

The Christian and the Future of the Church

The First Declaration

- **Jesus is about to affirm His messianic mission to save the world by establishing His church and dying on the cross.**

- **Matthew 16:13-20 - When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” 14 So they said, “Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.**

- ***The church that Jesus refers to above is the body of believers which will gather together after his resurrection. This is both a prophetic statement and a divine decree.**

When Did The Church Begin?

- The Church begins at Pentecost. This event brings all the words of Jesus to fulfillment. The Apostle Peter preaches the gospel (“rock”). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is experienced. The gathering of the believers is visible.

- Acts 2:40-47 - And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- All these things are similar to what Jesus did during the last passover meal. Breaking of bread, singing biblical hymns, reading the word of the law, and sacrificing His life for others.

- *How to remember the church’s activities: If it was taught by Jesus in the Gospels, practiced by the apostles in the book of Acts, and exhorted in the letters to the churches, then we as Christians are to continue observing those things today.

Where is the Church?

- **The church has two aspects to it. There is the visible church and there is the invisible church.**
- **The visible church is seen in the local and regional community of *professing* believers:**
- **Colossians 4:15 - Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that *is* in his house.**
- **Acts 8:1-3 - Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial,* and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.**
- **The invisible church is the spiritual church of *true* believers around the whole world:**
- **Galatians 1:13 - For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it.**

