

Hasn't everything/anything changed?

Before Covid, about 85% of churches were in decline, 94% were not keeping up the population growth rate. The worship, activities and mission efforts of most churches were not reaching new people in our communities. In some areas of the country, only 10% of people were worshipping anywhere.

Then March came and Covid hit. I want to applaud the efforts of so many pastors and lay people who have made some quantum leaps in getting their churches online for worship, study groups and other gatherings. The technology learning curve has been steep and many of you are tired or exhausted from that transition.

But now that you have made that leap, I want to ask a hard question. What has really changed in your ministry? What I see in many churches is that what was being done in person has simply been transported online. The worship and programs that were not connecting with new people pre-Covid, are the same things now appearing on websites, Facebook, etc. In many cases, all the effort is still going to those who are already members and believers. The number of churches in decline has not changed since March.

But what about all those folk in our communities who don't have a faith experience or know of the value of being part of a church? I believe the next phase of change/adaptation is to do a deep-dive into the needs of the next group in your community that you want to reach. Out of that research, can we then really begin to change how we worship, what groups we offer and what mission efforts we make, based on their needs and not just our own? Such change is going to require lots of prayer and a willingness to try new things, some of which will work and some that will not. This work is not easy, but we can learn how to really connect with our mission field and make new disciples; something that wasn't happening in most churches Pre-Covid.

You have done a great job of moving into 21st Century technology. Will you now adapt that technology to connect with people who are currently far away from your church?