

# 4 Shifts in Recent Church History

\* Losely Based on Doug Pagitt's "Church in the Inventive Age"

## Church as Agrarian Community 1800s-1900s



Churches were community gathering places, often based around shared language, culture and country of origin.

Churches were led by 'Shepherd' leaders, who often functioned as the resident person of education. Communities were small and local.

## Church as Industry 1900s-1950s



Churches became ethnic and linguistic communities with the purpose of creating more Christians. Churches could rely on society to support their evangelism.

Schools and Universities were founded to educate but also replicate more church members. Sunday School, Confirmation, Bible Study focused on indoctrination.

## Church as Informational 1950s -2000s



Churches began taking on organizational and programmatic focuses. Pastors became CEOs (Lead or Teaching Pastors). Churches were built to look like schools, with classroom space emphasized. Church publishing houses produced "curriculums" and "Study Bibles".

Screens and projectors entered into worship, members consumed worship, took in knowledge, were entertained by church. Worship became something that happened to us.

Churches could rely on secular schools and society to help with "educating" citizens about Christian doctrine.

## Church as Inventive 2000s +



Churches are facing a very different world, as technology changes at a rapid pace. Churches can no longer rely on culture to make Christians. Christianity is no longer the religion of the empire. The Millennials are the first generation to grow up with little to no church experience.

Yet, with the democratization of communication and publication, Christians have unprecedented access to each other, and ecumenical conversations happen every day online. Social media allows people to converse based on shared interests and values.

How Churches need to change to adapt remains to be seen, but God is calling us to this new venture, as God as had always called people of faith into a new world.