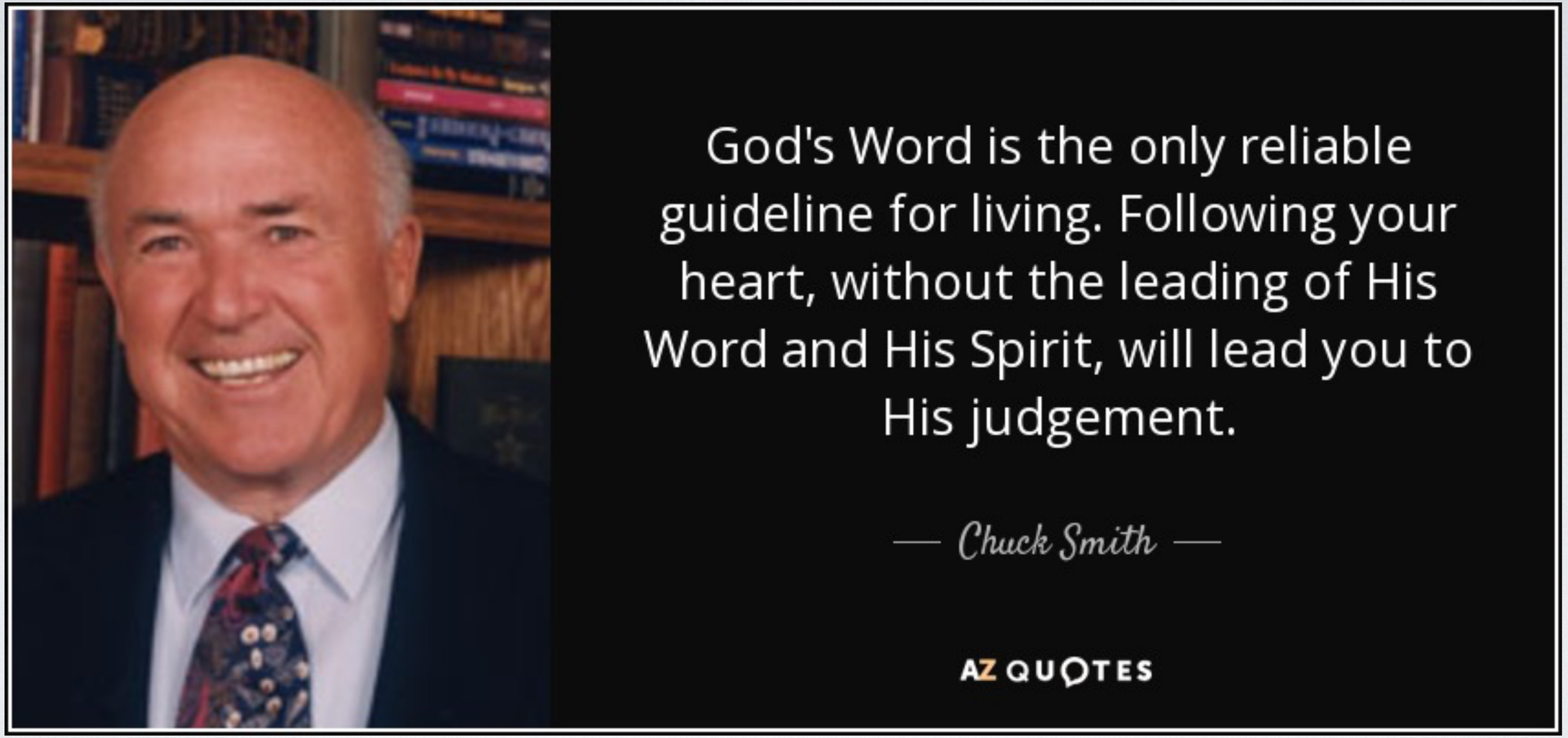
Church Government - A Theocracy

- **The Old Testament shows a Theocracy, God governs Israel, and the New Testament continued this practice as Christ governs the Church:**

- **Ephesians 1:22-23 -And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, [23] which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.**

- **Ephesians 5:22-26 - Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. [23] For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. [24] Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. [25] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, [26] that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.**

- **Israel is the bride of God. The Church is the bride of Christ. Those who fought against Israel were attacking God directly. Those who persecute the church are attacking Christ directly.**


God's Word is the only reliable guideline for living. Following your heart, without the leading of His Word and His Spirit, will lead you to His judgement.
— Chuck Smith —
AZ QUOTES

Should we pay attention to current events?

- **1 Chronicles 12:31-32 -** of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, who were designated by name to come and make David king; 32 of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command.

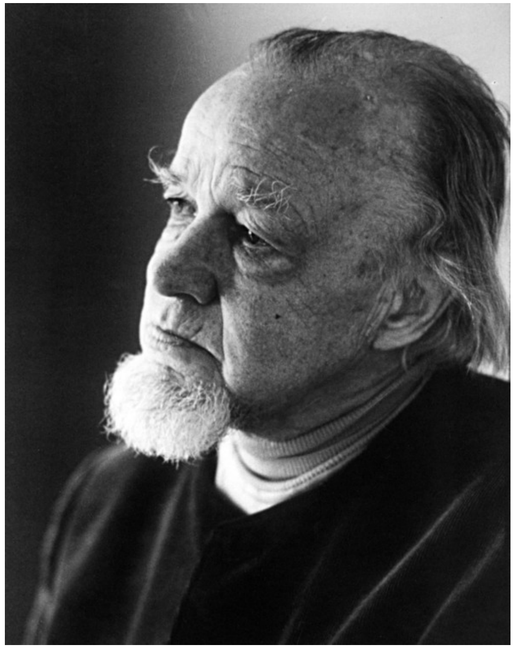
- **Proverbs 27:23 -** Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, *And* attend to your herds.

- **2 Corinthians 13:5 -** Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you [a]are disqualified.

