

**General Topics :: Online or virtual church - is it even sufficiently practical?****Online or virtual church - is it even sufficiently practical? - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/10/30 7:22**

We have literally continued outside a local church for over 5 years. While new language learning curve, illness as well as frequent relocation had a big share, looking particularly for a church that sought only God's glory through Christ was the major contributor. Particularly because I had both seen and read about churches that would be found so much in bad shape that they would be literally impenetrable in the past.

We have been trying to join one 'AFM of Africa' that seemed hopefully but the process is not being as smooth. One other issue is that we have a 5yr old autistic son who only feels more comfortable at home and is fussy else where. Suggesting that we might need to take turns in our doing local church endeavours. While plausible, my wife still cannot be patient with him enough so I might need to take all the stay-home turns in a way :)

So I wondered if anyone would be aware of a workable church that formally streams as well as acknowledge virtual membership. Or you may simply comment on whether or not this might be sufficiently practical. I read of an aged lady in The Wonders of Prayer book who was by illness detained from local church and reckoned there could be many such Christians who would appreciate an online option if sufficiently practical.

I have gone through a list of those that come up on Google but had yet to find one that is evangelically convincing.

Re: Online or virtual church - is it even sufficiently practical? - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/2 9:59

I began my illness journey as Covid broke out. And we were still without a church then. So no wonder how I missed arguments such as this: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/no-virtual-church/>

While I agree alot shall be missing, it seems to me that virtual presence is way better than complete absence for those with only two options.

Re: - posted by leyoung (), on: 2023/11/2 14:52

Dear Brother,

Matthew 18:20

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Please know that you can always have fellowship, discipleship, Bible reading, be asking the Lord for wisdom and direction, even in your small family group. It can be a precious time of prayer and singing, reading and ask Him to bring others to you.

We are never alone with even two or three.

In
Christ, sister Leslie

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/3 9:19

Greatly appreciated input. While I fully agree and that we in fact truly do try, the issue arises when you notice like an enormous earthly welfare gap that could ideally be addressed by fellow Christians who are able. Imagine a qualifying widow as Paul puts it, who, as a mother of 5 and without social security, has hopes in the Church's charitable considerations?

Yes it does further say that if she is destitute, she ought to trust in the Lord. My wife is now spiritually discouraged because she has a long standing PTSD and MDD that we did not properly afford to have treated and our government health care can only afford so much. Her mother has resources but she is not a Christian and therefore leans on her own understanding and priorities (social standing, etc.).

And then I often seat and say, if only we were part of a true Church of Christ, we perhaps would be aware of those who not only would have resources but also prioritize a Christian's welfare (or leading to the Lord) over social standing.

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While we should ever be faithful unto death, its difficult when the condition at hand is psychological and affects how you think amongst others - as that is the same fucully necessary to reason with oneself through hardships. I read that when Evan Roberts was diagnosed with MDD, he withdrew from the Welsh revival activities.

So while I am not dreaming about a trouble free Christian walk, I feel like psychological or mental disorders ideally need s to be treated with possible immediate effect or else the sufferers then needs to be excused?

Re: , on: 2023/11/4 5:57

Your concerns reflect the importance of holistic support within a Christian community. Combining faith and accessible mental health care is essential. Encouraging open conversations and practical assistance can make a positive impact.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/4 7:01

I also reckon so, brother. I came across this two days back: <https://mentalhealthgracealliance.org/> and hoped to suggest it to her. I just struggled to find the trauma related group link suggested there (under Find a group). It's Christian oriented support groups - which makes it a very interesting added intervention. And they boost of very interesting results too.

Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2023/11/4 10:22

With my friends in Israel and groups that over vast distances I have to meet online but I would prefer to meet in person
Hebrews 10:25
King James Version
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/5 3:26

Yes I too would ever choose in-person over online for more fellowship-oriented meetings such as these. But yes when options are not much, it seems online should be comparatively better than nothing. A very relevant verse by the way, brother.

Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2023/11/6 13:51

It was during lockdown , I desired to be with people as meeting over zoom sometimes does not cut it over meeting with people but I also like zoom as I can meet with people from Israel and people I wouldnt normally meet with

It breaks my heart in our church how few come and how empty the churches are , in these times you think people would be flocking to good bible teaching

As there has been many a time I have led a prayer meeting on my own

I evangelise each week but I want Jesus as I do not want Jesus to say depart from me I never knew you

It breaks my heart that all the heretical churches have thousands of followers yet those that are true have about as many people on my fingers about 10

I do not preach in church but on the street and not for very long as I not very bold

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/7 8:08

Duly noted dear brother. It is that coldish spiritual climate that has many of us in this SI community waking up and going to bed with an earnest longing for a widespread revival of God through Christ by his Spirit. Hope I got that last part theologically correct :|

May the Lord guide you as per his perfect will. The dying world surely can use more John Wesleys (endued and deployed). I believe I have a private prayer/intercession ministry so I barely preach. But I pray much as his Spirit thus gives me utterance (often in groans that cannot be uttered)

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/11 2:56

Jame 5:14 and Wesley's commentary marks another important and very relevant point on the need to be part of local/formal church whenever possible/practical:

Verse 14

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Having anointed him with oil â€” This single conspicuous gift, which Christ committed to his apostles, Mark 6:13, remained in the church long after the other miraculous gifts were withdrawn. Indeed, it seems to have been designed to remain always; and St. James directs the elders, who were the most, if not the only, gifted men, to administer at. This was the whole process of physic in the Christian church, till it was lost through unbelief. That novel invention among the Romanists, extreme unction, practised not for cure, but where life is despaired of, bears no manner of resemblance to this.

P. S: I expect this should include mental disorders too

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/19 3:54

I hope I was not haste thereto but I have now gone on to initiate (having a technical background therein) the desired online Church platform. It is indeed aimed solely at those who feel they have no access to an evangelical/worthy brick and mortar Church.

I am currently building or sandboxing it at <https://likechrist.c1.is> (free domain) but expect to have it running officially under <https://www.likeChristFellowship.Church> once I have the \$10 necessary to register the domain.

This is expected to operate as a sub-initiative of the 'likeChrist Ministries', which is a registered Not-for-Profit Company (NPC). It not yet worked out how timezone differences shall best be addressed but there are ideas. So if you know someone who could use this hub type (evangelical Online Church), kindly recommend the initiative to them (my email: kerv.m.athumbu@gmail.com).

Should I ever be convicted to discontinue this initiative (I have non thus far) I shall be sure to add a comment here to advise accordingly.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/20 6:46

A Christian someone (based in UK and detained from physical Church largely by illness) who appreciated the initiative donated twice+ the needed sum for the domain. I am now accordingly migrating the site from the free to the newly purchased one. I should comment back here once done - since only then can considering brethren be able to best create member accounts.

Re: - posted by ESchaible, on: 2023/11/20 7:01

Thank you for the updates dear brother. As one who is in the midst of a ruling false religion, with few to no Christian gatherings, I will continue to follow your updates.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/21 9:44

Dear brother, I indeed also cannot wait to see what God might make out of this work for which nothing else is purposed save his glory (thus through biblical fellowship). While I should continue to tweak here and there, the site is now fairly functional under <https://likechristfellowship.church/> as hoped. So may those who feel they could use this hub-type proceed to create joining accounts. Or if you know someone who could use the same, kindly recommend it thereto accordingly.

Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2023/11/21 10:25

My bug bear at the moment there is no real praying apps as I am from a computer science background and can code and so would like a proper praying app and I so miss a good local Christian bookshop

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/21 11:17

One thing that is apparent, brother, is that, it is often unlikely that the world can build that perfect something that Christians may go around longing for. So yes we will need to get hands as often as we have these potentially high impact dreams.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2023/11/26 12:39

It proves I was right in my understanding that many of our long standing needs could easily have been ministered to had we had been part of a thorough Church.

Despite being yet the only member (of the new likeChrist Fellowship) outside my family, the said saint not only have donated the said \$20+ for the domain but went on to offer an additional \$239 after I got a chance to detail out our needy state. The size of that gift left me agitated for the rest of the day and needed to calm down.

I would have a problem when my wife's Christless mother would barely try to help us as I wished but understood that our true relatives were those in the Church (which we did not have).

As limited as some may rightly argue, the LCF online Church has thus left us with good hope over our situation (which sadly left my wife drifting swiftly from the faith). May as may as feel like they are without a local Church be encouraged to join LCF because what is there proves to be more than superstition.

