

# **Pastoring in a Post-Pandemic Culture**

**Monday, April 20, 2020**

**Delmarva-D.C. COG Pastors Zoom Meeting**

**Re-Entry Team**

# ***Introduction***

Pastoring after COVID-19 will and *should* look different than before the Corona Virus outbreak. Carey Nieuwhof in an article titled *10 Predictions About the Future of the Church and Shifting Attendance Patterns* believes that a seismic shift is hitting the church right now on the scale of Christianity after Constantine and also the invention of the printing press. He suggests the following:

1. THE POTENTIAL TO GAIN IS STILL GREATER THAN THE POTENTIAL TO LOSE.
2. CHURCHES THAT LOVE THEIR MODEL MORE THAN THEIR MISSION WILL DIE.
3. ATTENDANCE WILL NO LONGER DRIVE ENGAGEMENT; ENGAGEMENT WILL DRIVE ATTENDANCE.

(Read the full article here: <https://careynieuwhof.com/10-predictions-about-the-future-church-and-shifting-attendance-patterns/>)

# *Insights*

The potential exists for an awakening. What are we going to do to if God sends us a harvest?

This pandemic has given Pastors and leaders an incredible opportunity to re-evaluate everything (a reset), allowing us to really reconsider what is necessary to effectively Pastor and grow the church (spiritually and numerically).

If any leader returns to their ministry without taking full inventory and then making proper changes - that is poor leadership.

EVERY church (regardless of size) should consider a relaunch of their ministry as we return.

We will see PHASES of reverse social distancing... initially, we went from LARGE to SMALL gatherings - soon we will go from SMALL to LARGE. This could allow many of our (smaller) COG churches to meet back in person sooner than others. However, each church must be prepared for these phases.

## continued...

We didn't have much time to plan for the quarantine, but we do have time to plan for our return. We need a range of ideas and options because we don't know what the return guidelines will look like or when that might be. It may look something like this: PHASE 1 = 10 people, PHASE 2 = 50 People. PHASE 3 = 200+ people PHASE 4 = Large Gatherings. We can't let students miss an entire school year, so I believe PHASE 4 will happen before the return of school... During the summer months - we could see continued restrictions.

The events of 9/11 forever changed the way we travel...COVID-19 (may) forever change the way we gather in large numbers.

Passover - The emphasis was on the family. No need for temple worship or priestly leadership. Every head of the family was the priest, sacrificing a lamb for those in his household. The house became the central place of protection (from the deadly plague) and ministry (the sacrificial lamb and the Passover meal itself). House churches may be an outcome of this crisis. Will the current church accept or reject this new wineskin?

## continued...

Ephesians 4:11,12 - “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”

We must return to this original intent for New Testament leadership. We exist to equip them; they do not exist to serve us...

With the restrictions placed on public schools many parents have become “home-schoolers.” Some may not return to the public school system. Churches may want to become an umbrella for home schooling...

Church Revitalization? Are we prepared to accelerate this process?

Crises will be opportunities to be catalytic-crisis allows us to make shifts that people will accept more readily than before the crisis.

Future pandemics are probable. Will you be prepared for the next cycle, the next outbreak?

**A Re-entry Team has been formed focusing on Pastoring in a Post-Pandemic Culture. The following are considerations and recommendations based upon the current crisis. They are grouped into five categories: 1) Facilities; 2) Schedule; 3) Finances; 4) Community and Connectivity; and 5) The Virtual Church.**

# FACILITIES

## Considerations:

- The church may need to keep step with measures the world is taking in order to remain relevant and caring. Will churches need an infrared temperature device or sanitation stations or masks available just like some churches have ear plugs available?
- People will probably be wearing masks at church...creating unique dynamics.
- Cultural dynamics like the active shooter scenarios change the way we do some things at church. How much impact will this pandemic have on the church?
- What will insurance companies require of churches to show due diligence?
- We may have to have limited capacities in our buildings.
- How are we going to comply with social distancing?
- People need a comfort level that when they come back everything is clean and sanitized...this may be an ongoing thing we need to do.
- Capacity of church sanctuaries is going to go down. The 80% rule of being full is going to go to 60%.
- Guests have always asked, “Is it safe, is it safe for my kids?” Those questions will increase. **THIS IS GOING TO BE HUGE WITH GUESTS.**
- Janitorial people may need to be licensed in the future.

