

# Created To Be Together

**Moving Beyond the Pandemic**

**Presented by Rev. Father Barnabas Powell**  
to the  
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco  
Clergy-Laity Assembly  
*April 16, 2021*

# We Were Made FOR Each Other

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

St. John 17:20-23

## But The Evil One Wants Just the Opposite!

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

St. John 10:9-10

# Our Changing Society

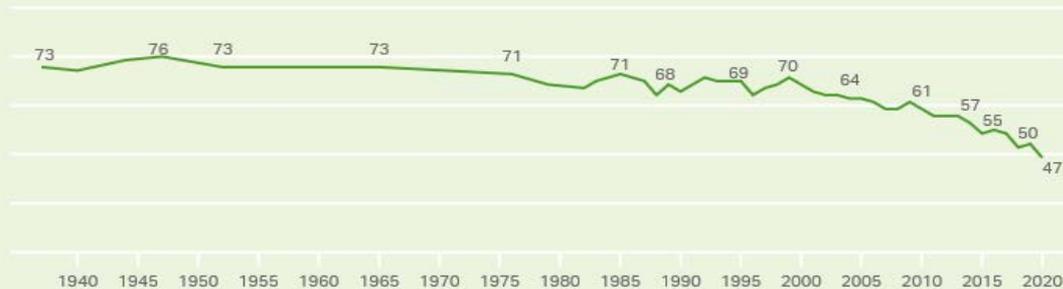
Recent Gallup Headline:  
March 29, 2021

## U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time

Church Membership Among U.S. Adults Now Below 50%

Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue or mosque?

— % Yes, member



Based on annual aggregated data, usually based on two surveys

GALLUP

# Our Changing Society

## The Christian Post

### Former Desiring God writer Paul Maxwell announces he's no longer Christian

by Leah MarieAnn Kleft

April 9, 2021

Paul Maxwell, a former [Desiring God](#) writer and the author of the book *The Trauma of Doctrine*, has announced he is no longer a Christian.

*“What I really miss is connection with people,” Maxwell said on his [Instagram feed](#). “What I’ve discovered is that I’m ready to connect again. And I’m kind of ready not to be angry anymore. I love you guys, and I love all the friendships and support I’ve built here. And I think it’s important to say that I’m just not a Christian anymore, and it feels really good. I’m really happy.”*

# Our Changing Society

Church after COVID—Why Bother Going Back?

Sept. 28 2020

CARMEN JOY IMES

(<https://www.christianitytoday.com/scot-mcknight/2020/september/church-after-covid-why-bother-going-back.html>)

“It’s Sunday Morning... and we’ll have a choice to make:

Get ready to go to church?

Livestream the service at home?

Watch it later?

Or skip it altogether?

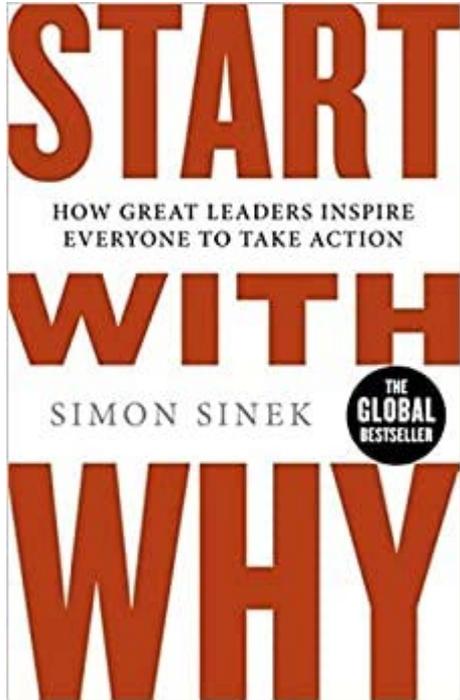
**What Are You and Your Family going to do?**

# What Have We Learned?

- First, This Pandemic and the Societal Chaos has Uncovered some Deep Wounds in our Country
- Second, Poor Catechesis Has DIRE Consequences
- Third, Pressure Reveals Truths about ourselves, but too many don't want to look at themselves. They'd rather look at others.
- Fourth, Some of these changes are going to stay with us for a long time.

**Who Will We Be When The Threat Has Subsided?**

# What Should We Do?

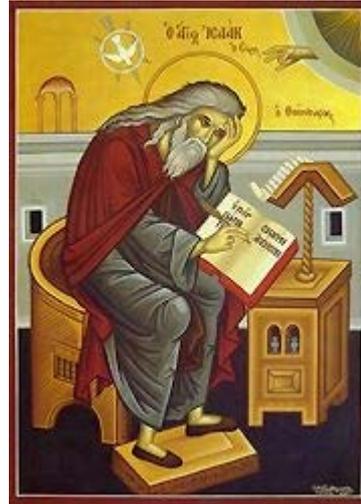


## WHY Do We Gather for Worship, Prayer, and Learning?

- “With Faith and Love DRAW NEAR!” To Him AND Each Other
- Be The Icon of the New Community
- We Are a Congregation, NOT an Audience
- The Physical Discipline of Gathering FIGHTS Individualistic Pride
- No One is Saved ALONE
- Gathering is Part Of Our Salvation (not an option)
- “I Know Myself in the Face of the Other”
- I am Created in God’s Image AND God Knows Himself in Community!

# Who Are We Really AND What Do We Really Want?

“This Life has been given to you for repentance; do not waste it in vain pursuits” St. Isaac the Syrian



# We Each Have a Choice

Will We Come Through this Historic Time Angry, Bitter, Faithless, and Alone?

*“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”*

Revelation 9:20-21

Or Will We Rise to the Moment and Be Orthodox on Purpose?

*“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

**Our Children and their Children stand at the edge of History**

Hebrews 10:24-25

**Looking at us to See How we Choose!**