

Introduction

Healthy as a leader
Hopeful in the local church

1. The Endemic Phase of Ministry

(1) Mask optional, next week

(2) Newsom - couple week ago

Slide #1

1. Signaled "end of pandemic" is just a few weeks away
(CDC Nurses; Masks)

Slide #2 (3) Matt Willis - posted shortly after & then recently did SF Gate

Quote #1: (I've done very little of this)

I do think that we have reached an inflection point in our response to this virus in terms of policies. That's driven by a confidence in the strength of vaccine and the increasing evidence that if you're vaccinated and infected, you almost always will have mild or no symptoms. Also, the omicron variant is so highly contagious it's difficult to contain.

If our goal was preventing infections as it had been in past, we'd be reverting to lockdown policies as you're seeing in some parts of world like China, Austria and Holland. While there are parts of the world seeking to prevent infections as the primary goal, we're recognizing that policies that try to prevent all infections would lead towards greater societal harm than this version of virus will.

Quote #2

But we're not reacting to that like we would have in the past, where public health policy would be to prevent such gatherings from occurring. Because results are more benign... it's up to individuals to understand the risk and make their own decisions based on risk tolerance and willingness to get infected.

(4) Changing our response will be hard because we've been through shared trauma together.

1. When interviewer asked:

Do you think you're having to hand-hold a lot of people out of pandemic mode and into endemic mode where, as you say, people will have assess risk and make their own choices?

1. Willis responded...

Quote #3

Absolutely. One of primary challenges now is shifting our mindset. Our mental models and policies are based on a virus that was one thing in the past, and is something different now. It makes sense for our response to the virus to also change, but our experience of collective trauma over the past two years doesn't get forgotten overnight. Every case used to be cause for alarm, and there was a stigma tied up in that. All of that just needs to be put in rear-view mirror, and our way of approaching this virus needs to change. We're dealing with a different variant of the virus; omicron does not behave like delta or alpha.

2. What this means for Anthem?

- (1) Pandemic to Endemic County Church
" " " "
- (2) The church will begin to move away from mitigating on your behalf¹
 1. You will need to begin changing expectations of the church to do so.
 2. We are moving past as a state, county & church a need to mask, distance or cancel our way out of surges.
 2. I can see tent coming down

3. Dear Anthem

(1) Philippians 1:3-5

- (2) Partner = participants = intimate word sharing

I. Participation preserves unity

Philippians 2:1-2

1. United in Jesus (United in what?)

1 Cor. 1:9 - ...for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus...

(1) All county meeting

Eph. 4:3 - Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

(2) Dear Anthem, you kept first things first these last two years.

1. Differences on politics, masks, vaccinations, mitigation, livestreaming
2. You kept us together, because you kept Jesus first.

(But now...)

2. United in Mission

Philippians 1:5 (NLT): for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.

(1) What is your agenda here?

1. Good teaching? Praying church? Worshiping church? Community?
2. How about spreading Good News?
3. Can't do it effectively under Pandemic thinking

II. Participation exposes unhealth

1 John 1:5-6 NLT - So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth.

1. Unhealthy thinking keeps us dissatisfied

Romans 12:2 - ...let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think....

(1) Why are you dissatisfied?

1. More often than not, my dissatisfaction with some area of my life says more about me than what I think the problem is.
2. My job, my wife, my health

(Covid test) (2) Diagnosis requires objectivity (seek objectivity from others?)

1. Your health may be hard, but your response doesn't have
2. Your wife may be the problem, but you might have caused it
3. Your job may be unfulfilling, but that doesn't need to mean you're unfulfilled

(3) How you think about your life affect how you respond to your life

1. Thinking affects living

Philippians 4:8-9 - And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. [9] Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me - everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

2. Unhealthy living keeps us disengaged

(1) From one another

1. Church health means creating a culture where people will either learn or leave.

(2) From mission

1. Church health means creating a culture where we care more about the front door than the side door
2. We don't chase, we invite

Application Q: Is it possible that your dissatisfaction with your life ... and your disengagement from your relationships ... the result of unhealthy thinking and living?

1. GC's, Men's / Women's

III. Participation creates momentum

Acts 2:41-42 NLT - Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day-about 3,000 in all. [42] All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

1. Old seasons can't be renewed with new momentum

- (1) We all want to get back to our former momentum of ministry
- (2) But even in the non-COVID era, the objective was never to preserve the status quo

Isaiah 43:19 - For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

2. New season can't be released with old momentum

- (1) God is always creating, so nothing stays the same except for God Himself.
- (2) Restart and reset former ministries, but maybe in new ways of doing them.

Application Q: Do you believe that you share responsibility, simply by participating beyond Sunday mornings, for the momentum of our church?

1. Serve
2. Give

Conclusion

1. Application

(1) Participants

Acts 2:42-44 (NLT): 42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. 43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. 44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had

(2)

(3)

(2) Attendants

1. Fall away from activity
(because it requires me to participate physically)
2. Turn away from honesty
(" " " " intellectually)
3. Stay away from intimacy
(" " " " emotionally)

(3) Ministry Implications

1. Build your ministry around participants to attendants
* BC, Men's group, church, business

Invitation

2. Don't wait for the attendants

2. Dear Anthem

Dear Anthem,

Thank you for the last two years of ideological participation. It wasn't easy, we didn't always agree on every nuanced approach, but believe me...it mattered. Where other churches across the country were knee-deep in conflict and division...you chose participation with Jesus over your own ideology...and with each other over isolation. In doing so, you helped preserve the unity of this church, exposed each other's unhealthy perspectives, and helped to create momentum through a fit of stops and starts.

But these stops and starts have had a toll. Some have fallen away from community, even if just in their hearts. Some have turned away from honesty and truth...while others, yet, have stayed away from intimacy and being fully known. So now, we need more than just your ideological participation...we need need you. Your presence, your gifts, your service, your voice.

So this is a challenge to those of you who may be in attendance, but are not quite participating yet. We need you. Your participation matters to us. It matters to our unity, to our health, and to our momentum. Making the shift, after being apart for so long, will not be easy. Our shared trauma over the last two years will see to that. Make no mistake, we all share in that trauma, to lesser and greater degrees.

But I'm here to tell you that the solution is to share in Jesus together...because participation is fundamental to our future.

I love you.

3. Critical Series

(1) Critical Information

↳ Participate in-person

(2) Critical Dates

Slide # 3