

Spring CG Leader Gathering



What's next?

Two big trends in the world right now:

- Decentralization
- Fragmentation

Decentralization

The movement of power and authority away from core institutions

Examples:

Movie industry -> YouTube

National currency -> Bitcoin (cryptocurrency)

Decentralization in the church

Not all bad.

At it's best: encourages accountability of church leadership, authentic local churches, and personal responsibility for discipleship and evangelism.

At it's worst: encourages distrust of church leadership, separation from local churches, and destructive deconstruction.

Upcoming event:

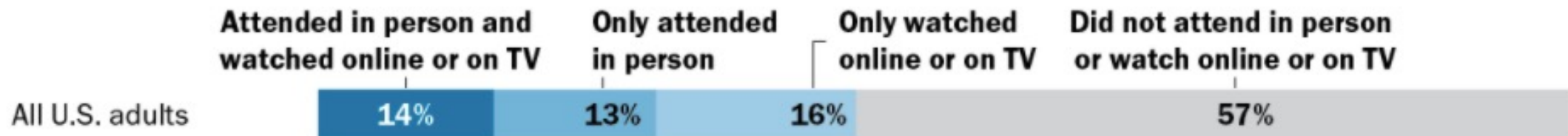
Life Class: Deconstruction

Sunday, August 28, 7-8:30pm

Example of Decentralization:
Live streaming

Roughly one-in-five Americans who typically attend services monthly have participated virtually but not in person in last month

Among U.S. adults, % who in the last month ...



All adults who typically attend monthly



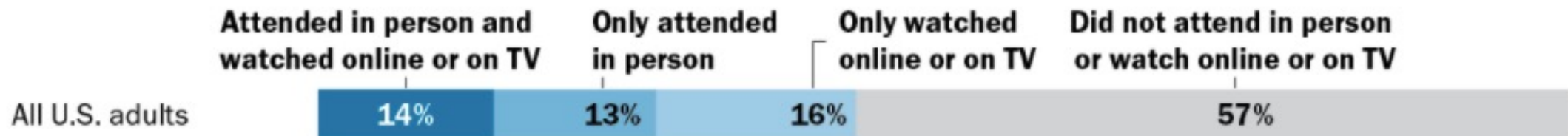
source:

Pew Research Center

March 2022 survey - 10,441 responses

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All adults who typically attend monthly



For a CG of 12 with zoom option:

2-6 people on zoom, 1-2 people have left your group

For a CG of 12 without zoom option:

4-5 people have left your group or don't feel comfortable attending

Decentralization in the church:
Loosing people

Fragmentation

Increased tribalism and polarization leading to a more contentious public sphere and an absence of civil discourse.

(you don't need any examples)

Fragmentation

Think of the Tower of Babel
(Gen. 11:1-9)

source:

Jonathan Haidt

“Why the Past 10 Years of American Life
Have Been Uniquely Stupid”

The Atlantic, April 11, 2022



Fragmentation in the church:
Loss of unity

Two organizational efforts:

- Pastoral care through CG Coaches
- Membership Renewal



Two points of encouragement:

- God's perspective on history
- The strength of CGs



God's perspective on history

To God, macros are micro.

Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD,
or what man shows him his counsel?

Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as the dust on the scales. – Isaiah 40:13, 15

God's perspective on history

History of the church

God's perspective on history

There is nothing new under the sun. – Ecc. 1:9

And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. – Matthew 24:6-10

God's perspective on history

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done!" – Revelation 21:1-6a

The strength of CGs: Dealing with Decentralization

Dealing with Decentralization

“Great preaching is needed and required. So is meaningful content. But again, everyone you’ve reached or are trying to reach has access to more content than they can possibly process.

What is deeply scarce right now are community and connection.

...people are more isolated than ever. That’s playing out the crisis in mental health, rising addictions and new [tribalism]. Authentic, loving and genuine community are more scarce than they have ever been in our lifetime.

The competitive advantage of the local church isn’t content, it’s community and connection. Every church should be running to fill that hole.” – Carey Nieuwhof, “The New Scarcity”

People want community

Between January to March this year we received 77 connect cards

> 52 (67%) were interested in CG

The strength of CGs: Dealing with Fragmentation

Fragmentation

“Social scientists have identified at least three major forces that collectively bind together successful democracies: social capital (extensive social networks with high levels of trust), strong institutions, and shared stories.”

source:

Jonathan Haidt

“Why the Past 10 Years of American Life
Have Been Uniquely Stupid”

The Atlantic, April 11, 2022



Right now, people need what God
has to offer them through your CG.

Focus for the summer:
Take some SIPS

Focus for the summer

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:42-47

Take some SIPS

CG gatherings/events that are

- **Social**
- **Invitational**
- **Physical**
- **Spiritual**

God's word: the axis

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Invitational

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Physical

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Spiritual

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Event/effort examples

- Eat together:
 - Add a meal before group, even just once a month
 - shared meal > BYOD
 - Cookouts, Memorial Day / 4th of July parties
- Have fun together:
 - Intentionally relaxed schedule
 - Beach trip
 - Vintage Socials – ex. June 2 sand volleyball

Social, Invitational, Physical, Spiritual intersections

Examples:

- Past: Lent Feasting Liturgies
- Group worshipping on Sunday together.
- Hold hands when you pray as a group or lay hands on someone.
- Fun, lowkey environments to which you can invite Love Ones.

Take some SIPS

Commitment: Vintage will give \$50 to help your group do a fun meal or outing together between now and August 14.

Requirement: someone who doesn't belong to your group has to be invited.

Miscellanea

- Rosters
- Recommendations for CG Leader Training
 - next training starts July 10
- Resources
- Childcare stipend for CGs – email me if you haven't
- Kids in CG – kayla.pleasants@vintagenc.com

Q&A