

Pandemic Positives (Romans 8:28) * Jeff Iorg, Pres., Gateway Seminary

How to we move forward in the pandemic?

Perspectives: 1. From my view in Los Angeles. 8 million people. 2. Mass mandates 3. Social Distancing 4. Disagreeing employees 5. Adjusting to digital education delivery: ONLINE; LIVE VIDEO CLASSROOM ; FACE TO FACE. * 1. Elder at church meeting weekly; 2. Mt. Zion Missionary Ontario Church 3. Prominently Black church 4. Resistant to vaccine 5. Higher death rate; 28 COVID funerals * 1. Traveling & speaking 2. Pastors/ Leaders conf.

Positives:

1. Over-dependence on attraction models has been exposed.

- A. Worship as a production event
- B. Evangelism centered on invitations church : Rare to have ongoing Evang. training
- C. Discipleship centered on coming to church SS; Small groups must become foundational

Attraction: Invite/accommodate to attract people to see an event; Children's homes

Engagement: Offer ministry to folks; Start sports leagues; Mentoring kids

Infiltration: Deploy believers in community; Join company softball team; Foster parenting

2. Less essential functions and activities have been stopped

- A. Barnacles are being removed and don't need to be added back!! Tough calls!
- B. People vote with the feet and monetary gift; Zooming replacing long commutes!
- C. Ask hard questions of what is production results and what isn't! Not "busyness"
(Academic conferences cancelled in 2021; Anyone miss them? Bring back?)
(Where are we spending our money? Pres. Trips? Not a one to one correlation!

3. Rediscovering of pastoral care as a core function

- A. 3 purposes of the pastor: Lead * Teach * Care (We don't co all equally)
- B. CEO model is being reversed: Care * Teach * Lead

4. Importance of stewardship underscored

- A. Stewardship development (training) vs. Fund raising (emotional appeals)
(Attendance down but giving the same; Those who left, mostly weren't giving)
- B. Stewardship training creates stable home finances and stable church finances
- C. New ways of gathering offerings have been developed
- D. Challenge of rediscovering the offering as an act of worship. Biblical gatherings included offerings!
("It's offering time." Applause erupts! Short testimony of a family re: giving –live or video– then pray.)
(Highlight the impact of giving with a story, video, testimony, etc.)

5. Creativity unleashed and technology used in new ways

- A. Electronic communication for the first time
- B. Online Bible studies; Devotionals; Prayer meetings
- C. Church members (elderly) now learning to use new forms of technology!
(Monday night prayer meeting grew from 20 to 125 when it went to ZOOM)
- D. Here to stay! Blessing those disconnected by travel, distance, illness, parenting, work schedules, etc.
(Treat live streaming and Zooming as a second service, campus, or video overflow room!

Managing Conflict in Your Church * Jeff Iorg, President, Golden Gate Seminary

My books are 50% off to you! Email me. * Shadow Christians is my latest (unnamed heroes!)

Email me re: a cohort for leadership training for AMS or executive deomon. leaders.

Unprecedented levels of church conflict! (Masks. Fist fights. Elections; U.S. flag & Cross mean same thing!)
Where is all this anger coming from? Anger rises from conflict. ANGER is often rooted in threat or perceived threat, and/or rooted in stages of grief due to loss and threat

Myths:

1. Churches are supposed to be one, big, happy family. (Most families are not happy)
2. Really good churches don't have open conflict (Growing churches have inevitable conflict; growing pains)
3. Committed, mature believers don't have open conflict (All believers still carry taint of sin)
4. Personnel decisions at church are not divisive (They're employees, not members)
5. When church conflict is resolved, everyone is satisfied (Only pastors can leave, not deacon or members!?)

