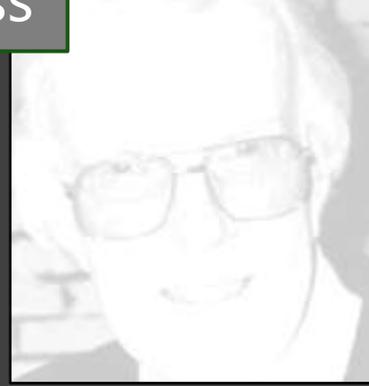
1844



Jesus' promised abundant life'



1963

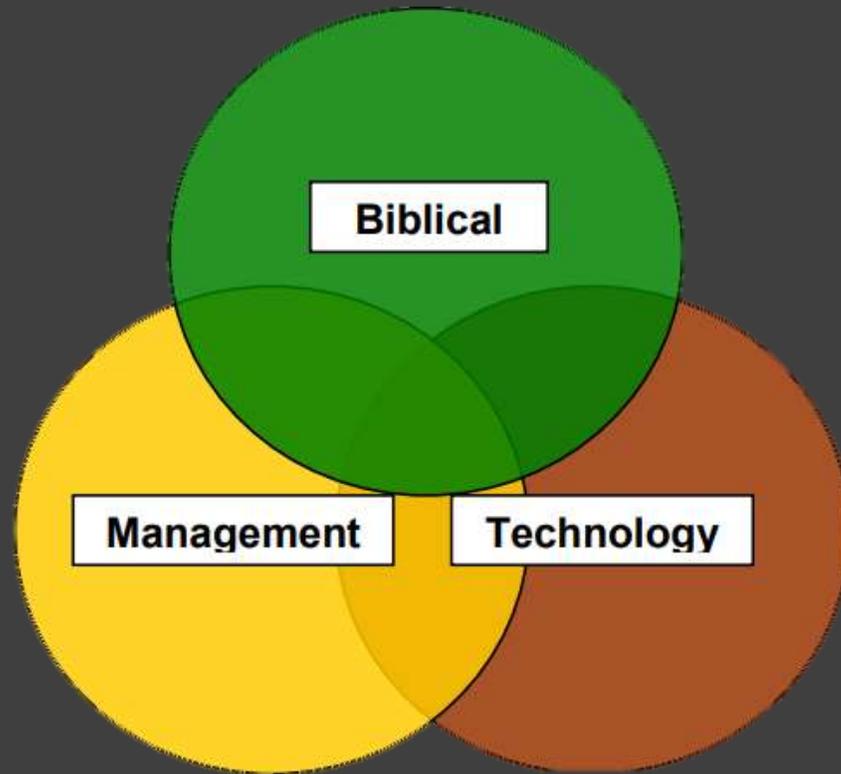


Present Day

JULY 18TH

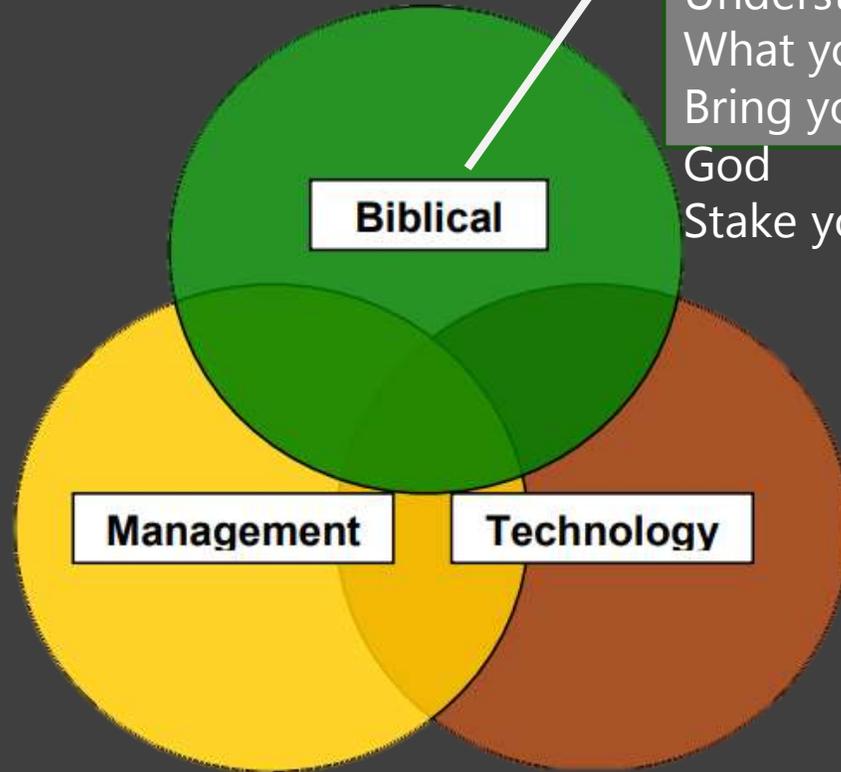
Billy Joel's album tops US charts, featuring 'It's Still Rock 'n' Roll to Me'

