



1 2 3 4 Issues Churches Can't Ignore

PROCESS

streamline

simple

Complex

change

Today is today, and it has already changed since yesterday. Everyone will agree that we live in a morphing world — a world in constant transformation.



Topper Reid

The iPod you bought last week will not hold as many tunes as the one that came out today; subjects once considered taboo in conversation have now become commonplace at Starbucks; and flying commercial air is more complicated

than it was before. These are just a few of the experiences we face each morning as we begin a new day.

The world we live in is changing by the minute. As a result of all this transition, the world of church is changing too. There is so much happening in church life, whether we realize it or not. I hope this brief article will

enable you to see or simply remind you of some of the issues churches must address. I have chosen only four issues, because I think these are among the most pressing.

1. The first issue is **process**. Churches must formulate a simple process or strategy to lead their people on a journey of becoming a spiritually mature Christian. This process includes a plan for worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and personal missions. There is another article in this magazine devoted to this whole issue (page 12) of deprogramming our churches from the complex institutions they have become to a more simple church that focuses on a simple process. The “KISS” strategy still applies. At my church, our motto, vision statement, mission statement, slogan is “Learning the message and living the message.” That’s it. We want our people to learn God’s Word and live God’s Word. Why does church have to be so hard? As Thom Rainer and Eric

staffing
 small groups
*Child Care
 or Discipleship?*
 curriculum
 choice
 accountability

Geiger say, “Why can’t church be simple anymore?” We must make our process simple so that people understand what we are trying to accomplish. Only then can they embrace and apply the strategy in their personal lives.

2. The second issue to grapple with is **how to manage or create small groups outside of church**. Have we made this issue too much of an over-rated deal? One thing is for sure, home groups are here to stay; and we must embrace this strategy and decide what principles work best. The biggest problem I see is that some mainstream churches view this strategy as sinful. They pass it off as too far out there, even as a possible future strategy. Because we can’t wrap this issue up in a neat package and make it work is no reason to dismiss it as a possibility. We must figure this out. There are issues such as open or closed groups; reproducing new groups; accountability; curriculum; babysitting; when to meet; duration a group should meet together before starting a new group; enlisting and training leaders; and how many times a year the group will meet. These are just a few of the challenges, and many

of these already have good solutions. But home groups are not wrapped up in a neat package just yet.

3. Another concern many churches view as extreme is the **multi-site church movement**. We define multi-site churches as one church in many locations. The churches that are doing this are viewed by many traditional churches as radical and out of bounds. I hear people saying, “I can’t believe anybody would watch a video recording of a sermon preached last week in a high school gym and actually like that type of presentation.” But like it or not, people are getting saved, and their lives are being transformed. More and more churches are popping up where this same scenario is repeated over and over again.

These churches are going where the people are, and they are taking the Gospel to them. I know one thing: We do not have enough churches in America to reach all the lost people for Christ. There are now more lost people in the United States than there are Christians, and the United States has become our biggest and most important mission field. We may not agree with this strategy, but at least these churches are trying to do something about reaching lost people. Technology will only make this strategy more mainstream, so we must determine how we will integrate it within our church.

4. The last topic of concern I will discuss is **leading our people to become missional, creating a kingdom mindset vs. a volunteer mindset**. Our people must take the Gospel to the streets and live the Word

out in their daily lives. It is just not going on Tuesday night visitation, feeding the homeless once a year as a small group project, or volunteering for a weeklong mission trip in Brazil. Becoming missional means living out the Gospel every day in your daily traffic patterns. You are at “visitation” in the produce section at the grocery store, and you take the opportunity to minister to a friend or a stranger. You share your faith with a coworker over a cup of coffee at Starbucks. Or, you babysit an unsaved friend’s child while they are at a doctor’s appointment. We must lead our people to be on mission every day and look for the opportunities God is placing in their paths. The church is the people, and the people must live the message in the world. Becoming missional means it is a part of your DNA, and you live it out every day. ♦

videocasts
 closed
 groups
 TIME
 music
 venues
 simulcasts
 child protection
 policies
 live campus
 pastor
 strategy