

# Church Membership Continues To Decline During Pandemic But There Are Solutions

*Faith Leader Urges Churches To Be More Innovative*

AUBURN (SEATTLE), WA, USA, May 23, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The spiritual landscape in America is changing, and there is a clear decline in membership for houses of worship. According to Gallup, for the first time in eight decades the majority of people now have no affiliation with a religious organization. The eye-opening trend reveals that membership was 70% in 1999 and only 47% in 2020.



[Jesse Bradley](#), a former professional soccer goalkeeper, is the pastor of [Grace Community Church](#) near Seattle and communicates that it is time for an awakening. Bradley explains, "The message of the gospel of Jesus is the same for all nations and generations, but the methods of reaching people need to be contextualized and relevant in every culture." According to a Barna study in 2015, the Seattle-Tacoma area has the second highest percentage of dechurched people in the nation. Bradley, however, has found significant reasons to be hopeful for the future of the church.

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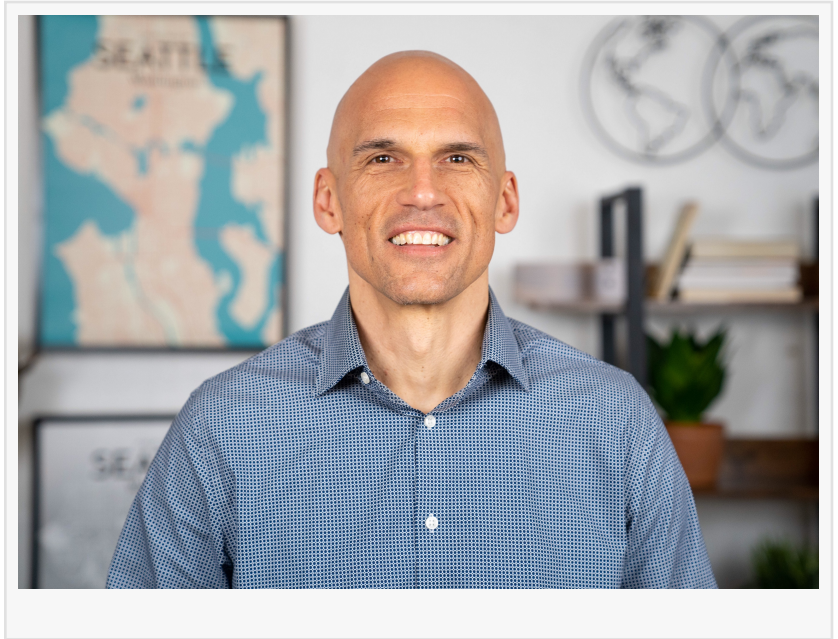
There is an abundant hope available for all people that is deeper than pain and disappointment. Jesus loves everyone, and we need to demonstrate this love within and beyond the walls of the church.”

*jesse bradley*

**A New Mindset:** During the Covid pandemic, many churches have been physically closed and have faced the additional challenges of mandated restrictions. For safety reasons, church attenders have often remained at home on the weekends. It appears that many former church members are not returning. Bradley sees these realities as

an opportunity for a paradigm shift. He adds, "For too long, faith has been compartmentalized in our country to one day, one hour, or one location. It is time to realize that a relationship with God is every moment of every day, including where we live, work, learn, and play."

A New Outreach: Churches are often proactive in terms of trying to attract new people with new programs and advertisements. It is not sufficient. Bradley shares this insight, "The church is ultimately the people, not the building; relationships are the heart of the church. It is not enough to have a 'come and see' approach. Followers of Jesus need to go to where people are in the community, bring an authentic love, roll up our sleeves and serve." Grace Community Church has a "Grace Loves Auburn" ministry that meets



tangible needs in their community in many creative ways including hope boxes, food giveaways, and a Good Samaritan fund. Bradley wants to inspire people, "There is an abundant hope available for all people that is deeper than pain and disappointment. My passion is to spread this hope and to see as many people as possible with satisfied souls. Jesus loves everyone, and we need to demonstrate this love within and beyond the walls of the church."

A New Method: A silver lining for many churches during the pandemic has been the discovery and expansion of online ministry. Pew Research found that 68% of adults are Facebook users, and 71% of 18-24 year olds use Instagram. Grace Community Church offers livestream of their weekend services on their church website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Through all of their content, Grace is now reaching millions of people around the world. Many churches in America are intentionally developing fruitful online ministries. Bradley comments, "Digital media today is similar to the discovery of the printing press in terms of its impact. In person is ideal, but it is also strategic to add a vibrant online outreach. People are turning to Jesus, and there is an immense spiritual hunger during these challenging days. Our hope is that new Christians will find a healthy church home and grow in their faith. It doesn't have to be our church; we just want what is best for each person. The pandemic is a wake up call for the church to make changes and move forward by faith."

#### About Jesse Bradley

A pastor, author, leader, and adoption advocate, Jesse desires to see churches thrive in difficult times. He played professional soccer overseas until experiencing a tragic illness in Africa. He was fighting for his life for a year, and it took ten years to recover. Growing up as an atheist, Jesse decided to follow Jesus after taking a religion course at Dartmouth College. For more information, visit [JesseBradley.org](http://JesseBradley.org) and [graceinauburn.com](http://graceinauburn.com)

jesse bradley

grace community church

+1 253-833-5660

[email us here](#)

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