



# How will Covid-19 affect the church in days

*-Wes Furlong shares results from the recent pastors' survey*

Where has Covid-19 most affected the church so far? How will Covid-19 affect the way we fulfill our mission in the days ahead? We conducted a short survey in April (n=25) to get a better sense of leaders' expectations for the days ahead. Here is a summary of our findings:

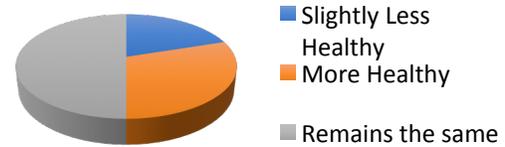
### **How different do you expect the church will look in January 2021 compared with January, 2020?**

Roughly half of pastors surveyed (48%) expect at least some long-term changes to the church due to Covid-19. Only 12% of pastors expect 'many' things will be forever different.

### **What areas will be most affected by Covid-19?**

Most pastors expect Covid-19 to have a neutral or somewhat positive impact on the ministry areas we surveyed (clear mission, unified leadership, compassionate ministries, finances, pastoral care, family ministry, and adult discipleship). On a 5-point scale (1: very negative, 5: very positive), mean responses ranged from personal mental health (2.84) to compassionate ministries (3.88). Some good news from the survey is that pastors generally expect church ministries to remain resilient and even grow during this pandemic.

### Expectations of Church Health



76% believe the church was healthy ('according to your own perspective') in January 2020 and 74% believe the church will be healthy in January 2021. Compared with the church's health in January, 2020:

- 20% expect it will be *slightly less* healthy in January 2021.
- 30% expect it will be *more* healthy in January 2021.
- 50% expect the church's level of health will remain the same.

Pastors expectations for the church's health in 2021 is strongly correlated with a few areas including:

- 'Church maintains strong connections with church members' (r = .71),
- 'Church has unified leadership during Covid-19' (r = .65),
- 'The church is prepared to adapt to a new reality' (r = .58).

### **Pastors expect Covid-19 will have an impact on attendance but not finances.**

Pastors expect church finances will either remain the same (56%) or increase (28%). Only 16% of respondents expect Covid-19

will have a negative impact on church finances. Pastors have a wider range of expectations on attendance patterns with 32% expecting a decrease and 32% expecting no change. Maybe most noteworthy is the highest group (36%) expects at least a slight increase in attendance between January 2020 and January 2021.

### ***How is Covid-19 affecting our pastors?***

68% of pastors rated the effect of Covid-19 on their spiritual health either somewhat positive or very positive. However, 36% rated the effect of Covid-19 on their mental health as either somewhat negative or very negative.

### ***How does the future look?***

Nearly all pastors see Covid-19 with a redemptive perspective. They expect the pandemic will make them better pastors. In fact, 52% believe it will make them 'significantly better.' And nearly all respondents believe the church's best days are ahead. \*

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## **Praying for Pastors**

Did you know that we at Evana are committed to ensuring that every pastor has someone to pray for them and check in with them regularly? We believe in the power of prayer and recognize our leaders often come under spiritual attack and are in need of encouragement because of the demands of their leadership and their ministry to others. If you are willing to be part of a group of prayer warriors who are committed to pray for Evana pastors, please take just a few minutes to fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/MzAc1Fn73Du7kaSe9>.

**Pastors**, we are currently updating our records and our list of prayer partners. If having this kind of prayer support is important to you and your ministry, please help us out and fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/9V55VCnhDF6Qk6Ss7> If you have any difficulties accessing the forms, you can also contact Pam Bartholomew who is coordinating the list of prayer partners at [jpbart13@gmail.com](mailto:jpbart13@gmail.com).

## **Virtual Delegate Meeting**

Since we were unable to meet in person this year because of the cancellation of ReGen 2020, all ***Evana delegates are invited to participate in an online meeting on Sunday, August 9***, beginning at 7:30 pm Eastern/6:30 pm Central. The purpose of this meeting will be to give opportunity for delegates to affirm new board members, hear reports about the current state of the network, and provide feedback on new initiatives and potential membership in Mennonite World Conference. The meeting will take place through a webinar format using Zoom.

In order to provide log-in information to all delegates, we are requesting that each congregation update their list of delegates by sending their name and contact information to our Operations Manager Lori Ann Izeke at [lori@evananetwork.org](mailto:lori@evananetwork.org) by **July 31**. All credentialed leaders in pastoral roles are automatically considered to be delegates. Congregations may also appoint one delegate for every 200 average attendees up to a maximum of six additional delegates. All delegates appointed by the congregation in this way must also sign Evana' personal covenant. \*