Biblical stories of church conflict:

1. Philippians 4:2-3a (Church members get crossways; Women helping Paul re: struggles)
2. Galatians 2:11-14 (Peter vs. Paul; Big time leaders can have conflict; Can be public and intense)
3. Acts 15:36-41 (Paul vs. Barnabas over John Mark; Sharp disagreement leading to separation)

Truths about conflict:

1. Good churches with committed leaders will sometimes have conflict
2. Church leaders and church have to make tough decisions that lead to conflict
3. Tough decisions will lead to some departures
4. Even when separations occur, our bond in Jesus Christ remains
5. Reconciliation and recovery of relationships can still take place (even years later)

Strategies to deal with conflict:

1. Anticipate conflict — it will happen eventually. Why?
 - A. Shock because we over-protect young leaders from seeing current conflict behind the scenes
 - B. Redeemed sinners; imperfect leaders; varying maturity; diverse opinions; emotional baggage
 - C. Teach about conflict when there is relative peace. Preemptive training; Get book to study
 - D. Preach on conflict when you come to Biblical stories about conflict
 - E. Watch the horizon to hopefully minimize potential conflict. We struggle with conflict aversion & denial.
Don't seek permission about executive decisions, but don't blind-side them publicly either!
2. Address issues intentionally
 - A. Deal with people specifically and directly, not generically and publicly from the pulpit
 - B. Approach them at the right place at the right time (not in the parking lot after meeting; Lunch later)
 - C. Discern genuine issues driving the conflict
 - D. Facilitate honest dialogue and prayer about genuine issues
 - E. Document agreed to results and future steps (Let's shake on it. Let's pray. Write in our Bibles.
 - F. Don't ignore conflict; Don't inflate it. Don't preach on it too early
3. Resolve conflict appropriately
 - A. Reach best possible conclusion, and not always with agreement or painlessness
 - B. Reach a conclusion that facilitates kingdom-focused work (Paul & Barnabus pressed on after conflict)
Biblical options: Stay and work together or Separate and work apart
Unbiblical options: Stay and keep fighting Leave an quick serving God

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4. Accept and be content with mixed outcomes (If you don't, your doomed to perpetual frustration)
 - A. Some happy and stay, some unhappy and leave; Collateral damage is inevitable (kids)
 - B. "In every resignation, there is some road kill." (Lou Saban). Help pastors with personnel issues.
5. Help pastors to move on after less than perfect outcomes
 - A. Stop revisiting the conflict and allow the memory to fade
 - B. Shift your focus from the conflict back to the mission
 - C. Ultimate goal is kingdom-expansion, not perfect conflict resolution.

Evening Worship Message

"Leading from the Outside In" (Acts 11:19-) * Jeff Iorg, President

INTRO: To me, DOMs or AMSs are the "glue guys." Seminary presidents and AMSs have one thing in common: our rolls are not in the Bible. Function yes, role not.
My book, *The Case for Antioch*, is based on Acts 11 where leaders were from the outside.

1. Be a leader who innovates.

Anonymous leaders preaching to Gentiles for the first time in history of the world! Innovators!!!
I want to challenge you to be, and support, those who would be innovators.
Cecil Sims empowered me to be an innovator church planter in the NW U.S. Great man!
He invited young pastors in 1993 to think about leadership in the 21st century.

2. Be a leader who risks.

- A. Barnabus was an outsider sent from Jerusalem as an inquisitor first, then an encourager
- B. He encouraged innovative vision and work. "Let's embrace the Antioch church!"
- C. Support people who makes courageous decisions and bold choices. (Pastor in San Francisco!)

3. Be a leader who builds (v. 25)

- A. They were doing church everywhere in homes, by the lake, in the city... multiple small groups at first!
- B. "Large numbers" were a complicated ministry and congregation... scattered everywhere for a year!
- C. Organized AND Organic church growth is key. Complementary, not Competitive.
- D. Have a sense of Legacy Leadership, building something bigger than you.
- E. Think of yourself as a transitional leader or interim president/pastor.

4. Be a leader who is courageous

- A. Agabus sent to Antioch to do some fund raising, regarding a famine, for their critics in Jerusalem!!
- B. Let's be courageous. Do the right thing racially, socially, economically . . .
- C. As an outsider, we can sometimes speak more powerfully than an insider can.

5. Be a leader who mentors

- A. Train other leaders to work with you, and then let them take over some day. (Barnabas and Paul)
- B. Train more diverse leaders. (Lucious, called Niger; etc.) (Asians, Latino, African-Americans, etc.)