Connection, Community, and Collaboration with Church 365

Church 365

Church 365

Becoming a Connected and Connecting Church

Overview

Three problems

- Connection

- Control

- Complexity, Confusion, & Cost

CONNECTION

Points to Ponder

- What are people looking for when they come to church?

- Define connection; what is connection?

- Define community; what is community?

- The opposite of community is?

- What are some of the obstacles to community?

- What are some of the components to experience biblical community?

A study guide on Connectivity in the Church

Beyond Small Groups to Authentic Community
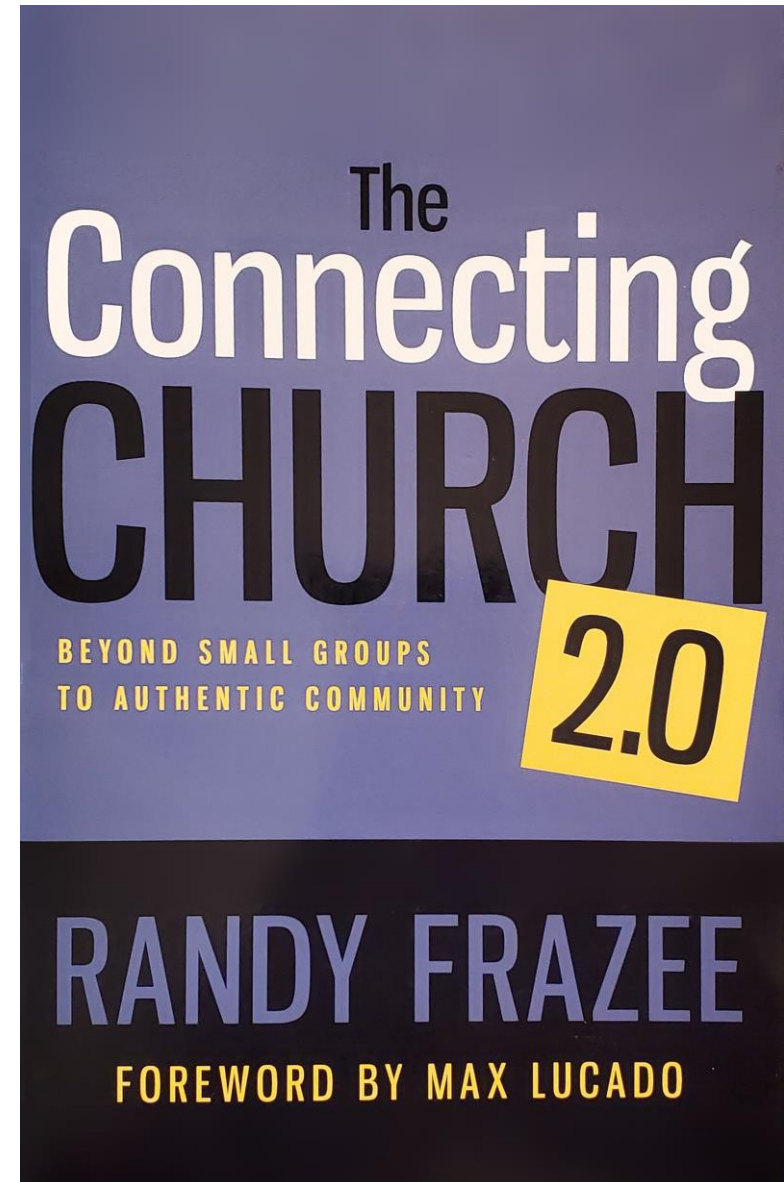
The Inherent Need for Community

➢ **From Genesis 2:18 …** It is not good for man to be alone.

➢ **From Science …** "The idea is that we are born to form attachments, that our brains are physically wired to develop in tandem with another's through emotional communication, beginning before words are spoken." Allan N. Schore of the UCLA School of Medicine

➢ **From LifeWay Research …** Of all reasons churchgoers choose to leave their previous church, the No. 1 specific reason is because the "church was not helping me to develop spiritually." Twenty-eight percent of non-mover church switchers indicated this as the reason.

Another 20 percent of respondents said they left because they "did not feel engaged or involved in **meaningful church work**."

