



The 20th vs 21st Century Church

Observations by Marion Aldridge, Coordinator
 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina
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ISSUE		Church in 20th century	Church in 21st century
1	Activities	Age-graded	Intergenerational; don't separate families
2	Advertising	Yellow pages/ Saturday newspaper	Internet links to church website
3	America	Mission senders	Mission field
4	Appearances	Church is a place to see and be seen.	"Don't waste my time."
5	Attendance at church	Every time the doors are open	When it is convenient
6	Automobiles driven to church	Four family members in one car	Four family members in three cars
7	Bible translation	King James Version	Whatever
8	Bottom line	Church, Bible, Denomination or "Christianity"	Jesus or "love"
9	Brand loyalty	Yes	"What have you done for me lately?"
10	Cause and effect	Deuteronomy: Effect logically follows cause	Job: Stuff happens.
11	Centralization	Yes	No — <i>The World is Flat</i> by Thomas Friedman
12	Change	Resists	Resists, though it is expected and necessary
13	Children	"To be seen and not heard"	"To be seen, heard and obeyed!"
14	Christian growth from...	One church, one denomination	Multiple churches and sources including para-church and Internet
15	Coffee	Maxwell House in a 40-cup urn, small Styrofoam cups and powdered creamer (YUK!)	Starbucks Café Latte, Frappuccino, Grande Mocha, etc. (YUM!)
16	Comfort level	Same ol' same ol', predictable, comfortable, hymns	Edgy, unpredictable, uncomfortable, drama
17	Communication	Printed materials and group announcements	Internet, e-mail, text messaging, FaceBook, MySpace, blogs, I-pod, MP3
18	Congregational governance	Committees, votes, lengthy processes	"Just do it."
19	Congregational life	At the church building	In the community, over the Internet

- 1) These are, for the most part, observations rather than evaluations.
- 2) 21st century approaches are not necessarily better or worse; mostly, they're just different.

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20	Conversation	Let's don't talk about hard things.	Let's talk about everything.
21	Conversion motivation	Heaven and hell	Life issues: marriage, depression, children, bettering self and community
22	Converted from what?	Cheating on tests, disobeying parents	Alcoholic? Skeptic? Stripper? Drug abuser?
23	Costs	Keep it cheap because the church pays	User fees for curriculum, camps, coffee
24	Cultural trust of church	Church trusted	Church not trusted
25	Decision making	Roberts Rules of Order (winners and losers)	Consensus (attempt to find common ground)
26	Denomination	Loyal and lifelong	Don't care
27	Discipleship model	Classroom learning/lectures	One-on-one, mentoring, coaching, small groups
28	Division in churches	Along denominational lines	Along secular political lines
29	Doctrine	Apostles creed/ Indoctrination/ Catechism/ Dogma	Mix and match/Learn and discover/Can be very naïve/no historical support required
30	Dress	Dress up in Sunday best	Casual
31	During worship	Hymn books, bulletins	Power Point projector, big screen for videos
32	Ethnicity	Always one ethnicity/culture	Multi-ethnic/multi-cultural okay
33	Evangelism	Assent to information and join the church	Relational: "I like who you are."
34	Expectations	"Everybody" knows that...	"I didn't get the memo..."
35	Facts	Untruth was often unchallenged and authority unquestioned	Hoax-busters/immediate verification of data via cell phones and Blackberries
36	Flexibility	Systems and structures highly valued	Spontaneity highly valued
37	Generosity	Yes, consistent, tithe	Yes, but inconsistent, give to pet projects
38	Giftedness	Certain gifts most valued: preaching, teaching, music	All gifts valued: gardening, cooking, coaching, singing, building houses, painting, writing
39	Great	Commission	Commandments
40	Group size	Bigger is always better	Size does not matter, as long as there is intimacy
41	Guilt	Often, and sometimes manufactured	Occasionally but less shamed; resists hanging onto guilt
42	Health	Build a hospital	Provide mental health counseling

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43	Healthy lifestyle	Heart attacks by age 65—cigarettes, Krispy Kreme
44	Hellfire and Damnation	"Now that's good preaching."
45	Homosexuality	Hidden, otherwise, mostly hostile, unless you were gay, then guilt, depression, anger, confusion
46	Hospital and bereavement visits	Only a visit from the pastor "counts."
47	How work gets done	Self-appointed teams based on giftedness
48	Information flow	Up, down, sideways, diagonal, across the room, across the Internet
49	Information sharing	Reluctance of church visitors to give name, phone number and address expecting follow-up visit.
50	Innovations	Drop what isn't working; willing to try new things
51	Jesus	"Search for the life-transforming Jesus"
52	Labels	"Believers"/"Christians"
53	Language (religious)	Pious (blood of the Lamb, saved, redeemed)
54	Language (secular)	Therapeutic (addiction, codependent)
55	Leadership	Podcast, Google, Text Messaging
56	Literature	Player/Coach/Coordinator/Servant
57	Litigation	Multiple sources, even secular movies
58	Meetings	Common, even in church
59	Membership	Random; whatever fits my schedule
60	Missions	Participate without joining (Bible says to make disciples not to make members.)
61	Model for Discipleship	Pray, send others and give money to support
		Go (get on a bus), pray and give
		Spiritual Formation