The Collapse of Rome

- **Rome: Rome was established in 753 bc as a formal city-state. Its history can be divided into three governmental periods: Regal (753–510 bc), Republic (510–31 bc), and Imperial (31 bc—ad 476).**
- **During the period of the Republic, a span of about 500 years, Rome saw the abolition of its monarchy, the establishment of a republican political system, and finally the fall of the Republic under the weight of the increasing internal conflicts. At the end of the Republic, Octavian, the emperor Augustus, established an imperial government that survived five centuries in the West and fifteen in the East.**
- **So why did Rome collapse?**
- **Theologian Francis Schaeffer said: "Rome did not collapse from outside pressure but from inward weakness…not from outward forces like the barbarians but from inward rottenness."**



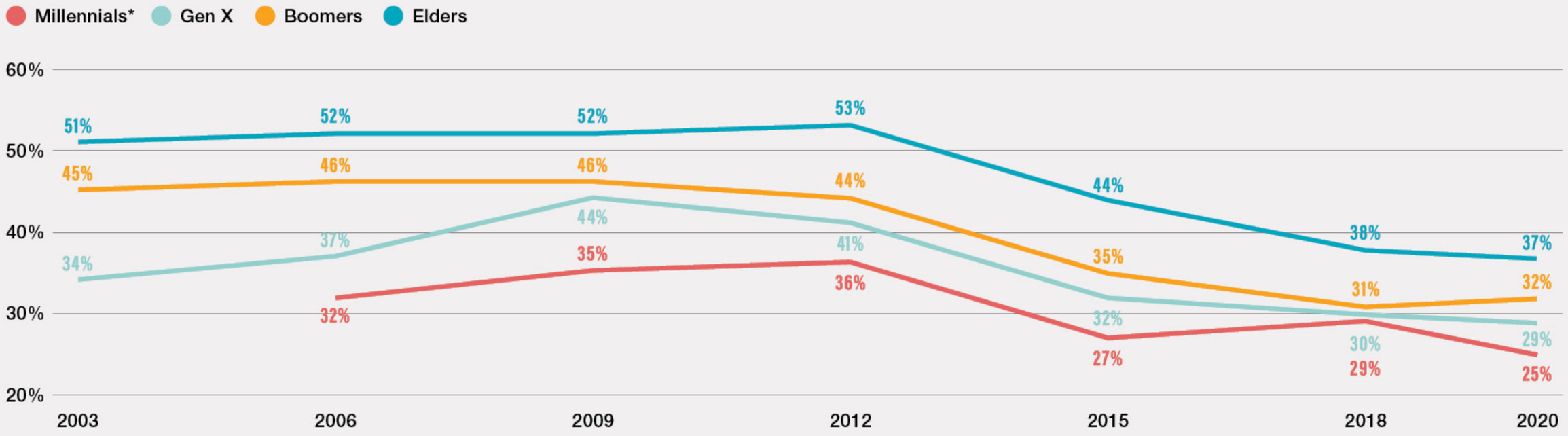


Johnson, John C. "Rome, Republic of." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, edited by John D. Barry, et al.. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.)

Does the world influence the church?

WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE, BY GENERATION: 2003-2020