# Farming God's Way



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# Farming God's Way



## Biblical Keys:

Acknowledge God and God alone

Consider your ways

Understand God's all sufficiency

What you sow you reap

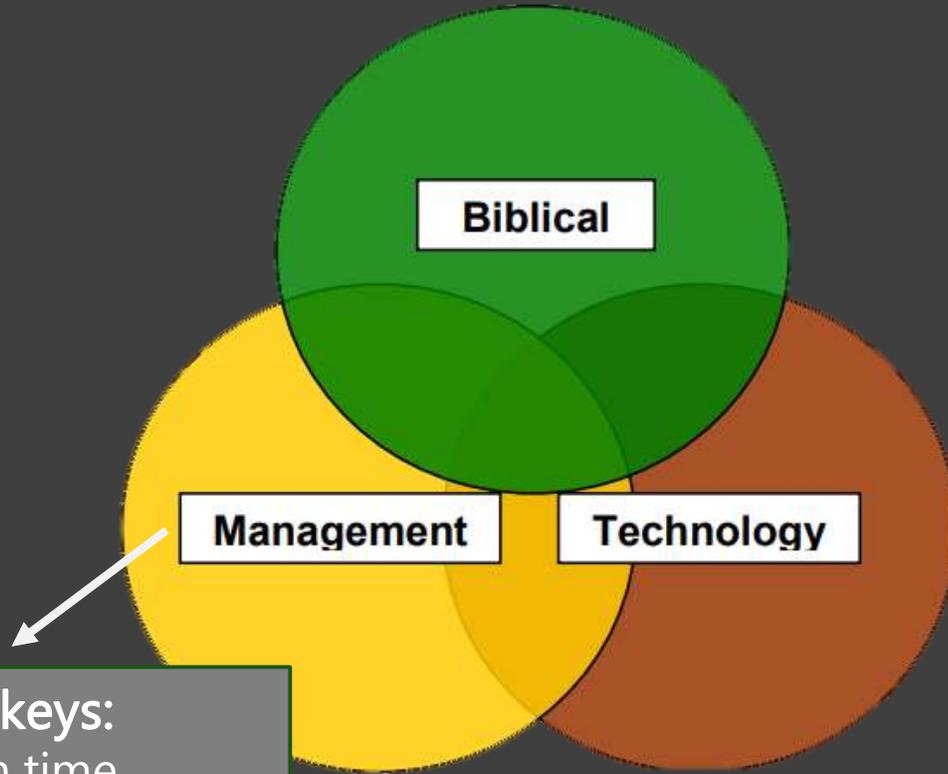
Bring your tithes and offerings to God

Stake your claim



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# Farming God's Way

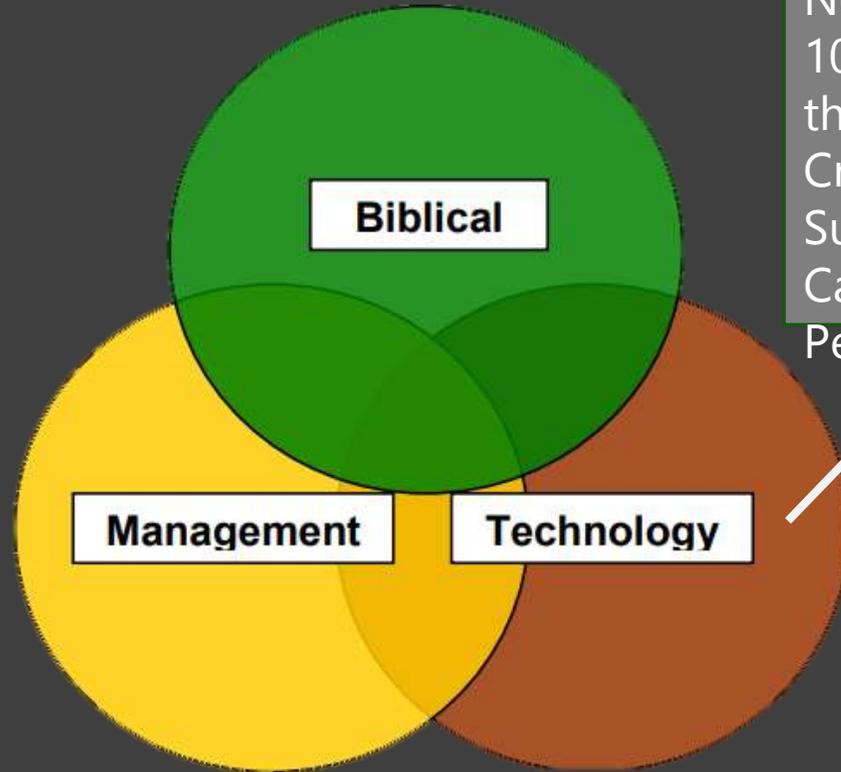


Management keys:  
Doing things on time  
To a high standard  
With minimal wastage  
With the fruit of the Holy Spirit



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# Farming God's Way



Technology Keys:  
No ploughing  
100% mulch cover, 2.5cm thick  
Crop rotations  
Surface composting  
Canopy cover  
Permanent planting stations





# Expectations of Increase: Prosperity theology *and* empiricism

'the prosperity gospel creates an expectation of worldly success and a conviction that true believers will enjoy God's abundance in this life as well as in the next' – Jane Soothill (2015)



# Expectations of Increase: Prosperity theology *and* empiricism

'We as God's people are called to improve, not maintain. To develop, not sustain. God's way is not to keep the status quo, it is not a part of His nature. He is a progressive, creative God and His kingdom is advancing all the time...The fruits of God's all sufficiency is having more than enough, increase, profitability, and progress. God's all sufficiency will lead us to prosper. God's all sufficiency is never ending, with no limits to His reserves, as He has no limits'.

-Grant Dryden, from the FGW video 'Understanding God's All Sufficiency'

'You know that the blessings are coming'

-FGW theme song, written by Grant

Dryden

# Expectations of Increase- Prosperity theology *and* empiricism



FGW video- '20 reasons why we do the how'