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62	Money	Earn it, save it.
63	Motivation	Guilt, parents, cultural expectations, duty
64	Movies	White Christmas/Sound of Music/Star Wars
65	Musical Instruments in Worship	Organ/piano
66	Mystery	Prefers clear answers
67	Name Recognition	Billy Graham
68	Non-Christian religions	Considered "ungodly"
69	Numbers	Nickels, noses, budgets, tithers
70	Opinions about "Oughts" and "Shoulds"	Many, especially about childhood faith habits and memories
71	Options	Either/Or
72	Organizations	Clubs, associations, denominations, national and international
73	Other faith groups	Denominationally loyal
74	Pages	Already full of words, telling us what to think and feel
75	Parenting	Parent is the authority
76	Pastor	Superhuman--All things to all people; all the answers; preaches 50 times per year (at least)
77	Permission	Earned
78	Perspective	Long term
79	Place/Location/Buildings/Facility	Proud of "our" building, sanctuary
80	Power and Control	White European males in positions of authority
81	Preacher(s), Teacher(s)	One primary communicator
82	Priority on...	Programs
		It will be there when I need it.
		Internal, good feelings, meaningful service, fun
		Lord of the Rings/Harry Potter/Monster's Ball
		Drums/synthesizer/or don't care
		Comfortable with paradox and ambiguity
		Rick Warren/Joel Osteen/Bono
		Even if there is disagreement, there is respect.
		Don't care; whose life has been changed? Experiential
		Some opinions, and more will come, but not too many yet
		Both/And
		Do your own thing. Local.
		Ecumenical and interfaith
		Empty, allowing us to journal our own thoughts and feelings
		Parents try to be "best friends"
		Human, equipper; allowed to be wrong and make mistakes. Allows laity to lead worship.
		"It is easier to get forgiveness than permission."
		Short term
		Doesn't matter: movie theater or shopping center
		Up for grabs; will follow "authentic" leadership
		Multiple (even though one may be the charismatic leader)
		Relationships/People

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83	Relevance to Daily Life	Don't get too specific, except on approved topics.
84	Salvation	The more practical the better: sex, money, whatever.
85	Science and Faith	From eternal damnation to heavenly bliss
86	Scripture	Either/Or
87	Seating	Importance of doctrinal definitions (even if you don't read the Bible) such as infallibility, inspiration; interpreted by approved curriculum
88	Seminary Education of Pastors	Pews (Easum: "only in courtrooms and funeral homes.")
89	Sequence	Professional degrees expected; Advanced degree preferred
90	Sermon and Sunday School Illustrations	Behaving, then Believing, then Belonging (David Holland)
92	Sermons	Classical literature, famous historical characters, metaphor, parables, testimony
93	Sin	Parent to child communication: You should, you must, and you ought not! Never!
94	Stability	"I am more important than anything or anyone else."
95	Staff performance evaluation	Values stability/Hates risk
96	Sunday School lessons on...	"Here Today, Gone Tomorrow."
97	Technology	Goal is to get rid of "losers."
98	Testimonies	Sin, miracles, prayer, Melchizedek, Hezekiah
		"Why does the church need a FAX? Why do we need a copier? A VCR?"
		How can a church function without a FAX, copiers, a DVD player, a website, and e-mail addresses of members? Without Power Point? Without Blue Tooth?
		Of your conversion experience, years or decades ago
		Of what happened last week or yesterday or this morning

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99	Theology	Systematic	Contextual
100	Tradition	Valued	"What have you done for me lately?"
101	Verb	Passive (see Seating)	Active (see Missions)
102	Visible leadership	Older people who have earned trust	Whoever is willing to lead, including younger unknowns
103	Which foot forward?	Best	Flawed: "Don't waste my time with pretense."
104	Wine, beer, mixed drinks, dancing, card games, tobacco	Big deal	"You've got to be kidding?"
105	Wives	Power through their husbands	Power with their husbands
106	Women	Restricted roles	Any role is possible
107	Words, Words, Words	Keep talking: Sunday morning, Wednesday night	Show me! Actions more important than words.



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