Barna STATE OF THE CHURCH

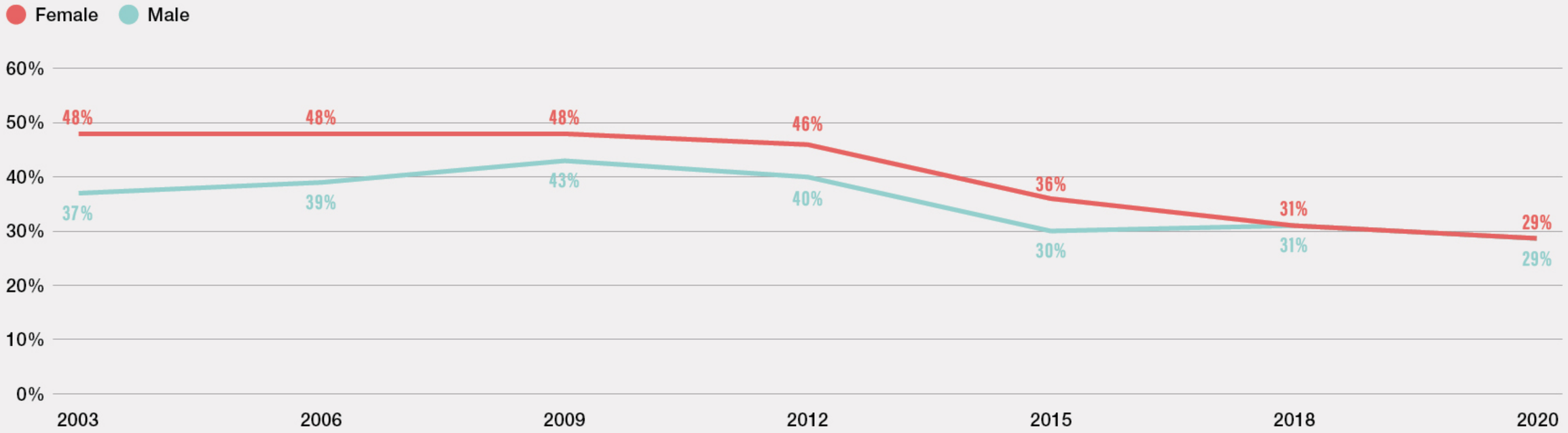


n = 96,171 U.S. adults | 2000-2020
*Due to low sample size, the 2003 attendance rate for Millennials was not included in this chart.

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WEEKLY CHURCH ATTENDANCE, BY GENDER