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Key Point

"Today's church is not a community; it is a collection of individuals." (p. 39)

IT that primarily empowers staff and support staff to make connections (communication) to members can actually add to the lack of community in the church.

Connection does not guarantee community.

Patterns of Today's Church

- We must be careful that we don't substitute "doing church for being the church." (p. 69)

- "Doing church" today looks like blasting emails, blasting SMS messages, blasting sermons via live stream; it's all communications from "sender" to "receiver"

- So "doing church" this way doesn't necessarily build community

- How can technology facilitate "being the church"?

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Ephesians 4:11-16

11 *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,*

Is it time for an "IT Reformation"?

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CONTROL

A Point to Ponder

Where there is no center, there is no circumference.

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This is a MAJOR frustration for IT directors, staff, support staff, and members

- Sounds and looks a lot like Judges 21:25:

    "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

- Some churches are spending hundreds of dollars per month on redundant services

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COMPEXITY, CONFUSION COST

A Point to Ponder

- I want IT to work for me; I don't want to work at IT.

When IT is complex or confusing, the goal of fostering community fades.

Pastoral leadership is key!

Exercise "kingly leadership" (Judges 21:25) and do three things...

1. Begin to articulate the message of biblical community.

2. Begin thinking about how to extend "IT Controls" to encompass the whole church.

    (Those controls will result in improved accountability, efficiency, integrity, security, reliability)

3. Begin to think about how to simplify the user experience to facilitate building authentic community.

Proverbs 14:4, Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.

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ekklesia360 — Web Site
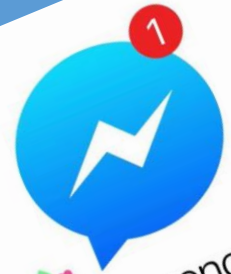
Google Meet

SOUNDCLOUD

vimeo

Church App

BOXCAST

Google Docs

zoom

remind

Telegram

Messenger

Constant Contact

DISCORD

twilio

Signal

Dropbox

slack

Church 365

What is Church 365?

https://church365.net

Church 365

Strength of the Ox, LLC

Microsoft

- Churches, as non-profits, are eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 and Microsoft Azure cloud services

- Microsoft enables and encourages adding "guests" to an Office 365 tenant

- **Church members can be those guests**, and use many of these features for free

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- Simplify management of these guests

- Facilitate bi-directional communication (aka "community") among church members

- Facilitate sharing of files and collateral within affinity groups

- Empower church members to independently create communications resources in this environment

- Fully leverage Azure on behalf of the church to automate and enhance operations, possibly replacing current subscription services

- Leverage this directory to assign operational roles for ministry volunteers

Features

Church 365 provides a solution that is designed for the specific needs of different roles within the church. There are features focused on:

- Members

- Leaders

- Staff

- IT

Members

Church members are the heart of the church. Here's how Church 365 enables everyone to engage.

- Members are invited to login to Church 365 and Teams using their own, existing online identity — a Gmail account, an existing work login, an Outlook.com address, whatever they have

- Any member of the congregation can create and manage - with staff approval - their own "Community" (a Microsoft Team). Once approved, these requesters are added to the team as Church 365 Community "leaders" (see details in the tab above)

- Requested Communities can be "public" (like a Men's or Women's Ministry), or "private" (like a small group)

- Teams allows instant communication through video, audio, or chatting, to individuals or groups

- Teams are also email-enabled distribution lists, so communications are enabled to all members of these communities using a single email address

- Maintain your personal information: contact info, mailing info, and your photo (visible in Church 365 and in Teams)

Leaders

Volunteering and leadership among church members is always encouraged. It increases engagement and extends the reach of all ministries, while also facilitating community and connection as the church interacts with the church. These capabilities are at the heart of what's enabled by Church 365; see how your leaders can use these tools.

