

A Sober Assessment of What's Ahead for Churches (Public Mass Gatherings) in COVID19 World

We are in the midst of a massive crisis.

We are living in Matthew 4:1 --

*"Then Jesus was **led by the Spirit** into **the wilderness** to be tempted by the devil."*

THIS is our wilderness. The Holy Spirit has led us here.

Note: Jesus did not hear from the Father for 40 Days.
Jesus only heard from Satan during those 40 Days.

---> Innovation is driven forward in crisis.

5 Sober Assessments for Church Leaders

1. Be prepared to be out LONGER than you think.

In a poll released Thursday, April 17 by the Pew Research Center, three-quarters of U.S. adults said the worst is yet to come with the novel coronavirus, and two-thirds were worried that restrictions would be lifted too soon.

Findings released Friday, April 18 by the University of Michigan's influential monthly consumer survey found that 61 percent were most concerned by the threat to their health from the virus, more than from isolation and financial impact.

In other words:

- 61% fear the virus more than a Depression
- 75% believe things are going to get worse before they get better

We will not return to full church services / mass gatherings for 16 months.

2. Be prepared for things to NEVER be the same.

- Be prepared for higher streaming numbers and lower building numbers in the long term.
- There are people who will only worship in a building and people who will only tune into a streaming service.
- People tuning in only for streaming will go UP long term.

3. Figure out how you can win.

*“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but **only one** gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.” (1 Corinthians 9:24)*

- The principle? There are Winners and there are Losers.
- The ways that I’ve won in the past **will not** work now.
- *“I don’t know how to win”* = Explains why we have conflicting emotions right now.
- Forget about slicing and dicing Streaming attendance #'s.
- **Right now the ONLY number that matters is GIVING.** This number tells us how many people are engaged, how many people are employed, how much runway we have until we’re faced with tough decisions.

4. Structure permanently for things we should have been doing all along.

- Love your neighbors -- How can you meet tangible needs?
- Everyone in church personally called on the phone -- “We’ve been lazy.”
- Invite 50 at a time onto Zoom with the Pastor and teach Matthew 4.
- Online Streaming is the New Normal:
 - You have two options going forward: Go Google or Go Amish. Try to be in-between? You will get crushed.
 - *“Be prepared to do online ministry only for the next year and a half.”*
 - Want to reach **Outsiders**? Don’t put worship up-front. New streamers are looking for your message and perspective on life. Move worship to the back-end after the message.
 - Keep your online messages **SHORTER**. Deliver the promise in the first 2 sentences.
 - Go on-location more -- Keep it **visually** interesting. Keep it vulnerable.
- **Staff Productivity** -- They don’t know what to do right now.
 - People are emotionally-anxious.
 - Create a Spreadsheet and say to each staff member, *“Here are the people you are responsible for. Call them. Pray with them. You are going to shepherd them starting right now.”*
 - “If you’re not willing to shift, you will get left behind.”
 - There can only be one Chief with a team of Indians.
 - Most of your church’s people **do not** have extra energy or margin during this season. Do not create more programs.

- Get your staff to stop thinking week-to-week.
Things will NOT go back to normal for a LONG time.
- If you want to reach Outsiders, your church has to look **socially-responsible** in your community. If your church opens up too early, **say goodbye** to ever reaching your community.

5. Concern for maintaining your personal spiritual vibrancy.

- You need time to recharge. Your church needs you to have a full tank.
- Greatest work God is doing is His work in you.

The Biggest Mistake You Can Make Right Now:

“Holding on” until things return back to normal.

The Spirit of God brought us into this! What is God wanting us to do NOW?