

McCRINDLE'S TOP TEN TRENDS FOR 2021 – IMPLICATIONS FOR QB CHURCHES

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Mark McCrindle has identified 10 strategic insights for the Australian landscape in 2021. I've distilled down the trends and reflected on what they mean for our QB churches. I have also reordered the trends (McCrindle's order in brackets) focusing on those I think are most relevant for QB churches.

TREND 1 (9): FOCUS ON WELLBEING

After the anxiety and reordering of priorities of 2020, 2021 will see an increased focus on personal wellbeing, pace of life, mental health, hobbies, exercise, and time with family.

Ideas for Churches:

- Opportunity to share the gospel in the context of holistic wellbeing-focused ministries.
- Promote prayer, silence, and stillness as part of cultivating a healthy inner life.
- Encourage and support congregation in pursuing a Christ-centred wellbeing in their lives.
- Phase out church activities that are not regarded as priorities.

TREND 2 (10): IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

There is a shift from top-down command and control leadership to collaboration and contribution. Leaders need to focus on empathy and wellbeing of their teams as well as strategy. Leaders need to lead both the head and the heart.

Ideas for Churches:

- Check that leaders are building empathy, wellbeing, vision, compassion, and purpose.
- Explore ways for greater collaboration and shared leadership.
- Explore new approaches to developing leaders with the skillset for the new landscape. Look for emerging leaders with high relatability as well as other leadership traits.

TREND 3 (5): CAUTIOUS CONSUMERS

Volatile economy, national debt, and higher unemployment will continue to be unsettling.

Ideas for Churches

- Explore ways to present the gospel as the solution to anxiety, uncertainty, and volatility. This is great opportunity for evangelism.
- Be gentle with your congregation. Encourage and strengthen.
- Continue to emphasise vision. God is at work.

TREND 4 (7): DIGITAL INTEGRATIONS

The COVID-19 crisis and new technology is accelerating change. COVID-19 will accelerate the existing trends of screens and technology use as normal.

Ideas for Churches

- Find volunteers/staff who can relate to Gen Z and Gen Y's visual, digital, and social way of doing things.
- Diversify communication streams to cater for different generations.
- Pursue online. To quote Carey Nieuwhof "The people you are trying to reach are online."

TREND 5 (3): RETURN TO LOCAL

There is a shift away from a focus on the city centre (with suburbs as overnight dormitories), to housing, life and work occurring locally.

Ideas for Churches

- People are more interested in their local community. This may result in increased availability for local ministry, life groups, prayer meetings, and community partnerships
- Develop community engagement and partnerships with other community groups and local gathering places.
- Change the narrative from city to village. Opportunity to create belonging, sense of place and culture of village within a city, especially for smaller churches.

TREND 6 (6): GENERATIONAL CHANGE

With Generation Z (6-24) entering the workforce and Generation Y (25-40) moving into leadership roles, there is a need to understand these generations. Gen Z and Y are visual, digital and social.

Ideas for Churches

- Enlist some Gen Ys for your leadership team if at all possible.
- Create pathways for Gen Z leaders to come into leadership and space for them to lead their way.
- Need to minister to Gen Z and Gen Y's through visual, digital, and social way of doing things.

TREND 7 (2) RISE OF THE REGIONS

Lifestyle factors, fear of COVID lockdown, work from home, and cost of living is driving people out of capital cities and into the sea change and tree change satellite cities and regional areas.

Ideas for Churches

- Churches in regional centres or sea change / tree change locations should prepare to welcome people to their community.
- Increased opportunity to share the gospel in regional growth areas as new arrivals may be more open to exploring Christianity.
- Potentially more diverse skills available for church leadership/ministry as people move to regions.

TREND 8 (8): THE FUTURE OF WORK WILL BE HYBRID (ONLINE AND OFFLINE, HOME AND OFFICE)

Working from home is the new normal. Work will be a mix of work from home and work in the workplace.

Ideas for Churches

- Review work-from-home policies for staff and be clear about expectations and boundaries.
- Utilize online collaboration and project tracking tools such as MS Teams, Planner, and Zoom.
- Explore ways to connect with congregation members online during the week due to more flexible work arrangements.

TREND 9 (1): SLOW DOWN IN POPULATION GROWTH (due to closed borders)

Australia currently has its lowest population growth on record due to COVID reducing the international arrivals to almost zero and the lowest birth rate on record.

Ideas for Churches

- There will probably be slower growth in Ethnic and Multicultural churches.
- With less overseas growth the conversion growth of people in Australia will be essential if the church is to grow significantly.
- The age profile is less like a pyramid and more like a rectangle, meaning there will be equal numbers in all generations. Revise strategy for ministry across all ages, especially focusing on life stage transitions.

TREND 10 (4): HOUSING REDEFINED

In the next year or two, half of all Australians plan on looking for a new home to rent or buy that incorporates more of what they value.

Ideas for Churches

- Opportunity to welcome into community those that have moved to a new house.
- There will be considerable movement between churches if this happens. We need to do this well, including effective integration of new people.