



## ***Moving Beyond Christendom***

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We're living through the death of Christendom. It's important to understand that Christendom isn't Christianity. Rather, Christendom represents a system where the Church enjoyed a place of power, prestige and respect within the larger culture. In the Christendom, the Church held real power in the culture: we had influence and people listened when we spoke to issues. In Christendom, the church was respected in the broader culture, we were often given a "seat at the table." In a Christendom world, there was a sense that people knew that having a connection and involvement in a local church was a good thing and an important thing. Our churches were set up to thrive in Christendom.

Things have changed.

Christendom is fading fast.

Because of this, there's a fair amount of confusion and conflicted feelings amongst those of us who follow Jesus while having grown up in a Christendom world. For some, the primary reaction is fear. There's a fear of the future because it looks so different from our past and what we know. For others there's a sense of anger: we need to wage war against our culture and take back what's been taken from us. Still for others, maybe it's more a sense of confusion: we don't understand what's happening or why we don't see the same things working the way the once did, but in the confusion, we keep on faithfully doing the same things hoping they'll eventually produce different results.

We don't need fear, anger or confusion right now. I don't think those things will help us much. We do need to capture a sense of urgency and begin to live into this moment in which the Lord has placed us. It's critical that we recapture our missionary calling and embrace the work of the Gospel in our time and in our place.

Every once in a while a get a glimpse of brothers and sisters who are making this shift and it fills my heart with hope. I spent some time with one of our churches recently and worked with them as they looked into the future and dreamed about what God might want to do through their ministry in the years to come. These brothers and sisters weren't talking about buildings or budgets or attendance goals – those things are more useful in a Christendom world. No, these brothers and sisters were leaning in and listening to what the Spirit was stirring in their midst. They were dreaming about what their

### **Author**

The weekly eNews is provided  
by CGGC Executive Director  
Lance Finley



neighborhood or city might look like 25 years from now because of how God wanted to use them to reach the children and youth of the neighborhood in order to change the trajectory the future leadership of their city.

These folks were beginning to ask the right questions like “who do we need to talk with to better understand what needs to happen here in our community to make a real difference in the lives of the young people who live here?” In Christendom, we didn’t ask those kind of questions because we knew what we were doing – we knew just the right program to reach the right people. In this post Christendom world, we often don’t know the answers to the questions. In a post Christendom world, we have to rely upon folks outside of ourselves to guide us and help us understand the people and the places that we no longer understand.

Don’t fear the death of Christendom. God’s moving us beyond this place and its okay to acknowledge the different emotions that may go with this kind of move, but let’s not be ruled by those emotions. Let’s yield to the Spirit of God and allow Him to bring us to the right questions and the right people who can help us make our way through a place where we’ve never been before. There’s no better time to be alive and following Jesus than now.

Christ’s Peace,

***Lance***