# Adoption decisions in conservation agriculture

## Farmers' adoption of conservation agriculture: A review and synthesis of recent research

Duncan Knowler <sup>a,\*</sup>, Ben Bradshaw <sup>b,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6*

<sup>b</sup> *Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON, Canada N1G 2101*

Accepted 30 January 2006

'the aggregated analysis of the 31 distinct analyses of conservation agriculture adoption reveals few if any universally significant independent variables...The one exception to our somewhat pessimistic conclusion derives from the potential of social capital as a more universally influential factor in conservation agriculture adoption'

# Expectations in conservation and development programmes



The image shows a screenshot of a journal article page from 'World Development'. At the top left is the Elsevier logo featuring a tree and the word 'ELSEVIER'. To its right, it says 'Contents lists available at ScienceDirect'. The journal title 'World Development' is centered, with the homepage URL 'www.elsevier.com/locate/worlddev' below it. On the right side, there is a 'WORLD DEVELOPMENT' logo and a 'Check for updates' button. The article title is 'REDD+, hype, hope and disappointment: The dynamics of expectations in conservation and development pilot projects'. The authors listed are Kate Massarella<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Susannah M. Sallu<sup>b</sup>, Jonathan E. Ensor<sup>c</sup>, and Rob Marchant<sup>a</sup>. At the bottom, there are three footnotes: <sup>a</sup>York Institute for Tropical Ecosystems, Environment Department, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5NG, UK; <sup>b</sup>Sustainability Research Institute, School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; and <sup>c</sup>Stockholm Environment Institute, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5NG, UK.

