

# What will the future church look like in a post-Covid-19 world?

**Tim Koch**

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Plagues, biblically, are a call to repentance. Repentance means change. Repentance means listening to God, following His lead.

I detect a resistance to change and a desire to go back. ‘When can we go back to church?’ Has anyone been asked that question?

I pray that the church—that’s Jesus’ community of faith—will be passionate about making Him known. I pray we will have discovered an outward looking posture, seeking to save the lost, and destroy the work of the enemy. I pray we will have grown in prayer, not prayer lists, but entering a conversation with Jesus: that’s a two-way dialogue. I pray we repent, asking Jesus what we need to repent of, where we need to change, what bad habits we’ve picked up, and where we might have taken on the world’s way of doing things.

More and more I’ve begun to wonder why we don’t ask Jesus for His direction. Instead, we vote! Why? Is it because Jesus has left the building? Will the future church, Jesus’ community of faith where He is king, ask, expect a response, and then act?

I know, I shouldn’t be so stupid. Let’s form a committee, have a research paper, enter dialogue, and then vote, hoping for a consensus.

Plagues—and I think Covid-19 could be seen as one—biblically are a call to repentance. Repentance means acknowledging that we need to listen to God. Repentance means listening and following where Jesus calls.

I fear that when the pandemic ends we won’t look too different. We’ll energetically re-establish our traditions, our way of doing things. We’ll pursue the past, hoping to do what we’ve always done. We’ll do what we’ve always done, assuming the virus was the problem, not us, not me.

What will the future church look like?

I pray that I will have grown in humility, not so sure of myself—rather, being open to hear from Jesus, seeking to follow Him, knowing there’s so much I don’t know. I pray I’ll be growing in discovering who I am, in Jesus. I pray I’ll be talking with Jesus as I seek to discover who He has made me. That’s my true identity. As a community, what’s our true identity?

Will I be living out the truth that I am in a relationship of love and affection with God my Father, through Jesus? In a conversational atmosphere, through the Spirit? Where I grow and mature in living out God’s supernatural love, naturally? For in Jesus, that’s who I am.

Will this be the church community of faith, in Jesus, that I find myself living in?

What a wonderful opportunity we have been given, to take time to repent. To stop and let God be God. What an opportunity to be open to hear and then step out with Jesus into this new landscape.

Part of this new landscape is that people are looking for answers, looking for hope, looking to live life unafraid. Jesus certainly speaks into all the fears and anxieties this plague has brought to the surface.

We are Jesus' people of hope, of life, of light, of love. Will we find our voice? Will we each speak these words of life, of forgiveness, of mercy, of grace to the people Jesus brings across our paths?

I'm not sure what the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand will look like post pandemic. I just pray we will find time in humility to repent, to enquire of Jesus what he wants us to let go of, what fears, what pride, what arrogance, what insignificance, what anxiety. I pray we find a way to repent and follow Jesus into this new world, bringing his hope, his life, his love, his presence.

Then again, is there anything more important than a Sunday morning ritual?

Let's get back to sanitising the pews, keeping good records, and hoping we don't get the virus. Let's get back to those 'good old days'. I'm breaking out my black gown and thumping the pulpit. Sinners go to hell!

What will the future of church look like in a post-Covid-19 world?

I think a lot depends on me and you. I for one am seeking to spend time talking with Jesus about what changes *He* sees I need to make. I don't want to build my life on what the world thinks or fears, but on Jesus and His presence in my life. I'm going to spend more time talking with Jesus, in a conversation, expecting to hear, and then I'll do what work He gives me. I'm going into this unknown future confident that I am in a relationship of love and affection with God, my heavenly Dad.

I don't want to keep this life a secret, so I'm asking Jesus to send the Spirit and show me *who* to talk with. Show me *how* to reach out into a world I know nothing about, that they might come to know *Him*.

In a post-Covid-19 world, I want to be changed!

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