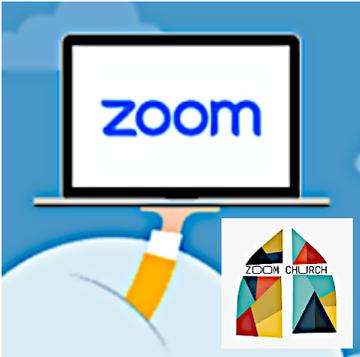


# The Link

## "ZOOM CHURCH"

*Can ZOOM meetings (internet church) scripturally be the "new normal" for the Body of Christ?*



When the pandemic hit our country, the church was directed by the government to forgo gatherings of more than ten people. Various denominations creatively used the internet for their worship services as well as utilizing ZOOM for interactive Bible studies. A number of people have commented on how much they enjoyed sitting in front of their TV set for Sunday morning worship. The question that one must ask is:

Can the Body of Christ function as a biblical church, if it continues meeting online after the pandemic? The Bible states in Hebrews 10:24,25 "...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (NASB). Unfortunately, since the government lifted the "ten person limit" for group size, the attendance in many churches is down. Interestingly, [Barna Research Group](#) recently published a statistical snapshot of the church "before" the pandemic:

In 2009, 48 percent of women attended church at least once a week, but, in less than a decade, the share has dropped to 31 percent. During the same period of time the share of men who attended church at least weekly declined 12 percentage points. While there used to be a gender gap in attendance, that is clearly no longer the case.

The fact is, in the past decade church attendance has been on the decline. This is ALARMING! Yet, our present-day culture has been primed and conditioned for the C-19 Virus event. Social media, emails, texting, internet shopping, (etc.) have all been instrumental in replacing one's voice and physical presence. The internet was a perfect segue to the pandemic adjustment lessening the trauma of staying home on Sundays. However, this shift presents a major dilemma as highlighted in [Hebrews 10:24,25](#) stating that the coming together is an opportunity to stir up love and good works in one-another. The absences of physical gathering makes it difficult for the church to flesh-out this passage. Added to this is the challenge for members to exercise their spiritual gifts. (Spiritual gifts are listed in [Romans 12](#), [1st Corinthians 12](#), [Ephesians 4](#), [1 Peter 4](#), etc.) The Bible encourages the use of spiritual gift(s) to strengthen the church. Sadly, many Christians are oblivious to the scriptural teachings about spiritual gifts as well as their own "giftedness." There are those who sit in the pew Sunday-after-Sunday who are spectators and not intimately involved in the life of the church. Attending only one hour on Sunday morning makes it difficult for members to "stir-up love and good works" in each other. The church is edified when believers utilize their Spiritual gift(s) in the Body of Christ for the common good. [The church is not a HOLY CLUB!](#) It is an intimate gathering of believers who love, encourage and care for one another. Please understand that

caring for another is not focused only on the physical, but also on the spiritual—being a catalyst to help others with their spiritual journey. Regrettably, the church is drifting from the biblical concept of a true church. There is no question that many will scoff at my even suggesting there is a major problem. [The fact is, many followers of Christ are "dormant"—defined as alive but not actively growing.](#) Each member of the Body of Christ is designed by God to contribute to the health of the church. We need each other, and called to serve one another. In other words, every member ([body part](#)) is essential to the whole.

[Aesop's Fables](#)—All body parts (hands, mouth, stomach, teeth) need each other to function as one: On one fine day it occurred to the Members of the Human Body that they were doing all the work and the [BELLY](#) was having all the food. So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to go on strike till the [BELLY](#) consented to take its proper share of the work. So, the [hands](#) refused to take the food, the [mouth](#) refused to receive it, and the [teeth](#) had no work to do. After a day or two, the members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active/good condition: The [hands](#) could hardly move, and the [mouth](#) was all parched and dry, while the legs were unable to support the rest of the body. Thus, they found that even the [BELLY](#) in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the Body, and that "ALL" must work together or the Body will fall to pieces.