These also includes those that are newly converted (on the street perhaps by modern day Wesleys) and do not have home Church to grow further in yet. As these increases beyond available care, then we may need to invite volunteering mentors/disciplers from this hopeful SI community.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/24 3:58

Some updates (edited):

The dear sister from the UK eventually wished to leave the LCF (<https://likechristfellowship.church/>) around the middle of this month. We have had extensive talks, mainly via email, on various topics almost on a daily basis. We for some reason seemed to disagree on several of the topics, sadly. One of the two examples I wish to share are: She for one believed the thief had the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the cross as she implicitly maintained that those that enter heaven must have had the baptism (or Entire Sanctification as she prefers to put it). My position has been that the thief could not have had the HS baptism as it was not openly given until the day of Pentecost and therefore cannot have been a prerequisite for entering heaven for those dying without it.

Our second major disagreement was on James 5:14 where she believed the 'sick' that James invites there are not the literally (bodily sick) but the unsanctified as she puts it (those that have a sort of spiritual impurity). This was very sad to me as not only did I disagree with her but I still desire divine healing for my GAD, wife's PTSD and son's ASD (if God will grant) - but this was by her seemingly excluded there - only the unsanctified if I felt like one. Leaving this here for brethren to judge for themselves. While we are still only 3 on LCF to date, I do not feel convinced to let it go. When we can, we try to pray at the same hour everyday at 7AM GMT+2 for now.

Myself and wife have recently gone on to register a non-profit organisation <https://ckwa.org.za/> that seeks to support autistic kids in South African disadvantaged families (including our son) through worthy fundraisings and donations. While this has been sweet tasting with all the possibilities of things such as needed salaries and being thus involved in a mercy ministry, my strongly welcoming divine healing especially first to my family's 3 cases of sickness brought me to question if we should desire (from God) to support these ASD kids through ordinary means (which will of course be limited and protracted) or to desire for them too the complete and perfect divine healing (through work that is like that of Smith Wigglesworth?).

Yes, this still depends on whether God does grant the gift thereof - and until he does, he shall have not granted and so we shall have to continue to offer support through ordinary means thus. Yes, this question will only be valid if God should first heal the 3 of us (wife, son and I) through our prayer attempts. Yes my wife has last retraced her steps back to Christ.

st and for this I so bless and praise God!

I read healing accounts (which I found very evangelical) in the 'The Wonders of Prayer' located here: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11553/11553-h/11553-h.htm> Particularly of two old ladies (one from Tuberculosis or Consumption) on their 70s and 80s (story section titled "The Prayer Of Faith.") and feel more stirred towards the validity of divine healing (yes I believe there are the counterfeit ones - you shall know them by their fruits?).

This has been so burdening in my heart that my third Sunday written sermon attempt turned to be more of an expression or study on the topic: <https://likechristfellowship.church/2024/01/21/musing-on-divine-healing-for-the-bodily-sick-folks/>

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/24 6:18

Updates post was edited (typos and additions for clarity)

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2024/1/24 8:15

Quote:

.....I am from a computer science background and can code and and so would like a proper praying app...
.....

The Catholic's have a praying app:
Hallow: Prayer & Meditation

Try it and see, it very well may be what your looking for.

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/25 2:18

Dear Sister Lysa, I had thought he meant a prayer app that lets brethren check in for virtual meetings from different locations at the same time - but yes I may have missed it like that. But coming to think of this, I admittedly would at this stage appreciate to have access to this as I so believe that leaving out fervent prayer in our outreach attempts should be unspeakable foolishness.

On a side note, must we not altogether loath resources that are offered by the Catholic (amongst other unworthy sources) seeing they are thus in apostasy? Must we not fear that the funds used to fund the app development may have been carelessly earned - as the members thereof are not expect to know how to choose Christian ethical careers? Or am I confusing things perhaps?

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/25 4:57

Was about to add the following as a P.S but realised it deserves to be added as a new comment (especially after finding that the Hallow app is free but with in-app purchases - therefore technically not free).

I meant to add that such carefulness should only apply to free resources - made available at the courtesy of the provider (likely to be funded by offerings as ministry support by Catholic members).

Resources with in-apps are not essentially free and therefore excluded from the carefulness I meant to draw attentions to. And yes if it can work for evangelical Christians, then we are free to procure and use.

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2024/1/25 9:02

by KervinM on 2024/1/25 2:18:08

Quote:

.....by KervinM

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Dear Brother KervinM,

I really don't know what he meant, but by him saying he is a coder, I thought about an app. And the only app that I've seen is Hallow. Even the Christians haven't come up with a prayer app.

I have known and know several Catholics (in laws and outlaws!) and they were faithful Christians, they were in fact a bit more ethical, loving and moral than some of the people I have gone to church with over the years.

