

5 Trends Affecting Your Ministry in 2010

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Last week [Guy Kawasaki](#) directed his readers to a piece called [5 Ways to Create a Future-minded Non-profit](#). The timing was a great read for me as I get more deeply involved in working with the [Center for Church Communication](#), a non-profit group that “helps the Church matter”. For me, reading the article allows easy application for ministry trends and the importance of leaders strategically resisting attrition, lack of innovation, failure to change, misplaced values, etc.

Here what the 5 trends look like when applied to the Church:

Shifting demographics. With new generations dreaming of their place at the table, churches must learn to share leadership with younger congregants. Top-down leadership gets rejected by next generation believers in favor of team dynamics. Thus, it's critical to allow baby boomers to step sideways and share leadership opportunities at every level of church operations.

Technological advances. Social-media technologies provide churches the opportunity to gain greater exposure, but they also require church leadership to be comfortable giving more people a chance to speak out. And we must accept the reality that conversation is going on whether or

not we're participating in it. We've known for quite some time that the broadcast model is dead – dialog over monologue, conversation over one person megaphoning, etc. The perceived threat of opening up the backchannel is now a moot concern – since most people have access to cell phone browsers in their pockets.

New ways to collaborate. With the advent of new technologies, churches (and parachurch organizations) can just as easily work with an individual located across the country (or world) as they can through their local parish or church. And today, individuals would rather connect with those they share values with rather than those who are simply geographically close.

Furthermore, these connections often morph into movements, networks, alliances, etc. (formerly known as denominations). Collaboration itself is seen as a fundamental value, so isolation / independence is viewed as a dead end.

Greater interest in service. There's no doubt about it, the next generation speaks the language of volunteerism, but churches need to keep in mind that people have many different reasons for serving and ought to tailor their opportunities to individuals' interests, gifts & talents. In fact, if your church ministry philosophy is straight, rather than have people to get the jobs done, you have "jobs" to get the people done. Serving is the key to each individual discovering their individual gifts & calling in God, so the fact that it's en vogue right now to do so is a sure fire win.

Blurred lines between nonprofit and for-profit. There's a greater emphasis on corporate social responsibility & justice and the emergence of organizations whose primary aim is to "do good". These groups are challenging the Church's postmodern identity. Formerly, it was the church who was to care about society. But the Church fell down on it's responsibilities in many people's eyes, creating opportunity for other organizations to rise and take on some of the responsibilities that might have been the Church's. And, social justice & global environmental concerns aren't just for rock stars anymore. Masses of conscencious people believe these are stewardship issues. Churches now have opportunities for new partnerships with these groups and can link with everything from recycling organizations to social services. In fact, for many young people, feeding & clothing the planet, eradicating stupid poverty, ending the slave trade, etc. are considered the outward works of their faith.

Understanding these trends can greatly benefit the Church at large. And, can often explain why rather than build a multi-million dollar building, young people are more given to using free technology to facilitate their ministry endeavours, networking and collaborating (even globally if necessary), tithing their time and working to improve the common good, rather than just the good of their own church facility or members.

Cynthia Ware

connect // communicate // collaborate // repeat



★ **Blog:** [The Digital Sanctuary](#)

★ **Non-profit:** [Center for Church Communication](#)

★ **CFCC Blog:** [Church Marketing Sucks](#)

✉ **E-Mail:** cynthiaware@gmail.com

→ **Briefly:** Communication Strategist / Social Media Consultant / Church Champion / Networker / Recycle Junkie