‘Expectations can be defined as imagined ideas about the future that are produced, circulated and mediated through social interaction... Actors’ actions and decisions are always made in relation to expected outcomes and consequences’

# Expectations in conservation and development programmes



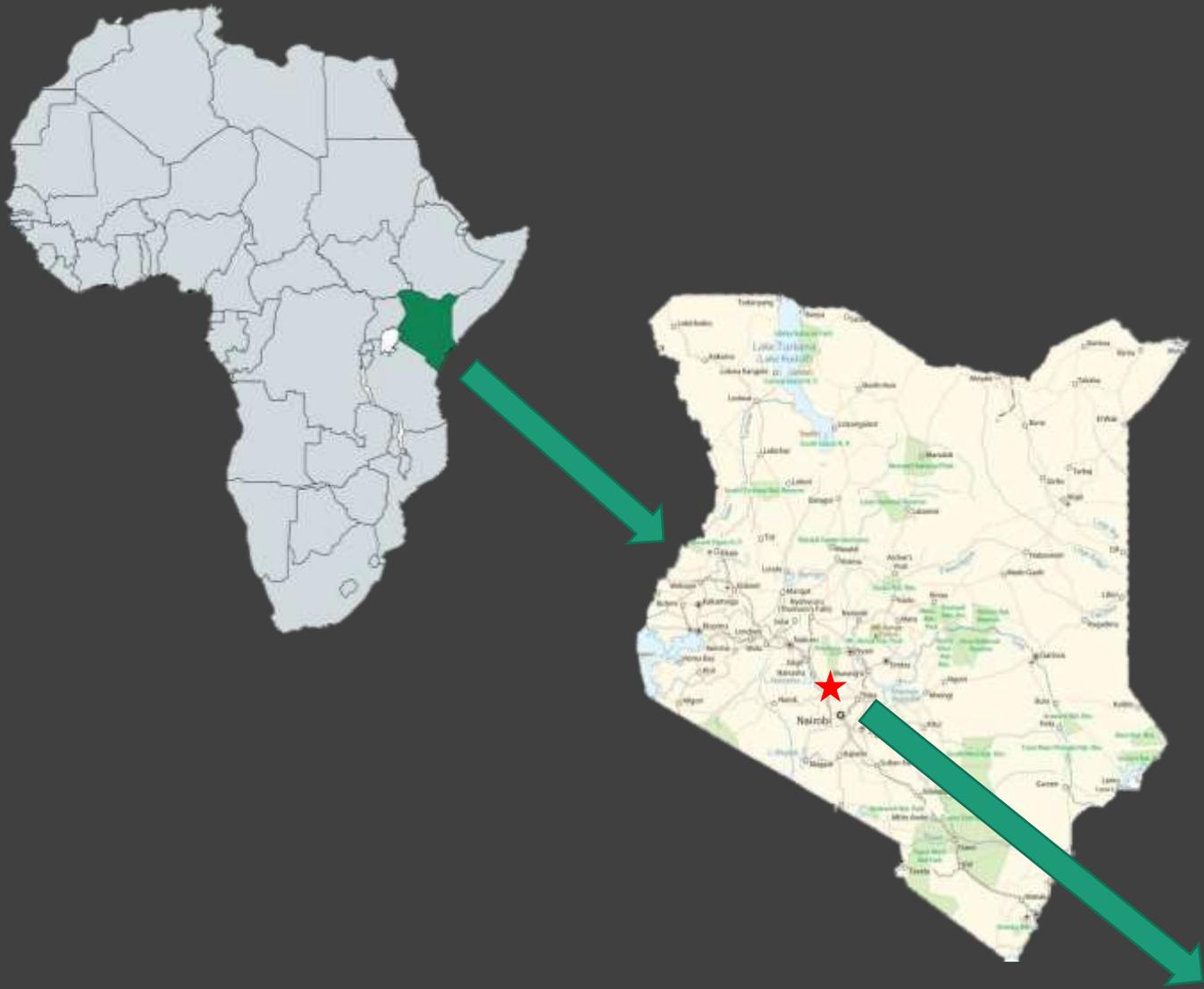
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C+D projects characterised, in part, by 'the intense focus on the future, on new beginnings, is rarely moderated by an analysis of the past...Elevated expectations, created by hype associated with early stages of innovation, results in hype and disappointment cycles'

How might I put Pentecostal notions of prosperity in conversation with literature on adoption decisions and expectations in the context of FGW?

