

MINISTRY OF DISCIPLESHIP





Lecture 10
The Virtual Reality –
Part 1

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THE CLIMATE WE FIND OURSELVES IN

- In today's culture, there are two options for people to attend church, it is either physically or virtually. The recent pandemic has thrown the reality of the virtual church into the forefront of many ministries, making it a critical option that many were unprepared for.
- As a point of clarity, the physical church will always exist, but in a culture that is hyper-connected, hyper-entertained, and hyper-serviced, a church will need to face some harsh realities if it wants to reach people for the Kingdom.



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- Let's consider the physical church for a minute. Do any of these words describe your church?
 - Boring.
 - Irrelevant.
 - Uninspiring.
 - Stale.
 - Aging.
 - Few young families.



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- If the church has the greatest message in the world, then why do we dare deliver it in a lacklustre way and why would we think that anyone would be attracted to it?
- It's a must in today's world. So as far as the physical church goes, there are two things that will make them thrive into the future. They will be able to deliver...
 1. A great experience.
 2. A great community.



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- It's an inevitable consequence of our culture. I'm not talking about excellence or "seeker" oriented ministry as a method for reaching people, but as a normal expectation by those who continue to attend.
- For a church to deliver a great experience and a great community the key to it all comes down to authenticity.



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FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL

- The key target for virtual ministry is engagement.
- It usually takes a dynamic physical church in order to create a dynamic virtual church.
- If you have difficulty creating the real thing with real people in real time, it will be difficult to create the kind of virtual church that embodies authentic ministry engagement.



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FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL

- The physical church will be the proving ground for the virtual church. Again, if you cannot deliver quality physically, you will have trouble delivering quality virtually. Church is people-oriented, not product-oriented. In time, I believe that will change, but for now I think the physical and virtual will need to develop in parallel in order to deliver excellence in both horizons.
- The virtual church has the potential to reach and impact far more people than the physical church.



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FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL

- The virtual church, if done well, could reach demographic groups that would have been impossible otherwise.
- Here is what we are not talking about when I talk about the virtual church. It is not:
 - putting audio or video sermons online.
 - having a website that has links to community events, updates, or the ability to contribute.



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FROM PHYSICAL TO VIRTUAL

- The virtual church will certainly have these elements, but it should be so much more.
- It should be a way of building an online community that feels deep connection to others in the online community if not to the physical church itself.
- Here is one of the more powerful truths about investing in a virtual church. The majority of people check out a church's website long before they make a decision to attend. In fact, the church foyer has long ago moved from being a physical only space, to a virtual one (website, social media).



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VIRTUAL CHURCH ESSENTIALS

1. You will need dynamic teaching.
2. You will need inspiring worship.
3. You will need engaging social media.
4. You will need responsive and dedicated staff and volunteers.
5. You will need to think mobile.
6. You will need a strategy for building community.



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VIRTUAL CHURCH ESSENTIALS

- They say that technology is the great equalizer. What was at one time very expensive and reserved for only those who could afford it is now available to the masses.
- This is especially being realized in smaller to medium sized churches. The era of internet and technological accessibility is giving churches a broader platform that never would have been available to them in ages past.
- Dying churches see their target audience as those within their congregation while thriving churches see it as everyone else.
- Finally, this is not an either/or proposition but a both/and one. The way forward is both the physical and virtual church together. In many ways, we need to think of them as one “church body”, not two.