# FACILITIES

## Recommendations:

- Churches need to develop a Health Team. Just like church shootings created the need to develop security teams, COVID-19 create a need for churches to develop Health Teams made up of medical professionals within the congregation.
- Hire an outside company to come and sanitize the building.
- If you have multiple services, develop a plan to clean between the services on Sunday.
- One church will not have handshakes, hugs or any other greeting...their greeting is going to be squirting hand sanitizer on every person's hands who walk in the building. Decide ahead of time how you will handle the "greeting time."
- Make sure the facility is CLEAN SMELLING. Have hand sanitizers and anti-bacterial wipes readily available.
- Consider multi-site even if you never have before. Some churches will not make it. Church property will become more available. If you have been in the market to get a facility, be on the lookout.



# SCHEDULE

## Considerations:

- What is the physical plant schedule (depending on restrictions)?
- What is the online schedule?
- The opportunity exists to change our scheduling.
- Pastors will need to overcome their fear of multiple services.
- We may need to go to multiple services because of social distancing. **START PREPARING THIS MOMENT.**
- Offering an early service just for seniors may be an option to address any concerns they have of rejoining the congregation.
- Special consideration should be given concerning children's ministries.

# SCHEDULE

## Recommendations:

- If you were considering adding another service before this pandemic, plan to reopen with that service in the schedule.
- Optimize your online schedule to offer more opportunities for virtual gathering than your physical gatherings.
- Be prepared to adapt the physical gathering schedule to accommodate any restrictions placed on the size of gatherings.
- When it comes to Children's Ministry follow the local school systems guidance. If they're not having school, you shouldn't offer that ministry right now. If they social distance to x number in a class, you should try to do that as well... even if you have to do multiple meeting times for the kids. Kids ministries is a big challenge because most aren't prone to social distancing to begin with.

# FINANCES

## Considerations:

- Finances can actually increase during this crisis.
- Stimulus money will be tithed upon because tithers are going to tithe.
- Scott Sheppard (Pastor of Cornerstone Church in Athens, Georgia) says to his congregation, “You’re not giving *to* Cornerstone, you’re giving *through* Cornerstone...”
- People outside of the church will give to churches who are meeting needs in the community.
- Budgets will never be the same.
- Cash Giving will fade quickly.

# FINANCES

## Recommendations:

- It is vital that every pastor develop different avenues of giving: mail-in, online (through the website), text-to-give, Church App, etc.
- Cast a vision and encourage people to give towards it (the vision), not to help keep the church afloat.
- Get a fully-funded emergency fund (3-6 months of income/expenses). This will take time and discipline, but it's possible!
- Adopt a need in the community and encourage people to give towards it (feeding hospital workers, food boxes for those in need, masks and face protection shields, etc.)
- Share the ways people can give on all your social media platforms (have it listed at the bottom of your posts).
- Create training videos on your social media platforms teaching people how simple it is to give online.
- Connect with your top givers every week.

# COMMUNITY & CONNECTIVITY

## Considerations:

- Evangelism opportunities are huge right now.
- It takes 21-40 days to form a habit. A “habit” is being formed to stay at home. How will we re-engage people?
- A new church plant just before the outbreak of the pandemic was getting some new families through hosting parenting classes (no advertisement about church-just helping families...)
- Small groups through Zoom...how can we keep that going? This is one of the greatest opportunities we have.
- Communication - phone calls/connectivity.
- We will always have Zoom groups from this point forward.
- Attendance used to be king/viewership.
- Engagement is key.