- How does faith shape FGW adoption decisions?
- How does faith shape expectations of FGW?

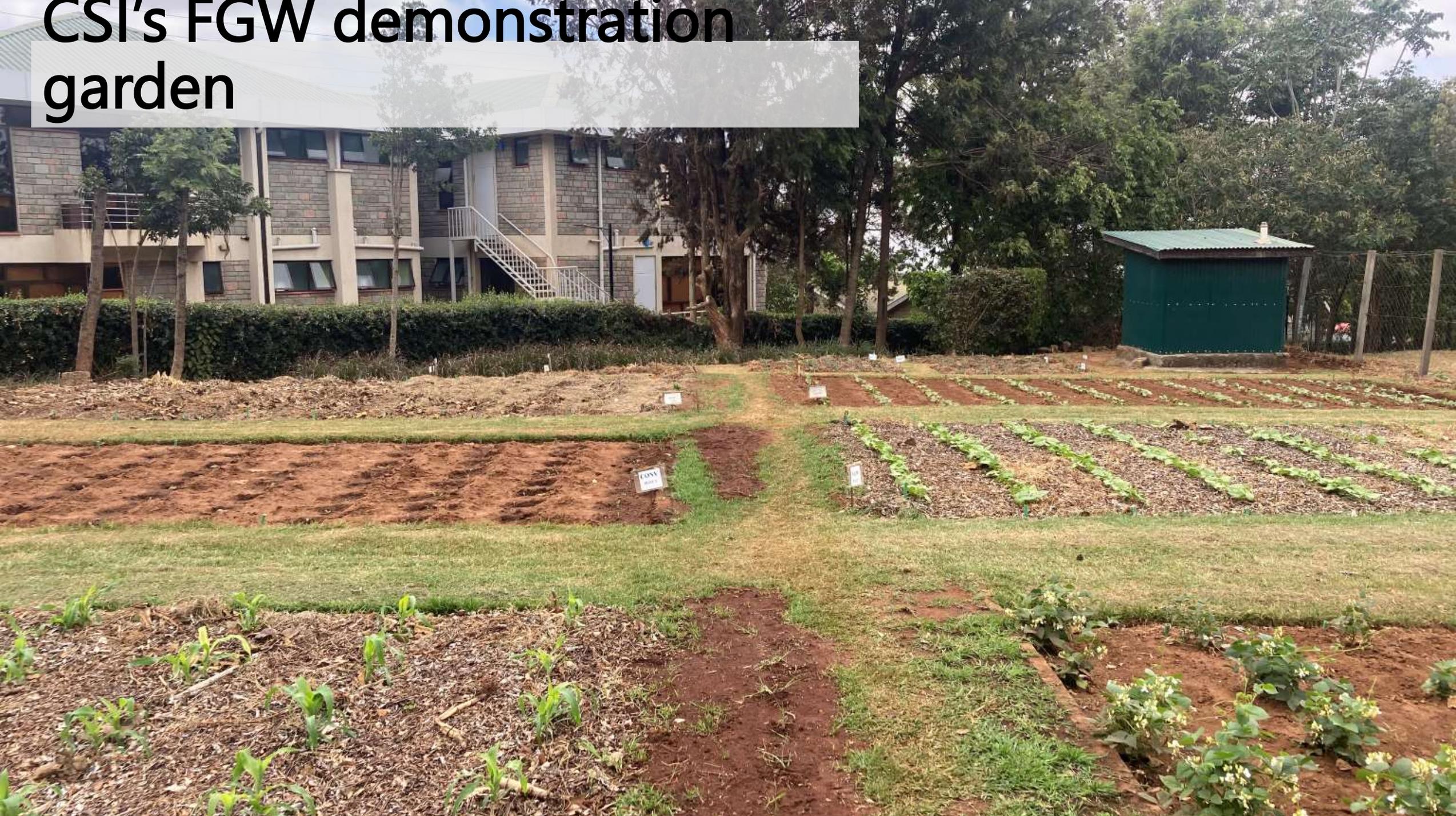


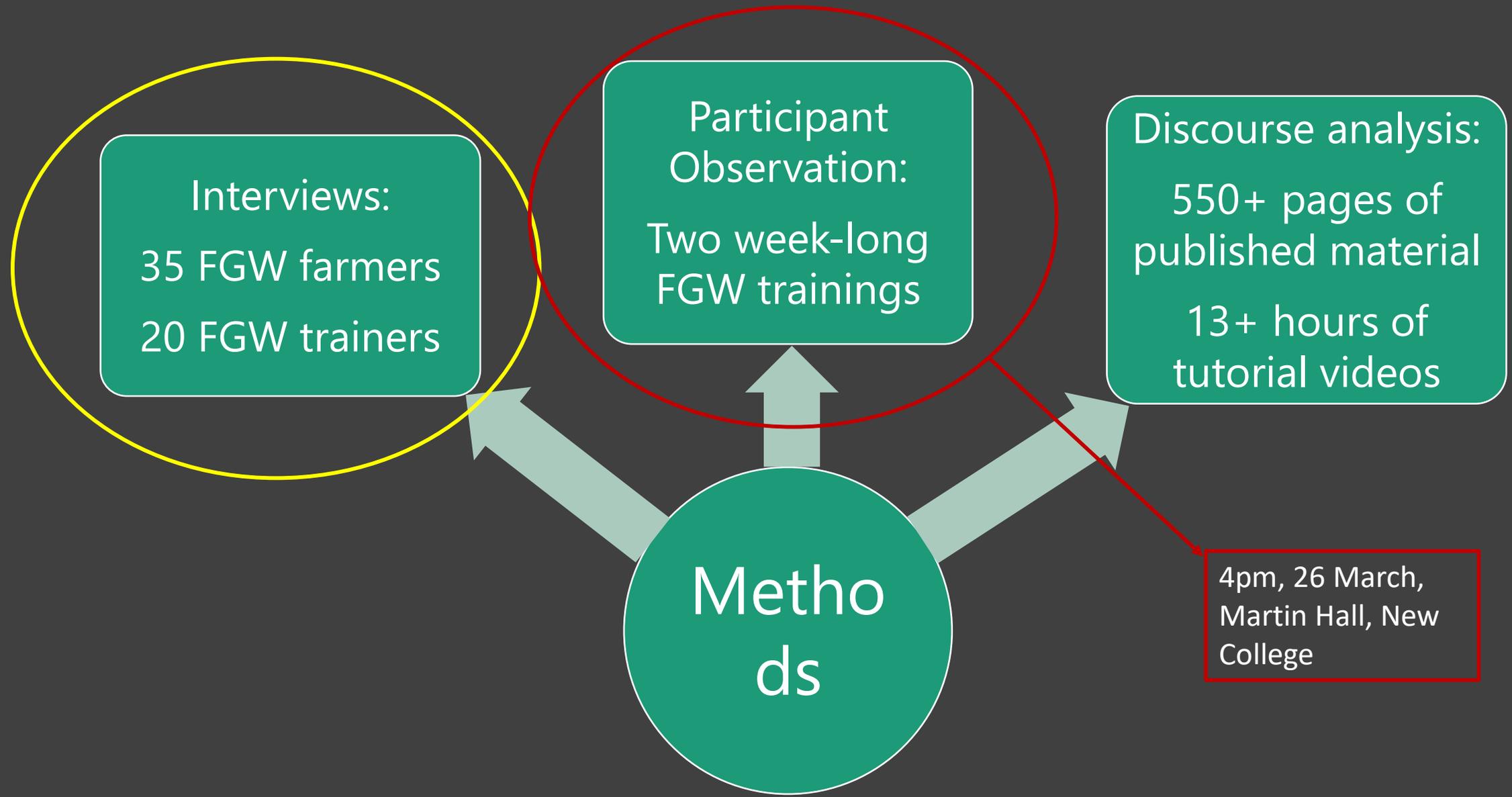






# CSI's FGW demonstration garden





# Convincing and Convicting- FGW adoption

*'I actually use two phrases, convince and convict. Conviction, that's the Holy Spirit's work...The convincing part I feel is maybe a bit more of the human, physical side'*

*'the convincing, you know, God gave us a mind, God gave us a thinking capacity....I think the convincing is pretty obvious, that we're trying to convince people. We do things with the runoff trays, the practical experiments...So 100% there's the convincing part and I don't shy away from that and I hope that people are convinced'*

*'you have to do things to let conviction happen, and that's presenting God's word and presenting people a chance to repent'*

# Convincing and Convicting in FGW



Convincing in action?