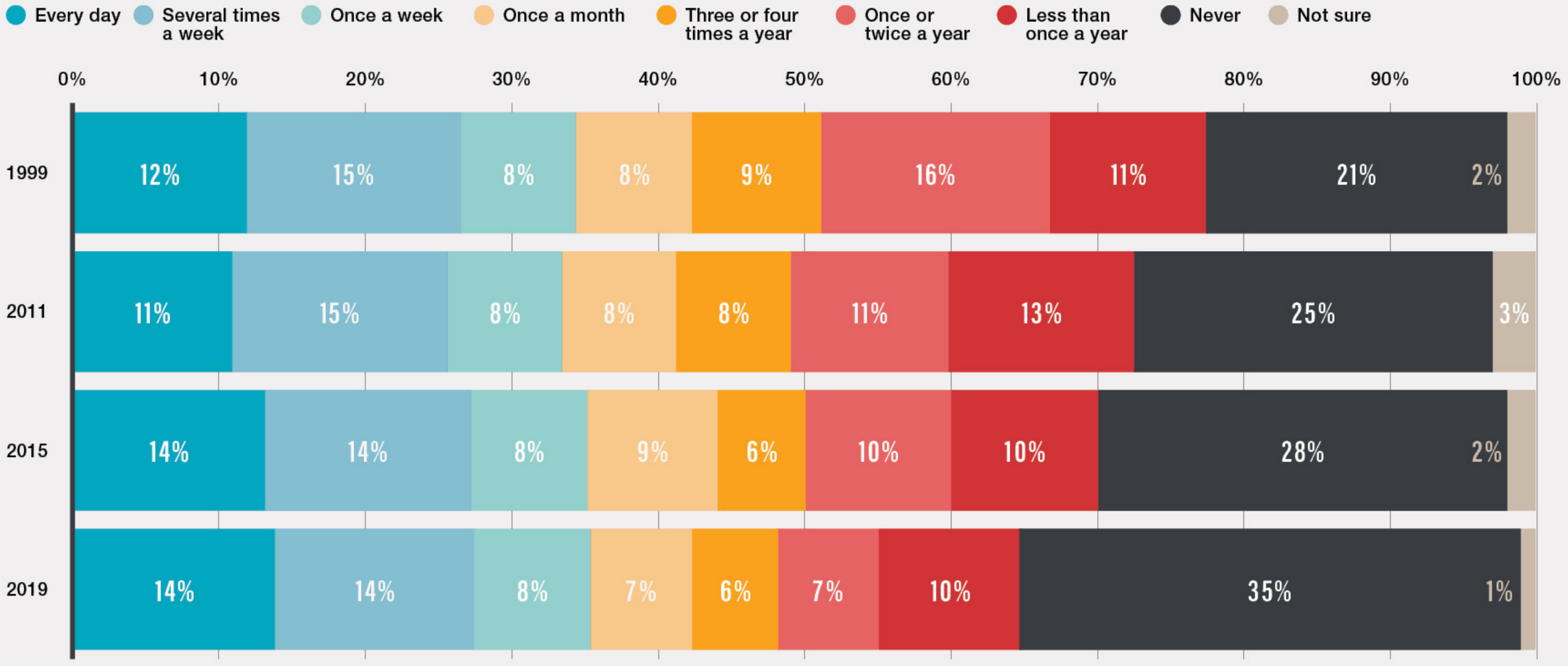
Barna STATE OF THE CHURCH



n = 96,171 U.S. adults | January 2000 - February 2020

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FREQUENCY OF BIBLE READING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR



n = 18,192 U.S. adults | 1996-2020

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The Church in America

- 2019

- In February of 2019, the Houston Chronicle and San Antonio Express-News publish “Abuse of Faith,” a report which revealed 220 Southern Baptist church leaders and volunteers who have been convicted of or pleaded guilty to sexual misconduct in the past two decades.



- Southern Baptist leaders vow to improve how churches address such behavior in their June 2019 meeting. It was considered a crisis of sexual abuse.

The Church Today

- May 2024
- A panel of Queer United Methodists joined the general secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History to announce the following:
- “We celebrate that we are finally living into our true identify as people called United Methodists…The voices, ministries and witness of my Queer siblings in Christ—who for far too long have been silenced and cast aside—are examples of the stories we will intentionally collect, preserve and tell through the Center for LGBTQ+ United Methodist Heritage.”





The Future of The Church

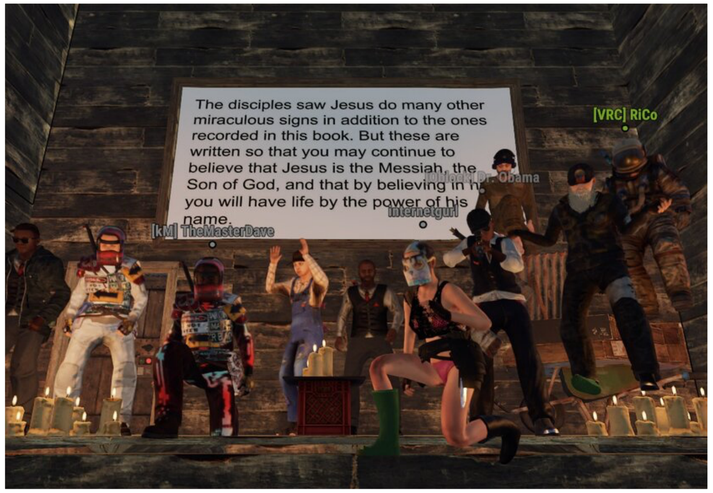
VR Church 2023: **The newest church gathering young people today is known as MMO Church or “Massively Multiplayer Online Church” where each congregant can pick their online avatar and enter a virtual reality church.**

