

# Your Weekly Reaching New People Newsletter

## Longing for Normalcy

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### **"When can we go back to the ways things were?"**

**One of the sure signs of a church in decline is when members start to say, "*Remember the good old days, when Rev (you fill in the blank) was our Pastor and the church was filled, youth groups were huge, and everyone seemed to go to church*". Usually, such reminiscing has been about the 1950's which was the high-water mark for many churches in this country. Churches that spend their time remembering the past, seldom have energy for a vital future.**

**But in recent days, as people grow weary of Covid-19, I often hear church members say, "*I can't wait for things to get back to normal and we can all be together in worship again*". We all understand the sentiment that people miss seeing their friends, but this new nostalgia is also very troubling.**

**Why would we want to return to the pre-Covid "normal", when most churches were in decline, less than 20% of people were worshipping anywhere, and most of the community around us didn't even know our church was still in business. Who wants to go back to that "normal"? Whenever it is safe to return to our worship spaces in full force, the danger is that we will let out a big sigh of relief, hunker back down in our buildings and forget all about people who have been online with us these past few months. All that will do is continue and in many cases, increase the rate of decline.**

**So, church leaders, when you hear a member talk about wanting to return to "normal", please do the following:**

- **Remind them the "old days" were not that good and if we go back to our old practices we will wither away.**
- **But more importantly, remind people that we have seen the possibilities of a "new normal" in which we can connect online with many people who might never have entered our buildings. Paint a picture of all the lives we could change and the impact we could have in our towns and villages.**

- **Remind people, as Myron Pierce said, "*The shift is from going to church to being the church*".**

**In the wilderness, many of the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt, but the leaders pointed them to the Promised Land. In our day, let's not go back to the "good old days" of decline, for there is our own Promised Land of new life, right in front of us. Lead people to that new vision.**