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### Please Don't Make “How Many Watched Online?” Our New Ministry Metric

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/2020/april/how-many-watched-online-new-ministry-metric.html>

While necessary right now and important in the future, we can't close our eyes to the downsides of online church. It's a whole new ballgame. In a matter of just a few weeks, churches all around the world have a new standard for measuring ministry success. And I'm trying not to be cynical about it. So here's my best shot at a non-cynical (but certainly skeptical) take on this. What's Good About Online Church I'm grateful every time I hear that a church now has as many or more people watching their online services than they had attending their in-person services. Better than a drop-off of numbers, for sure. But let's be honest about what's happening here. Recently, there's been a lot of helpful information about how engagement is a better metric than attendance. I fully agree with that assessment. But if engagement is a better metric than attendance, eyeballs on a screen is a worse one. At-home viewers are far less engaged than bodies in the room ever were. Online And Distracted We all know how online viewing goes. We watch while we're cooking, eating, chatting, Tweeting and working out. Even if we lay all of that aside, people who sit at home and watch a screen are far less engaged in the experience than when they were in the room together. An Incomplete Metric Obviously, that's all we have right now. And I'm truly grateful we have it. Even when we're able to meet together again, keeping an online presence will be an important way to reach new people and keep connected with absent members. But let's be careful not to replace one incomplete, even unreliable metric (attendance) with one that's even less reliable (online viewership). Online church is here to stay. Our congregation does it, and we've learned how to do it even better because of the necessity of this ...Continue reading...

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