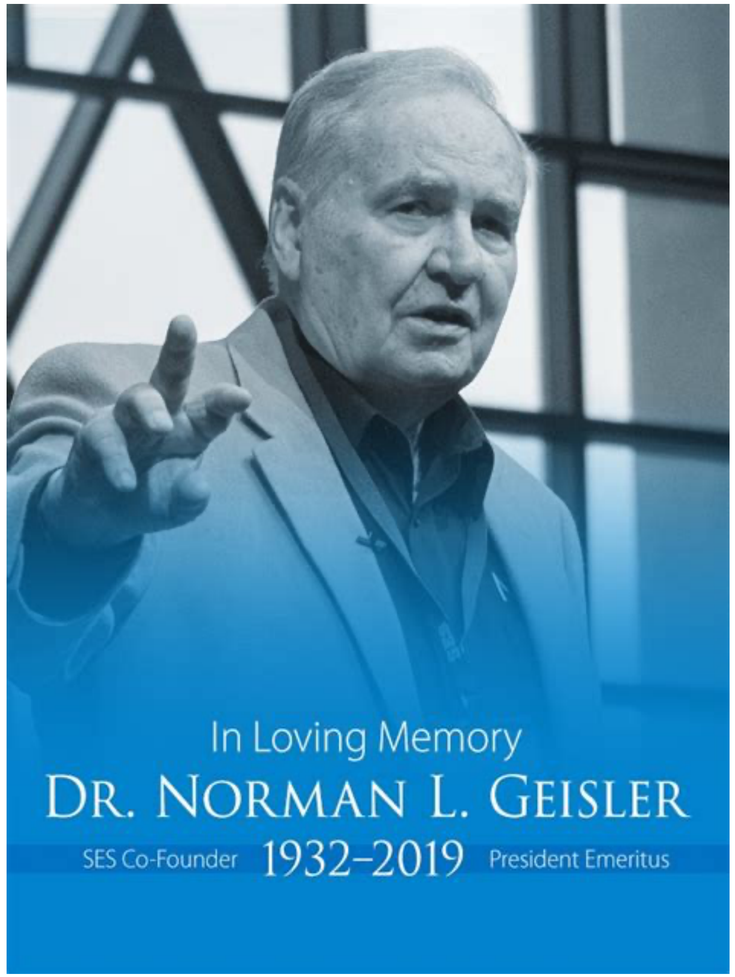
A young visionary had previously felt called to church planting, or starting new physical churches. But after discovering a VR social platform, he was awakened to the possibilities of connecting in virtual reality. He set out to create an inclusive Christian church in the metaverse, an immersive virtual world that has been gaining buzz since Facebook said that it would invest billions in building it out.

The founder, says, “Our vision is to cultivate loving spiritual communities across the metaverse.”









- **Dr. Norman Geisler - “A bad methodology leads to a bad bibliology and to bad theology.”**

2 Peter 1:3-11 (NLT)

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone.

8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins.

10 So, dear brothers and sisters,[c] work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. 11 Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Impact of 2020



- The world stood still in the year 2020. Business shut down and churches closed for in person worship. Yet, as we have seen, it is God who brings order out of chaos and peace through tragedy.
- The metrics of church attendance shows that in person attendance is returning to pre-2020 numbers. But some things to note are the following:



- Survey Center on American Life reported - “For the first time in modern American history, young men are now more religious than their female peers. They attend services more often and are more likely to identify as religious.”
- The Wall Street Journal published - “Sales of Bible are booming, by first-time buyers, most likely due to rising anxiety and a search for hope.”

Good Theology Exist To Produce The Future Church

- **We are to gather as much possible in person with other believers. It is a physical and spiritual gathering, not just an event.**

- **Hebrews 10:23-25 : Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful. [24] And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, [25] not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**

Good Theology Exist To Preserve The Future Church

- **We are warned to keep the tradition of preaching the Gospel and teaching theology within the Church:**

- **2 Timothy 3:12-15 - Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them,* 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

Good Theology Exist To Protect The Future Church

- **The last days will shows us that when the church is about to mix into the world, then God calls us out just in time:**

- **Revelation 18:1-5 - After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.**
2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” 4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.



- **Dr. Raul Ries**
- **President of Calvary Chapel Golden Springs Bible College and Senior Pastor**
- **“Imagine how it will be when all things are made brand new. The things of this world, pain and suffering, will pass away for all those who are found written in the Book of Life —those who lived their lives steadfast in the Word of God. We have been called to be a holy people, set apart from the world, with a glorious promise — a life eternal with the Living God.” (*Doctrines*, p.176)**
- **Revelation 22:16-17 - “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.**

Conclude with Prayer