# Convincing and Convicting in FGW



Conviction in action? - 'We need to repent and acknowledge that we have been doing a sin. And not a small sin, a big sin'

# Convincing in FGW adoption

*'When I got to Kijabe...I saw the difference in plots between FGW and the conventional way, and I got so encouraged'*

*'You know I have tried so many ways [of farming], and sometimes things don't come just from another way. So I had to think twice...It wasn't possible for me to switch all of a sudden without further research or without visiting. So when I went [to CSI], I was a bit more convinced...It's kind of like you are on the road using a smaller car, and somebody comes with a bigger car. You come to realise the bigger car is faster, more comfortable...FGW was better, that's why I had to stop what I was doing and engage fully in FGW'*

The Promised Land  
Flowing with Milk  
and Honey

*'It is a land the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to the end.'*

# Test and see that the Lord is good?

*'Every time me and the other members in the beginning met with the FGW team, nobody decided to do this. We were feeling like 'these guys [CSI staff] are stupid and don't know what they're talking about'. But you get to know the success of the farming, or you get to know how good it is once you begin. You have to do it so that you can get convinced'*

*'For the first harvest, people don't trust that it can work. But now, they have been convinced because it is something which is practical, they have seen it. Actually, that is the reality, until we did an experiment...most farmers, they will always trust what they can see...they can understand the Biblical side, but the actual result, they must compare and contrast that this is the best way to go'*

The Promised Land  
Flowing with Milk  
and Honey

"It is a land the Lord your God cares  
for; the eyes of the Lord your God are  
continually on it from the beginning of  
the year to the end."  
Deuteronomy 10:14

# Convicting and FGW adoption



*'Because we are Christians, when we came to learn about FGW...it got to a point where we felt that our obligation to do the right thing was to do FGW. We came to learn how FGW is more Biblical. So as Christians, that's when we had the urge to switch to FGW, because it is more Biblical and it connects farming with God'*

*'Because of the things I was told through the Bible, I realised it was God who started it [FGW] and I switched to FGW'*

*'I see it [FGW] as a way of reconciling myself to the Lord...It is inviting God into our farms'*

# FGW trainers and FGW adoption

*'For me, what I'm using to convince people is two things, food and financial. Because the money they get from the wages, they are using it to buy food. So I encourage them 'why spend a lot on food? Why not just have a farm and do FGW, and get enough. The rest of your money...spend it to build a good house, for school fees, for other needs. So I majorly focus on those two things'*

*'a recognition that [FGW] is what God has called us to do...so it's a spiritual thing. And then it's a real practical thing in the sense that this is a system that actually works, and many farmers have actually succeeded from it'*

*'Actually, we hope it's both. We hope it's both to an equal measure. The approach should not be like it's another farming system that you've discovered that you are hoping to better your yields with, it's that this is God coming into your life and you living out your life for Him and for His glory...so, I would say it is both, it is both glorifying God and having something to eat'*

# What do FGW trainers think farmers are expecting?

*'Up front, for the majority of people, the first thing that comes up in terms of expectations, always, is the yield. Because, remember, the reason why a lot of these individuals actually come to training is because they have a problem. And the problem is the yield, and that's what they focus on for the most part'*

*'I mean, if you tell a Christian that God has actually come to answer your agricultural problems through FGW, it is almost like you are preaching to the choir...Every time there is an introduction of God, nobody is thinking that God is going to fail. When you come and tell people about 'Farming God's Way', immediately you've introduced a faith-based term right there, so people begin to wonder 'what about God?'. And, with FGW leaning heavily on scriptures and the use of the Bible, that builds expectations, and especially if you are interacting with people who already have an inclination towards faith, they are saying 'oh this is God's blessing coming my way'. And...you can't see God failing'*

