

Pk's Perspectives... Ten Predictions About The Future Church

TEN PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE CHURCH (by Carey Nieuwhof) Predictions...

really? Okay, before we get going, a few things. I realize making predictions can be a dangerous thing. Maybe even a bit ridiculous. But I want to offer a few thoughts because I'm passionate about the mission of the church. So, borne out of a love for the gathered church, I offer a few thoughts. Consider it thinking in pencil, not ink. While no one's *really* sure of what's ahead, talking about it at least allows us to position our churches for impact in a changing world.

1. THE POTENTIAL TO GAIN IS STILL GREATER THAN THE POTENTIAL TO LOSE Every time there is a change in history, there's potential to gain and potential to lose. I believe the potential to gain is greater than the potential to lose. Why? As despairing or as cynical as some might be (sometimes understandably) over the church's future, we have to remind ourselves that the church was Jesus' idea, not ours.

It will survive our missteps and whatever cultural trends happen around us. We certainly don't always get things right, but Christ has an incredible history of pulling together Christians in every generation to share his love for a broken world.

As a result, the reports of the church's death are greatly exaggerated.

2. CHURCHES THAT LOVE THEIR MODEL MORE THAN THE MISSION WILL DIE

That said, many individual congregations and some entire denominations won't make it. The difference will be between those who cling to the mission and those who cling to the model.

When the car was invented, it quick took over from the horse and buggy. Horse and buggy manufacturers were relegated to boutique status and many went under, but human transportation actually exploded. Suddenly average people could travel at a level they never could before. The mission is travel. The model is a buggy, or car, or motorcycle, or jet.

Look at the changes in the publishing, music and even photography industry in the last few years. See a trend? The mission is reading. It's music. It's photography. The model always shifts....moving from things like 8 tracks, cassettes and CDs to MP3s and now streaming audio and video. Companies that show innovation around the mission (Apple, Samsung) will always beat companies that remain devoted to the method (Kodak).

Churches need to stay focused on the mission (leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus) and be exceptionally innovative in our model.

3. THE GATHERED CHURCH IS HERE TO STAY Read the comments on this blog or any other church leader blog and you would think that some Christians believe the best thing to do is to give up on Christian gatherings of any kind. This is naive.

While some will leave, it does not change the fact that the church has *always* gathered because the church is inherently communal. Additionally, what we can do gathered together far surpasses what we can do alone. Which is why there will always be an organized church of some form. So while our gatherings might shift and look different than they do today, Christians will always gather together to do more than we ever could on our own.

I will share the remainder of Carey's predictions in next week's newsletter. As you read these predictions, try to consider how they might relate to FBC Cochran. We would do well to imitate the goal of our Senior Adult Ministry - leaving for those behind us a legacy of vibrant Christian faith and energetic church ministry. Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.