



Challenges Facing Us In The Long Term

As a family of God's people, we at Southside are facing some uncertain times at present, and even more uncertainty in the future. It is enough to provide me with not a few restless nights and some prayerful soul searching.

This year has dealt us some serious challenges as a family. We have had to be separated from one another because of the deadly spread of a pandemic virus. We have had to adapt our worship services to online experiences, which have come with many downs and only lately a few ups, in my opinion. We are basically having to pave brand new roads for ourselves in what is the present condition of the church. Additionally we are facing racial unrest in our nation which affects our family profoundly.

I wish to share with you a link to a marvelous article by our brother Phil Ware, who is doing what he can to help us all adjust to this strange new world, especially with our need to minister by internet. The link is here: https://www.heartlight.org/articles/202006/20200623_tired_uncertain.html. Some of his conclusions are spot on with my experience, and I'd like to address some realities with you, my brethren.

When we first began live streaming, and Zoom meetings, I was full of trepidation, and more than a bit excited as well. I saw some great possibilities in online ministry, which I was willing to embrace if necessary. It became not only necessary, but imperative. I admit to being thrilled after the first few posts online seemed to be generating larger than expected viewings. Some of the first few posts saw over a hundred viewings.

Now, most of the posts are being viewed by fewer than 30 people. Zoom sessions are attended by only a small number as compared to at first. Contributions continue to be okay, though the last couple of weeks have been low. We're still okay for the year. As time drags on, it seems some have flagging enthusiasm.

My encouragement is this: Don't allow yourself to just wander away! Tough times call for tough solutions and sometimes less than perfect scenarios. Invest in any and every way you can in the church. We continue to be the church even if we never get back to public meetings again (may God not let that happen)! We continue to need one another and need to be in contact with one another every opportunity.

We need to remember that the first century church didn't get to meet all together in one place very often, but they met in homes and as small gatherings constantly. For the sake of your soul, find some positive way to engage with fellow Christians during this hardship. God put us together as family, so meet with your family as often as possible. Let's not grow weary as we wait for what we hope will be a reuniting very soon. Whatever happens, may we be found faithful, serving, and loving when Christ returns. — Keith