

How COVID-19 Will Dramatically Change the Church Forever

This should be the shock to the system pastors need, or the next pandemic just may take the church out.

You'd expect the church to respond very differently than the world in the midst of crisis. Sadly, this hasn't always been the case. Social media is filled with freaked-out Christians who are absolutely terrified, spending their energies seeking out natural solutions to a supernatural situation. The fact that they can't disinfect their hands has sent many into a frenzy. Something is terribly wrong, and church as usual is no longer an option.

If ignoring, minimizing or seeking a natural solution to a demonic threat brings relief, don't presume you have won the battle. The entity is merely resting alongside you, thankful his foe has refused to fight.

The response is a glaring indictment on the church, and without question, the church must not ever be allowed to go on as usual. This pandemic may be the catalyst to reformation for which the remnant has been crying out.

The Church Isn't Ready

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

In an age when so many believers are merely concerned with their personal eternal security, and so many others are sitting back waiting to be raptured before the trouble comes, it's clear that the church is far from ready for the end-time

waves of crisis that are crashing down.

Global traumas like the coronavirus very well may play a part in determining the wheat and the tares. Who will rise up in great, unmovable faith, and who will shrink back in fear? Those who know God will respond very differently than those who are mere pretenders.

“The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits” (Dan. 11:32b, NKJV).

So the question for pastors and every believer in the midst of trial is, how can we prepare? Yes, there are natural precautions we should take. There are spiritual reactions that are necessary too. Many are suggesting adopting house church/small group models. That very well may come into play, but that’s a functional shift. There are spiritual shifts that are much more important.

10 Ways Every Church Must Respond

Institute Strategic Prayer

The days of simply attending a Sunday-morning service where we worship a little, pray a little and listen to a sermon before heading back into the world for a week must come to an end immediately.

The primary focus of every legitimate Christian church must be fervent, passionate, powerful and strategic intercession. The days of simple prayer lists and prayer chains are over as the call to groans and cries of spiritual prayer explode out of the saints.

For years I’ve been campaigning for services that are marked by people laid out at the altars from start to finish as the Holy Spirit broods over them. Deep, guttural groans of intercession will be heard throughout the sanctuary every Sunday (and ultimately, every day of the week).

I am absolutely convinced that a church filled with tongues of fire will do more than any other single activity to make everybody ready for the coming storms.

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

Deal Directly With Spirits Of Fear

It's astonishing how a very dark spirit of fear has blanketed the church. Fear results in unsettled, nervous reactions, while faith results in a confident, peaceful, calculated response.

Pastors must introduce deliverance into their churches as a primary ministry. The spirits that are tormenting Christians have been exposed all over the world during the pandemic. I believe nearly all Christians need or have at one time needed deliverance. The enemy is especially attracted to children of God as he seeks to find open doors to latch on and destroy.

We cannot afford a scared, timid people who shrink back at the sight of their own shadow. This end-time season requires mighty warriors, an army who has annihilated fear and who will stare right through the darkness, expose the enemy and send him fleeing!

In fact, it very well may be time to allow those who are afraid to step back so the church can finally do what God has ordained it to do—fight and possess the land!

“So now, call out so the people can hear, “Whoever is afraid

or anxious may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.” So twenty-two thousand from among the people turned back, and ten thousand were left’” (Judg. 7:3).

Develop a Prophetic Culture

Possibly a primary source of fear in the camp is the lack of foresight, the absence of prophetic revelation. Imagine how different everything would be if God’s people were made ready in their spirits as God prepared them with all sorts of prophetic communication.

Dreams, visions, God’s still small voice, words of wisdom, words of knowledge and other divine impressions are extremely powerful and necessary if everybody in the church is to weather the storm.

Every Christian must be both equipped and activated prophetically. The church needs to hear God’s ever-present voice now more than ever. To have some people who are not tuned in compromises the camp and gives the enemy a very powerful and secure foothold.

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess. 5:19-20).

Grow in Powerful Faith

There is an angry crowd of “believers” who are demanding we “*use wisdom!*” regarding this crisis. I wish they’d shout, “*Use faith!*” t’s much more effective.

It’s disappointing to see very little difference between the world and the redeemed in time of trouble. For so many, the initial and most powerful reaction is natural protection instead of supernatural advance. On social media, I’ve run into an angry Christian crowd that snipes anyone who suggests peace, faith and authority over the schemes of the enemy are the answer. They see such counsel as a minimization of their

human efforts and a threat to that strategy. I wonder just what counselor they are listening to.

They love to promote “wisdom” but tend to see faith as haphazard and even some sort of nonsensical supernatural voodoo. A life of true biblical faith is so foreign to them that the extent of their belief system is a cop-out by simply “trusting that God will do as he pleases.”

True faith looks nothing like that. It’s confident, authoritative and declarative.

Pastors have no option but to repent of their silly anti-faith positions and to actually embrace some of the teachings they previously dismissed. Whether you appreciate the whole of who Kenneth Copeland (or similar ministers) is or not, you cannot deny the powerful truth on the subject of faith that he carries.

“Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb 10:38).

Stay tuned for Part 2!