



JULY 20, 2021

FIRESIDE CHAT

The New Reality of the Urban Church:
How Do We Lead Effectively Through
Change to Keep Ministry Relevant?

DECEMBER 2020 DISCUSSION

What Has Changed?


TAKEAWAYS

1. The church is now forced to embrace technology (social media).
2. The communication methods changed: virtual gatherings.
3. The meeting place changed: social media rather than a physical building.
4. The life in community was interrupted.
5. The Church economy was deeply impacted.
6. The emotional health of the church members: a different need.

MARCH 2021 DISCUSSION

Lessons Learned

- We had to **establish unshakable priorities** to maintain the focus of our ministry in the midst of the storm (Safety, maintenance of excellence, and sustainability of the mission).
- We had to **be nimble and adapt quickly** if we wanted to stay relevant. Needed to consider removing many traditions. Be humble and willing to learn.
- We don't know the future—**we have to live the present**. We learned the importance of having finances in good order.
- **It's SO good to be in God's place and with God's people.**
- **The Church is not the building.**
- We learned **the reality of our mortality** and our standing with God and our significant other.
- The Church (as His agent) has to take the leadership role and **be prominently present and very actively engaged**, rescuing as many as possible (Evangelism, discipleship, prayer, etc.).



“The Church is not
a building. **It is people.**
Everywhere we go,
the Church goes.”

PASTOR JANATHAN AUSTIN



DISCUSSION QUESTION

How do we lead effectively through change to keep ministry relevant?

PANELIST

Rev. Doriane Parker-Sims

Pastor Doriane Parker-Sims is a senior leader and the co-founder of Kingdom Life Ministries in Grand Rapids, MI.

She is also the founder of the Deborah Project, a ministry to single mothers that has equipped and empowered thousands for the Kingdom and supports single mothers and their children in three cities. She is the founder and Executive Director of The Deborah House which is transitional housing for homeless single/pregnant mothers and their children.

She is a graduate of Trinity Bible College, Cornerstone University, and Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. Pastor Doriane believes that God wants His people better and not bitter, no matter what life brings your way. Pastor Doriane cherishes her role as a wife and mother. She is married to Kenneth Sims and together they have six beautiful children and one grandson.





PANELIST

Rev. Dr. Timothy Harris

Reverend Dr. Timothy Mark Harris believes that intense educational paths are key components in affecting change.

He also asserts that as Christ Followers our Christian investment strategy should include motivation, stimulation, education and recognition along with personal accountability which, when practiced, leads to a renewed and redirected sense of responsibility within our community of faith inclusive of all generations!

Dr. Harris has been living in his call to preach since 1999 and currently serves as the lead pastor Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Bloomington, Illinois.

Dr. Harris is a native of Wilmington, Ohio and has been married to and is in covenant relationship with Lady Karin L. Harris, affectionately known as Lady K, a true love gift from God for 29 years. He has two adult children and five grandchildren.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

How do we lead effectively through change to keep ministry relevant?



A YEAR OUT: HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED PRACTICING CHRISTIANS

“65 percent of U.S. adults and 62 percent of practicing Christians—said they were experiencing moderate to high anxiety during the pandemic (as of October 2020). Does this heightened anxiety indicate broader impact on Americans’ mental and emotional well-being?”

Source: Barna; *A Year Out: How COVID-19 Has Impacted Practicing Christians*; page 6.

Leading Through Loss

David Kinnaman

“In advising others how to help those who are grieving, he suggests, ‘First, recognize that **you can’t put words to grief, so just slow down and listen.**’”

Source: Barna; *ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations: David Kinnaman Shares on Leading Through Loss*; page 4.





CHURCHPULSE WEEKLY CONVERSATIONS

Leading Amidst Grief

Rick Warren

“Grief is **not something you get over;**
it’s something you get through.”

Source: Barna; *ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations: Rick Warren on Leading Against Grief*; pages 3-4.

29%

OF PROTESTANT PASTORS
REPORT HAVING SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERED QUITTING
FULL-TIME MINISTRY WITHIN
THE LAST YEAR.

—Barna Survey of Pastors



DIGITAL CHURCH STRATEGY

“**Church attendance isn’t decreasing; it’s decentralizing**...this perspective gives leaders the opportunity to help support people as they search to connect with a smaller group in their own cities and communities...”

Dave Adamson  ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations

Source: Barna; *ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations: Dave Adamson on Digital Church Strategy*; page 3.