And, I have taught/preached to women at our local jail going on 17 years and I cannot make distinctions between their denominations, I preach Jesus Christ, Him crucified, buried and resurrected. So, my apologies, I don't understand your bias response.

You do realize there is not going to be any religions or denominations in eternity, right? Jesus said: A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. ~ John 13:34-35

He never put a caveat on that, 'except if they are Catholics.'

God bless you, KervinM, I hope the eyes of your understanding are open.
Lisa

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/25 9:14

I admittedly have not studied what they have to offer in depth but I hear of assertions such as Mary being a co-redeemer with Christ. Shall we not seek to deassociate with such errors? If I call myself a Catholic, then I implicitly assert to this amongs other apostate assertions - not so?

And the only way to put an end to the said inference (if I do not consent therewith) is to terminate my associations with the denomination.

Re: - posted by Lysa (), on: 2024/1/25 12:44

Quote:
-----by KervinM
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Here's a short summary of co-redeemer:

Wikipedia: *According to those who use the term, Co-Redemptrix refers to a subordinate but essential participation by the Blessed Virgin Mary in redemption, notably that she gave free consent to give life to the Redeemer, which meant sharing his life, suffering, and death, which were redemptive for the world.*

Do you know that as the ORIGINAL church we were called Catholics?

Look, I don't want to argue about Catholic's, I already said that my experience is different than yours. Do I agree with every single thing the Catholic church teaches? No way. Do I agree with every single thing the Baptist church teaches? No way!!

There are MANY, many tongue speaking Christian's today and they are all spread out among the different denominations. I speak in tongues but I like my Pentecostal church that I go to. I have two friends that speak in tongues that go to our local Baptist church. They haven't terminated their association with that denomination!

When my dad had cancer, his (Catholic) wife and I took him to an evening Charismatic mass at Bergamo, outside Dayton Oh. They anointed with oil, prayed the prayer of faith over him and they had communion. There are born again people in every denomination, where is it written that we have to terminate our association with others?

Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:8

Here is the end of the matter: you do you and I will do me!!

God bless,
Lisa

Re: - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/26 1:51

To my knowledge sister, there are two main branches of interest to this topic. The Catholic and the Protestants. Protestants are all non-Catholic denominations (excluding Orthodox who says they existed before the Catholics I think).

You could try to find out why it was necessary for those who broke away from the Catholic (called Protestants) and see if you are still comfortable esteeming them (Catholics) thus. Yes there exist many denominations within Protestantism today but that is a different subject on its own and needs to be looked at separately.

So in my humble understanding, there are minor issues that could be borne with - but again there are major issues that needs to be either corrected or de-association ensue. The aim is not to argue but to let iron shappens iron for Christ's glory and not man's

Dr Norman L. Geisler on Catholicism - posted by brendaM, on: 2024/1/26 3:46

"It is noteworthy that the apostles did not appoint more apostles to replace them after Pentecost where they became the "foundation" of the Church, Christ being the chief cornerstone (Eph., 2:20). Rather, they appointed "elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). Irenaeus himself speaks of "the disciples of the apostles" as "presbyters" (elders) (Against Heresies 5.35.2). He wrote: "we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, and which is preserved by means of the successions of presbyters in the Churches" (AH 3.2.2).

Irenaeus (130-200) seemed to believe that each church has a single Bishop over it, speaking of Polycarp as "bishop of Smyrna" (cf. AH 3.3.4) and a line of bishops in Rome beginning with Linus (AH 3.3.3). However, this is in contrast to the New Testament which is clear that every local church had its own "bishops and deacons" (cf. Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:13). And it was they whose leadership was to be followed by their congregations (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24), not any ecclesiastical authority in Rome. For Christ, the Chief Shepherd, was the invisible Head of the visible church. For He walked among them and rebuked them for not recognizing His Headship (cf. Rev. 1-3).

The beginning of false doctrine, even on the primacy of the episcopacy, was nearly a century before this time. John the apostle spoke of it in his third epistle when he warned: "I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us" (3Jn. 9)."

Re: Dr Norman L. Geisler on Catholicism - posted by KervinM (), on: 2024/1/26 6:03

Input greatly appreciated, sister brendaM. We all may wish to seat back and have a smooth Christian sail. However when you take a clearer look inside the hood of spiritual affairs, you soon realise that the devil walketh about as a roaring lion - seeking whom he may devour. He does this in one of a great many ways. Of whom we should not be ignorant. Thus I do still advise that you try to study Catholic criticisms further and see if they shall remain thus commended in your heart, sister Lysa.