# COMMUNITY & CONNECTIVITY

## Considerations (page 2)

- The personal reach into the community is the major impact that can be made.
- Re-entry pathway - Drive thru Sunday night - 1 hour service, Kids Ministry teams handing out bags for kids...every car will get a card handed to them asking them to go to various places in the city to pray around the city - the purpose is to get people re-engaged...
- That (connectivity) is the biggest need in culture right now. People are starved for it.
- Pastors and churches that do that well will absolutely thrive in this environment.
- Community Outreach will actually move to the community. The church will go to the community more than the community will come to the church.
- Community is our advantage - they can get great preaching and singing anywhere...

# COMMUNITY & CONNECTIVITY

## Recommendations:

- Offer online classes for parenting, home schooling, exercise, finances, grief share, mental illness help (specialized) and other community needs.
- Use [freeconferencecall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com) for those who will not drift into Zoom Church. Drop the audio file so they can listen to the message (good for seniors). Use [gotomeeting](https://gotomeeting.com) as an option.
- Set up a system so every person in the church gets a phone call every week. “Pastor Scott wanted me to call you and share several things about...”
- Make sure connectivity is happening across every ministry and platform.
- Develop a strategy for chats on every platform. Make sure your staff and leaders are talking to everyone during the service being streamed, offering prayer, answering questions. Have a live host on all your streaming services to engage people who are watching.
- Engagement is KEY!!! This also increases Facebook algorithms. Make the church experience real-be intentional about engaging people.

# COMMUNITY & CONNECTIVITY

## Recommendations:

- Adopt a ministry opportunity outside the church that is in the community. It may be a hospital, food service ministry, first responders, etc. Think about feeding them or providing snack boxes to employees.
- Do community outreach in neighborhoods through your people. Make sure the elderly are taken care of and have their prescriptions filled. Focus on the underserved and the people in need.
- Drive-thru services have been a way to rally congregations. Since entertainment is shut down, rental companies have nowhere to send their large LED screens. You can get them very reasonable. Travis Johnson got a fixed LED screen on the side of the building at Pathway Church in Mobile, AL for two months for \$9,000. The drive-thru creates a tremendous sense of team and unity - people were honking their horns...you cannot create that type of synergy online.
- “Pray and Go.” Stop in front of a home, pray for them, and then leave a door hanger that says, WE PRAYED FOR YOU.
- Decentralize ministry out of the building and into the community.
- Transform your small groups into points of contact in neighborhoods all over your city.



# VIRTUAL CHURCH

## Considerations:

- Digitize everything.
- Virtual church EXPOSES the church to all of its good and bad.
- Concern-many pastors are not prepared for the digitized world-pastors are still doing 2 hour services online. They've just taken what they're doing live and putting it online.
- How can we do things in bites? Two songs, then a powerful question followed by another song...30 minutes of power bites.
- Move from the couch to the table-engage. Ask three or four questions that need a response at the table at the end of the online experience.
- Media positions will be needed more on staff.
- Online bulletin.
- More people can be engaged online than in person.
- Have a once a month online Zoom service...
- Online Campus pastors - Life Church (Craig Groeschel) offers a free online platform for churches. They have grown from 3,000 churches using their online platform to over 23,000 in five weeks.

# VIRTUAL CHURCH

## Recommendations:

- Developing an online presence is a must. A leader in Scott Sheppard's church is offering to set up a one-page website for COG pastors...free of charge! (One-time setup)
- Host a “virtual lobby” experience after the “live stream” is over. People join in and hang out.
- Delete the printed bulletin and go online with your announcements.
- Create pathways for online/Zoom viewers to connect with a prayer/altar counselor if they prayed for salvation or a specific need.
- Put your Growth Track online and a class for new believers online.
- Get on social media every day. Do not worry about saturation! This is a crisis and the sheep need to hear from their shepherd—promoting giving links...share, share, share...we are gathering people every day!
- Brett Seals is available to come to you and help set up Facebook live for you and your church.