

Bridgeway Community Church  
Series: State of the Church  
Conversation led by Dr. David Anderson  
January 24, 2021

## State of the Church

### Conversation with Clergy Team on the state of the universal church

Question: How's the personal state of your heart these days?

Sandy Pope: Believes that the state of the church is divided and the political climate has made that divide very visible as the world sees Christian vs Christian over a man or woman in a certain office.

Gary Coiro: A sense of grieving over all that went on in 2020 but also a desire to step into the mess and be an influence and an encouragement. Opportunities to create community even though virtually/Zoom. Grieving yet thriving at the same time.

William Jin: Bridgeway loss about 35-40 people because of COVID or other causes. As director of care, feels exhausted. Realized that he needs to know God in a more personal way, can't play church like we used to. Now is the time to get to know God in a real way.

Dave Michener: Last 6 months of 2020 were his "losing season" because of loss of his father first, then a college coach/professor to COVID, a brother-in-law a mentor and then his son, Davey. Still here! Still alive and enjoy each day as a gift from God, yet crushed. God has still met him there. Learned that God truly is a God of comfort.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all **comfort**, <sup>4</sup>who **comforts** us in all our troubles, so that we can **comfort** those in any trouble with the **comfort** we ourselves have received from God. <sup>5</sup>For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our **comfort** overflows. <sup>6</sup>If we are distressed, it is for your **comfort** and salvation; if we are **comforted**, it is for your **comfort**, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. <sup>7</sup>And our hope for you is firm, because we know that

just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our **comfort**.

Question: How's are others doing as you have ministered to them?

Steve Hardnett: People struggling with separation issues and detachment from church and one another and loneliness. Anxiety and stress. He's been encouraging people to connect virtually through Zoom. Pick up the phone and call people.

DA: That's good! An old fashion phone call instead of texting with someone.

David Heiliger: A lot of people are asking the question, what matters? What can I DO that really matters? When people find the answer to that, they are energized. In light of all that though, everyone is tired, exhausted and hurt.

Jared Sorber: There are challenges during this time but what are the opportunities that are there as well? Focusing on these hopeful chances to move forward, to grow more, to learn more, to deepen relationships.

DA: What have you observed/noticed in the universal church/christianity with those who proclaim to know Christ and surprised by negative and positive?

Gary Coiro: We need to have biblical minds. People are conforming and embracing values that are not of Jesus and the Bible. For example, "America first" philosophy instead of being citizens of the heaven first and having a global concern for all who bear the image of God and crossing cultures, colors, classes and creeds.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Acts 17:11

Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Scott Garber: In my view, the church at large has acted abysmally during this period of time in its responsibility to be protectors and purveyors of the truth, but there's been a challenge to the very notion of truth and the challenge to all of the authorities upon which we lean to understand what is true, and that spirit of skepticism that Christians have bought into, let's not think that that will not effect us and our own authority at some level as well. I think some Christians will be forced to embrace even more blindly whatever they believe already but others will be eventually effected by that and I think we hold some responsibility for that. When these attitudes run under the radar, then it can be so frustrating because people don't see them. Strangely enough, I've been a little bit energized over the last past couple of weeks just because now it's out there where its much harder to deny that there is really a problem and that there's a problem of a moral nature that we need to face up to in this country if we're ever going to get beyond the divisions that we're living with and living through.

White as Sin: A New Paradigm for Racial Healing by Scott Garber.  
ISBN: 9781977208132

Tracey Tiernan-Coiro: I am very disturbed and concerned about the mixing of the gospel of Christ and a political agenda. People making assumptions about one another based on their color, their age demographic. People are highly triggered by certain words. I feel like I am walking on a minefield all the time. How much it must grieve the heart of God to see his body so divided.

Message: Walking on Egg Shells by Tracey Tiernan

DA: This idea of being discerning but courageous. Trying to be winsome but at the same time feeling like you are in a fight. Spiritually we are in a battle and it is not just cultural or political. People are so evangelistic about their politics but yet can't open their mouth to talk about Jesus and the fruit of the Spirit that Jesus gives birth to in our lives.

Sandy Pope: 2020 exposed a lot of gaps in the big C church. One of those things is definitely the root of our compassion. This is a spiritual battle for the souls of people and understand the weapons of war we need to fight this battle. I think some of the gaps that have been exposed is just our growth and growing our people as a body of believers. The basic fundamentals of the Scriptures and what they say we have time to

teach them during this time. Not just to know information but to be conformed to the image of Christ.

DA: The phygital church - physical+digital. Before COVID 70% of what went on in the church and 30% outside of it. After COVID it might be the reverse: 30% of what will go on in the life of a church might be IN it and 70% of the church life might be OUT of the building. Not saying those are the actually percentages but it has forced many churches to think about what it means to be phygital.

What do you think clergy about the idea of phygital? Do we just go back to the way it was pre-COVID? Do we forget everything pre-COVID and just go digital with everything?

David Heiliger: I am highly social so all this interaction by screens I feel like I am missing out on a lot. What I am really missing the most is all the magic that happens in the margins of life - the conversations in the lobby, the car rides to drop someone off, whenever we are NOT doing the thing we came here for, all the demonstrations of Jesus when you're having a meal together, joking around, just hanging out. We have lost that and it is hard to recreate in the digital. How do we do that on the digital side? I don't want to lose that aspect of spiritual life.

DA: Jesus was with people while in the margins of life. That might feed us in ways that we didn't realize. A small group, discipleship class, a worship service can feed us, but on the way to church, in a hallway at church.

Jared Sorber: The early church didn't have church buildings. They met in the temple courts and in peoples' houses but there were a few things they stuck to we see in Acts 2:

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

<sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

DA: What do we have that people can jump into on Zoom, Facebook, etc.? We have our services.

Gary Corio: We have over a dozen life groups that meet on a weekly basis digitally. We have Wednesday Night Alive with seven different class options. The men's and women's ministry are meeting on a monthly basis on Saturdays. We have Bible study life groups, married life groups, social life groups all throughout the week.

William Jin: It is a 5 week life group so they can see what a life group is about. It is an entry point into the longer groups. We call it "Great Conversations" where they can talk about what they are learning about God and can serve one another. We will take one or two questions from the sermon from that week and application of the sermon.

Sandy Pope: I'm excited about what we are offering now for Wednesday Night Alive but also in the future helping people take their spiritual lives deeper. We should be able to offer our people seminary level education in our church. People can go to [bridgeway.cc/events](http://bridgeway.cc/events) to register for the classes.

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Gary Coiro: We had a men's gathering last Saturday and we had a man joining us from Kuwait, a man in the room from Ghana, a man in the room from Florida so the beauty of broadening the ministry through the digital platform. **But don't become content with just digital connections.**

3 John

I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to write it with pen and ink. <sup>14</sup> For I hope to see you soon, and then we will talk face to face.

David Heiliger:

Jeremiah 8:21-9:1

[Jeremiah speaking]. I hurt with the hurt of my people. I mourn and am overcome with grief. <sup>22</sup> Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is there no healing for the wounds of my people? <sup>1</sup> If only my head were a pool of water and my eyes a fountain of tears, I would weep day and night for all my people who have been slaughtered.

Steve Hardnett:

Jeremiah 33:3

[The Lord speaking] 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'

Dave Michener:

1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

### **Practical Applications**

#### 1. Questions for Journaling

How's the personal state of your heart these days?

What are you finding out because of the pandemic and social/political upheaval, what actually does matter?

What are those things that energize you?

#### 2. Who do you need to make a phone call to so they can hear your voice? Whose voice do YOU need to hear?