- Add and remove members from your Community using the self-service tools built into Church 365

- Send member communications directly from Church 365; the directory with emails is built-in to your Community member list

- Manage "channels" in your Community - custom locations for file management, prayer requests, live online meetings, subcommittees, or even private channels for leaders to collaborate with discussions and file sharing, separate from the larger Community

- Upload and download files and share with your Community, or share externally if desired

- Manage the description (also visible in Teams) for your Community

- Designate additional Community members as co-leaders so they can assist with managing your group

- Create and publish surveys to capture information for planning (or just for fun)

Staff

Administrative and pastoral staff have access to communication tools that allow oversight of membership usage of Church 365 features, and also take advantage of Azure cloud services to enable built-in capabilities that may currently require multiple 3rd-party subscription services.

Staff: Member Management

- The Church 365 member database is automatically kept synchronized with your Office 365 directory, so you can manage member access and Community (Teams) membership in one place using simple tools

- Designate other staff or volunteers with Church 365 role assignments that grant privileges to perform member maintenance within Office 365 (some roles require a Microsoft 365 license assignment; most don't)

- Manage church membership status, Community membership, and family relationships between members

- Create and schedule email and SMS communications using templates and graphics, which are distributed using the same Community (Teams) definitions

Staff: Community Management

- All Communities (Teams) created within Church 365 are automatically mail-enabled and visible in your staff Outlook directory

- Create custom "Community Labels" for your church and assign these labels to each of your Communities. This doesn't change the experience in Teams but does allow your membership to sort and organize all the available Communities within Church 365

- Designate one Teams "Team" as the Default Community; anyone invited to log in is automatically added to this Community

- Manage Community creation requests, validating need, modifying as appropriate, and rejecting if necessary; we'll handle all the back-end work and communications through this process

- Manage Community event creation requests in a similar fashion

Staff: Operations

- Publish **announcements** on the Church 365 home page, and keep these announcements synchronized with their associated events

- Organize your **office file system** in the cloud, using Teams combined with OneDrive and synchronized with your Windows Explorer or Mac Finder files and folders - this enables files to be shared automatically with members, in their respective communities

- **Signage**: Create and manage digital content distributed automatically throughout your facility (digital signage)

- **Streaming**: Full-featured, scheduled live stream capabilities: live stream your worship services using your free Azure grant from Microsoft, and embed the player, with sermon history, in your public site or share directly in Church 365

- **Streaming**: With the live streaming feature, manage your database of sermons; our live streaming service is designed for churches, so assign your speakers from a list and add multiple passages of Scripture (hot-linked) to each broadcast

- **Streaming**: After the broadcast is complete, create custom clips - choose a start and end time, choose a pre and/or post-roll of your design to wrap around your clip, and send it off for processing in the cloud - with 3 clicks

- As a Microsoft Partner, we will assist you with receiving your non-profit benefits from Microsoft, democratizing the IT ministry functions of the church, and provide guidance so that your net monthly cost could be zero!

Information Technology

Getting a handle on the "IT Function" within a church can be challenging. Church 365 provides a framework for your IT-savvy members to volunteer their time and skills to help keep operations working smoothly.

- Manage the branding for your Church 365 site
  - We synchronize this with your Office 365/Azure Active Directory login so your members will be comfortable logging in with familiar church branding

- Using role-based access control, manage "secrets" (passwords, account numbers, vendor contact info, etc.) using Azure Key Vault. Designated, trusted staff and/or volunteers (IT Ministry, Finance Committee, Elder Board, etc.) can login and decrypt these secrets in a transparent fashion using their own credentials with full audit logging visibility

- A specific "Support" role is available that gives designated volunteers insight into issues or challenges that members may be having with their usage of some of the tools, or simply for getting logged in and seeing what they expect to see
  - Without granting full access to manage member details, support volunteers can view a member's current Team membership or view details of any errors that might have occurred during the user's session

- Review and monitor the deployment of back-end services in your Azure subscription that are used by Church 365
  - We've automated this and given you tools to monitor progress and check status

- For church public website hosting, stand up a full WordPress deployment, in Azure
  - We'll take care of all the details of provisioning the app service, MySQL database, custom domain name validation, and WordPress deployment with a selection of templates to install

- Manage the default Bible translation used by your church (currently only used by the live streaming module)

Strength of the Ox, LLC

Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.
Proverbs 14:4 ESV

- Microsoft Partner Network Member

Microsoft Partner

References

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