

IN TOUCH

THE POST COVID CHURCH

Dear Friend:

As you may know Ohio is approaching 33% of those over age 16 who have received their first vaccine shot and that number continues to rise. We are headed in the right direction. COVID will not likely disappear but we are getting closer to the way we lived before the pandemic, and church seating will return to normal capacity.

What will the post COVID church look like and what will be needed to be effective? Some pastors and Christian leaders are predicting things I do not believe will happen – their predictions are not based on solid fact, scientific research. I absolutely do not believe that “digital church” is the way of the future. Christians who were solidly committed to a local church before the pandemic will return. Early results are showing that non “shut-in” church members initially “watched” church, but no longer a nominal idea, viewership is in decline. If you are a family with a few kids and a dog do you think everyone together (including the dog) will sit quietly at any point during the week? Good luck with that.

There are those who believe the pandemic will put an end to the “consumer” model of the church. I don’t buy that! Particularly in America, consumerism is too ingrained to change because of one pandemic. Lastly, there are some who say the church as we know it will change permanently. Not true. In one sense it has – live streaming is here to stay (goo). I believe that within a year after health directives are over church will return to normal. It did with the Spanish flu (50-100 million deaths) and the Hong Kong Flu (1 million deaths worldwide)

The churches that will grow the fastest and be most effective after health directives are lifted will do the following: 1) Welcome those back who have stayed away without judging them. 2) Relational, relational, relational. Effective churches will create new ways to gather people for social connection (from dinners to small group events). 3) Take prayer to a new and powerful level. Really this should be priority one. It doesn’t matter what we try to do to bring people back, without prayer it is a wasted effort. 4) A new mindset for church facilities. Other than mega churches, small and mid-size churches mostly reflect a football stadium in regard to church building use....a facility used once-a-week. That’s poor stewardship for a church. BUT KNOW This: bringing in outside groups to the church DOES NOT BRING CHURCH GROWTH. However, a well planned strategy of interaction CAN bring church growth.

Every church in America will find it’s attendance negatively impacted by COVID, it already has. A comeback is absolutely possible but it won’t be

suddenly. However, the comeback will be quicker when the church is non-judgmental toward those who stayed away, relational, prayerful, and facility use intentional.

In Christ's Love, Pastor Mike

Please Pray For: Rose Farber, Jessica Pittenger, Ava Northrop