# From the Garden of Eden to the Demonstration Garden

*'at the time when God created Heaven and earth and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God never gave them any jembe and there were still fruits and all kinds of vegetables and they had everything they required. And through FGW it's the same...you are doing little work and getting high yields...just like the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden'*

*'When I was taught about FGW, they [CSI staff] used the Bible and that's when I was told that God was the first farmer. Adam never ploughed and they still had much food and afterwards, that's when sin came, and that's when people started ploughing and bad things happened and people started doing what God never intended people to do. And because now there is a way of going back again, you can still have high yields with little work when you involve God'*

*'In everything I am doing in Farming God's Way, I am doing through faith and I am involving God in it, and I believe that after doing my work, God will bless the labour of my hands'*

# Garden

*'When I was switching, I had high expectations because of what I had seen from the CSI staff when I was in training. They have a shamba where they do conventional and FGW and when you go to the field, you see the difference, so I had hope from that'*

*'It was that time when I went to Kijabe and saw the demonstration plots. There was a great difference between the FGW and the conventional way'*

# Adoption decisions and expectations together?

At times, the factors shaping adoption decisions and the factors shaping expectations quite literally grow out of the same ground

CSI's demonstration garden serves as a space where adoption decisions and expectations, convincing and convicting, material and immaterial, physical and spiritual, are woven together

The Promised Land  
Flowing with Milk  
and Honey

"It is a land the Lord your God cares  
for; the eyes of the Lord your God are  
continually on it from the beginning of  
the year to its end."  
Deuteronomy 10:14

CSIW  
2019

# Some concluding thoughts

## Narrow conclusions

- Adoption decisions and expectations are linked, influenced by aspects of both convicting and convincing
- Faith illuminates new dimensions of Massarella et al.'s 'hype and disappointment cycle'

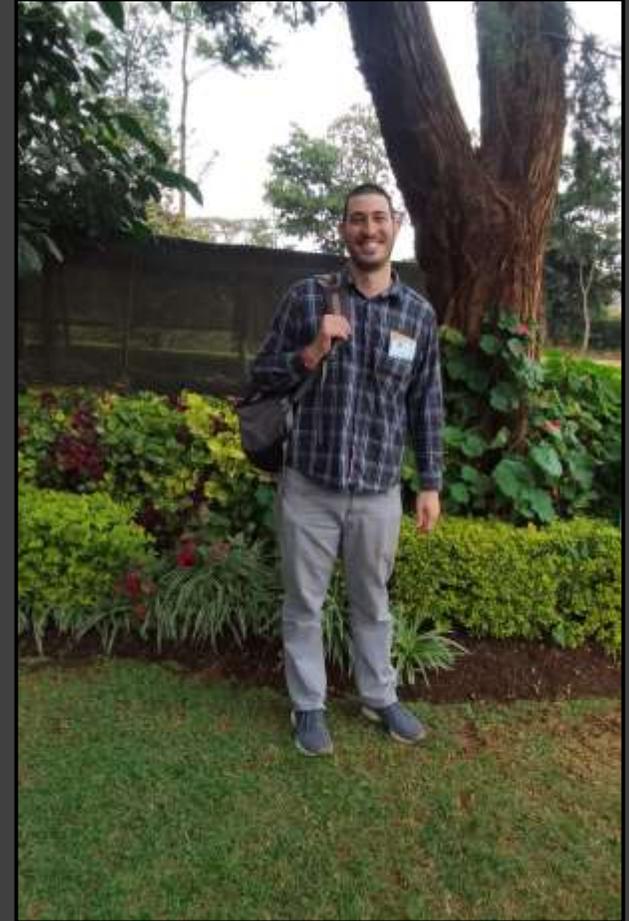
## Broad conclusions

- Limits of faith-based and secular C+D projects
- Highlights need for interdisciplinarity
- Highlights need for more research into how faith 'works' in C+D projects

# Thank you! Questions?

Some things I didn't talk about that I'd be happy to take questions on:

- Gender in FGW
- Limits to FGW (climate change, drought, etc.)
- Faith and positionality
- History of Christian mission and links with FGW



Want more info or to chat further? Email me at: [peter.rowe@ed.ac.uk](mailto:peter.rowe@ed.ac.uk)

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