**“MISSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A POST PANDEMIC WORLD”**

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Recently I participated in a panel discussion organized by Classis Alberta North of the CRCNA. The event was entitled “REBOOT” and explored what ministry may look like in a post-pandemic world. Questions focused on whether congregations should anticipate the full return of membership, whether the pandemic will change the way members relate to the church, and whether the church must adapt to thrive in a changing environment. One question initially posed to me was whether I saw any new missional opportunities flowing from the pandemic. I offered the following five possibilities for consideration.

**Here are some missional opportunities flowing from the pandemic:**

**Missional Opportunity 1: COVID INCREASED PEOPLE’S DESIRE FOR COMMUNITY**

Isolation has created a passion for community. There is a tangible giddiness of togetherness evident as people begin to regather. Our missional opportunity is recognizing that the church is God’s best idea of true community and inviting everyone who is longing for joyful, intentional relationships to participate in the bride of Christ.This will demand, of course, that the church be on her best hospitable behavior.

**Missional Opportunity 2: COVID INCREASED THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL WORLDS**

A year and a half ago churches, for the most part, knew next to nothing about on-line ministry. Today, most churches are semi-fluent in communicating digitally. The amazing thing about this life on-line is that it is a boundaryless environment. We can be connected around the world simultaneously. Our missional opportunity is to leverage the new “phygital world” (physical + digital) to reach those who are on a journey to God both locally and globally.

**Missional Opportunity 3: COVID (SADLY) INCREASED TRIBALISM**

Someone pointed out that this pandemic is the first societal challenge that divided more than united. Our missional opportunity is to provide an alternative to tribalism by being Gospel focused and calling people to the ethics and practices of the Kingdom. Jesus demonstrated this Kingdom focus by calling a tax collector (Matthew) and a zealot (Simon) into a shared community committed to God-centered aspirations.

**Missional Opportunity 4: COVID INCREASED SOCIETY’S DISCONNECTION FROM RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

A two-decade trend among North American adults disconnecting from religious organizations was greatly enhanced by the isolation of COVID-19. Today, less than half of all adults say they are members of a church or faith community. For millennials it’s 36%. Our missional opportunity is to reach those who are one-step disconnected from the church seeking to reconnect them while they still possess some level of faith memory and practice.

**Missional Opportunity 5**: **COVID INCREASED THE GULF BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS**

There are sectors of society that went gain busters during the pandemic. The rich truly became richer but the poor have become poorer. The growing divide between the haves and have nots grew into a chasm since COVID. The missional opportunity is to recognize that the church has been called to serve the least and the last. The church has been called to be the voice of justice for the oppressed. We are called to live like Jesus who came to set the captive free.

What missional opportunities would you add to this short list? The whole of the REBOOT conference can be viewed on the Classis Alberta North website located at <http://www.classisalbertanorth.ca/home-missions>. The Center for Church Renewal seeks to serve leaders who are renewing churches. Visit churchrenew.org to see the various ways we are serving churches for the purpose of developing intentional missional congregations that make more and better disciples.