

State of the Church: 2025 and Beyond

How is your church doing? Are there any—many?—in your area that are for sale, having shrunk out of existence and now likely to become another new restaurant or apartment building? God's church has faced the resistance of the world since its birth. The challenges today are as varied as they are deep and seemingly insurmountable. But believers know we serve a faithful and powerful Father in heaven who generously pours out His wisdom and grace as soon as we ask. As we're now a full 25% of the way into the 21st century, here are eight of the powerful patterns our churches are facing and what we all can do to carry faithfully the message of Jesus to our neighbor across the street and the far corners of the world.

1. Declining Religious Affiliations

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Studies from the Barna Group and Pew Research reveal a troubling decline in religious affiliation, particularly among the millennial and Gen Z generations. Churches face serious challenges in retaining younger members, who often struggle with doubts, disillusionment and disengagement.

To address this, churches are investing in innovative reengagement strategies. Apologetics ministries address intellectual and spiritual doubts, and outreach efforts include hosting community events and partnering with schools or civic organizations. Creative approaches must be implemented to reignite interest and commitment among younger generations who value authentic relationships and mentorship. Programs that pair younger members with mature believers spark discipleship and accountability. Additionally, incorporating

contemporary worship styles, social media and addressing relevant cultural topics bridge generational differences. Ultimately, a combination of relational and programmatic efforts is necessary to counteract declining affiliation.

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2. Mental Wellness and Wholeness

Mental wellness is a critical area of focus within the evangelical church that has been hiding in plain sight for several years but has become more visible and important in the recent past, not least due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic. Recognizing the prevalence of anxiety, depression and trauma, and their many origins in contrast to their relatively few solutions, numerous churches have launched counseling ministries, support groups and partnerships with licensed therapists. Sermons now frequently address mental health topics, integrating biblical wisdom with psychological insights. Additionally, there is growing awareness of pastoral burnout, prompting initiatives to care for church leaders' mental well-being. By prioritizing mental health, churches not only support individual wholeness but also strengthen their overall communities.

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