HYBRID CHURCH

“There are a lot of things we can do digitally that are actually going to involve more people. We are going to be able to do better education and outreach. Still, at the same time, **we have to use the digital to woo people into face-to-face relationships**, or they are not really going to be changed by the Gospel.”

Tim Keller  ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations

Source: Barna; *ChurchPulse Weekly Conversation: Tim Keller on Hybrid Church*

A photograph of a man with glasses and a young girl with curly hair sitting on a couch, looking at a laptop screen. The man is smiling and has his hand raised as if gesturing. The girl is also smiling. The background is a simple indoor setting with a plant.

Pastoral Health & Leading Online

Glenn Packiam & Andrew Hébert

CHURCHPULSE WEEKLY CONVERSATIONS

“...this shift has meant a reframing of the perception of online spaces from being just a tool or mechanism of broadcast into an actual space where people inhabit. Packiam notes, “**We’ve recognized that you can actually create these spaces for connection**, even if it is augmentations of the actual physical embodied stuff.”

Source: Barna; *ChurchPulse Weekly Conversations: Glenn Packiam & Andrew Hébert on Pastoral Healthy & Leading Online*; page 5.

What Churches Might Miss When Measuring Digital Attendance

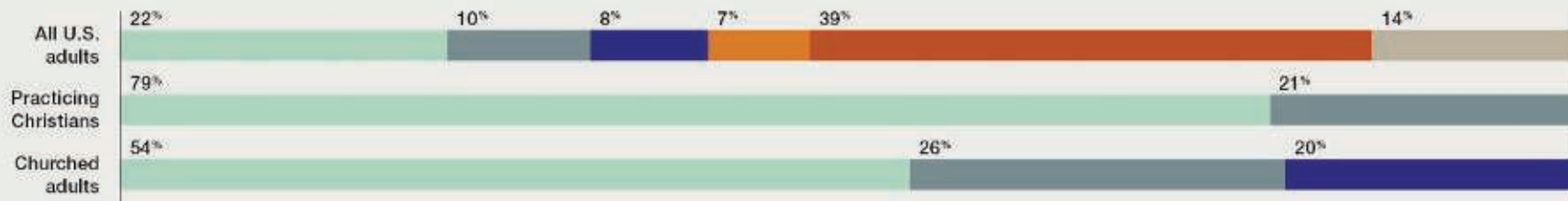


CHURCH ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT, THEN & NOW

Pre-pandemic attendance

When was the last time you attended a Christian church service, other than for a holiday service, such as Christmas or Easter, or for special events such as a wedding or funeral?

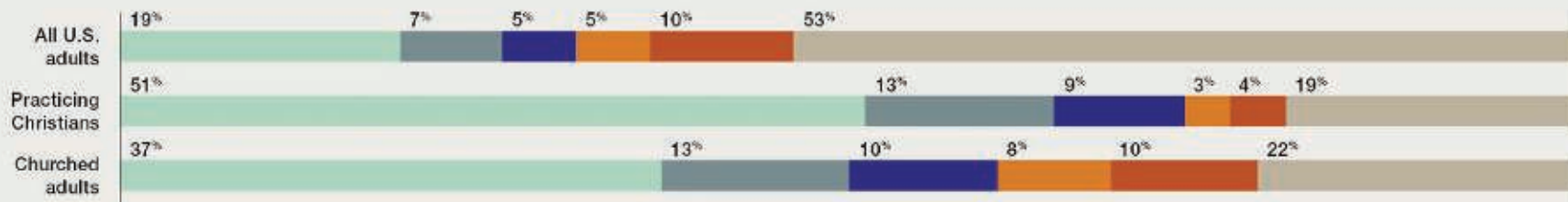
● Within the past week
 ● Within the past month
 ● More than 1 month ago, but within the past 6 months
 ● More than 6 months ago, but within the past year
 ● More than 1 year ago
 ● Never



Pandemic attendance

During the COVID-19 pandemic, on average, how often have you attended a church worship service, either in-person or digitally?

● Weekly
 ● Two or three times per month
 ● One time per month
 ● Once every 2-3 months
 ● Once or twice
 ● Never



n=1,003 U.S. adults; December 5-18, 2019.
n=1,302 U.S. adults; September 1-15, 2020.

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DISCUSSION QUESTION

On December 7,
we will consider the
following question:

**Will the church ever
be the same?**