As described in the above fable, the church is much like the human body. It only functions well when all of its members are working together expressing their God given gift(s). If the Body of Christ sees someone slipping away from the faith, the members become a "rescue mission" to help draw that person back to the fold. Unfortunately, we often hear someone say, "*I wonder what happened to Charlie? I have not seen him at church for several months.*" The Apostle Paul states emphatically, "[The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part,...](#) [If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. You are Christ's body—that's who you are!](#)" (1 Corinthians 12:24-27—Taken from "The Message"). [\[Please note, "The Message is not a translation of the Bible and it is a very poor paraphrase. However, in this case, "The Message" does make a truth statement.\]](#)

For the "body" to be healthy, each member must be plugged into the life of the church. We are not a social club or a fancy religious organization. [We are the very heart beat of the Living God—the expression of His love and grace—the Bride of Christ.](#) Test yourself to see if you are "plugged in": **(1)** Do you come to church to always receive?; **(2)** Are you investing your life (time/talents/spiritual gifts) in the church?; **(3)** Does the church represent one of the most important parts of your spiritual life? My prayer is two-fold: **1)** That the church create an environment that teaches and assists members to discover their spiritual gifts; **2)** and that every member is plugged-in exercising his or her gift in the Body of Christ. A healthy thriving church is where you will find members [not](#) acting like the "[TATOR Family](#)" (spectators, agitators, dictators, hesiTATERS), but active & productive participants. **Rick**

# Your Gifts Have Empowered MLI to Help Africans!

**GENERAL FUND:** THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!! Your gifts to the general fund has empowered MLI to help many Africans. The needs are still great and your continued gifts are appreciated. A short list of current needs is: Salary support for several MLI teachers and staff still needed; widows general fund enables us to help with medical issues and to give something to those who do not currently have a donor; Please continue to support the medical fund. **On Going Projects:** Milling Project for Widows; Deaf Ministry and construction of the Deaf School to be constructed on newly purchased land; street kids fund; Thomas Kunya's house construction. Pr. Anthony & Pr. Euticauls of Kenya are grateful for your continued support. MLI's Instructors Pr. Paul & Julius Lusinda of Tanzania still need support.

Normally each month, space is reserved listing "details" of current needs; however, this month space below is designated to show various projects that MLI's generous donors have supported.



**Top Left to Right:** Boda Boda's (motorcycle taxi) receiving food; pastors receiving food in the village of Tongolo.

**Middle Left to Right:** Widows of Mafubira and Itukulu receiving food; Pastor James with his new motorcycle. He is so very grateful!

**Bottom Left to Right:** Albino community in Uganda receiving a shipment of food; **Rev. Euticauls Wambua** in Kenya distributing 1000's of dollars of food in the Korogocho Slum & beyond. This represents Euticauls 2nd wave of food distribution; **Right**—Widow hospitalized. There is not space to list all those MLI has helped last month, but thank you for your gifts and for loving Africans!



**Prayer Concerns:** Our daughter, **Heather Vicks**, had a successful liver transplant. She is currently in the UVA hospital with a blockage in the small intestines...additional surgery is necessary. Heather is married to Commander David Vicks (Coast Guard) and has two beautiful daughters. Please pray for **Dr. Sam**; Sam, who has assisted MLI many times in the past, had surgery. MLI's donors funded his costly surgery, and he will need another operation in one month. **Widows** continually need the prayers of God's people. We recently had several admitted to the hospital. MLI's medical fund was used to pay their bills. **Finally**, give God glory and praise for the many good things happening in Africa through MLI's donors!



## UGANDA NEWS

Uganda remains closed to international travelers unless they are willing to endure a mandatory quarantine period of 14 days.

### LATEST NEWS

Concerning the pandemic, President Museveni reported:

- 250,000 natives tested
- 1073 are positive
- 958 of the 1073 have been discharged
- NO DEATHS!

The President has restricted much activities in the country. Though he has loosen some restrictions, schools remain closed and businesses suffer. Food, rent and medicine is a major issue for most Ugandan Citizens.

Mission Link's donors are standing in the gap feeding and assisting may Africans.

**NOTICE:** Again, August is a continuation of MLI's cell phone collection. Please ask your family, friends, Bible study group and church (Pastor) to donate their old cell phone to Mission Link. Also needed are laptops, tablets, electronic keyboard, and cameras. Thank you for helping!



**Thirty dollars (\$30) a month brings great happiness & needed provision for our African Widows in Uganda!**

**Jane Nangobi:** Jane was born in 1966 and has 5 children. Her husband died of blockages in 2015. She is so happy that God saved her, and she thanks God for her pastor who gave her a job to be a cook at the school. She is also grateful for the stove, medical clinics, soap and food that she always receives through Mission Link. Personal and medical needs are a challenge. Jane fellowships at Itukulu Baptist Church.