

Your Weekly Reaching New People Newsletter

Part Two of "How Do We Reach New People Online?"

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In the last issue of this newsletter, I went through some strategies of how to clarify the "next group" we wanted to reach in the community. Churches write a detailed description of this group, including age, church background (or not), lifestyle, education, occupations, etc. The question then is: "*how do we connect with this group?*"

During Covid, many churches have simply taken what they were doing face-to-face and transported it online. But in terms of reaching new people, most of those activities weren't reaching new people, pre-pandemic. Simply inviting people to do our activities will not engage many people (thus, 85% of churches are in decline, prior to, and now during Covid).

A key step is to discern the needs and stress points in the lives of the people your church is trying to reach and then to create online groups, activities and programs that will meet those needs. We begin not with what "*we have always done in the church*"; but with "*what do those beyond the church need most?*". So, for example, one church that was attempting to reach young families with children held an online forum with a panel that included a school administrator, a child psychologist and a time management specialist. The theme was around how to balance working at home, having children doing long-distance learning, and finding time and space for each family member. This panel discussion was widely advertised on Facebook and other social media and church member families invited other families to join them. A follow-up Facebook group was offered for parents who wanted support and encouragement. The response was great, because the church had taken the time to figure out what others needed and provided something that added value to their lives. Another church did a similar process with a retired community, around issues of isolation during Covid, and health concerns.

What a church does is completely determined by what the community around the church needs and what group the church wishes to reach "next". So, I encourage you to take the focus off of self and look deeply into what those who are far away from the church and the faith might need.

Providing valuable support can often be the first step in someone becoming a disciple and becoming part of your faith community.