

*Futuring the Church During  
the Coronavirus Crisis*

JEREMY HOOVER




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The coronavirus crisis is changing the world. People's lives are being disrupted, the economy has ground to a halt, and there is a lot of anxiety in the air.


It is reasonable to project some significant changes for the church. If these do not come to pass, church leaders will still have practiced good leadership in thinking through eventualities. If these changes do come to pass, church leaders who have thought about these eventualities will find themselves ready to act.

Below are some questions for you to consider as you think about how to “future” your way through this crisis.




*Questions for  
a Futuring  
Church Leader  
to Ask and  
Answer*

- **What are your church's core values?**
  - Every church has values that they create content and programs out of. If you were not clear on your church's values, now is the time to gain clarity on these.
  - Are your church's core values being reinforced or eroded through your current online offerings?




*Questions for  
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- **How are you currently leading and serving your people so that they do not become accustomed to “church watching”?**
  - One danger, if stay-at-home orders remain prolonged, is that churches who are focused primarily on delivering content are primarily creating a culture of church watching.
  - How can you push through this in order to fulfill God’s mission?
  - What are your church’s values around this question?




*Questions for  
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Answer*

- **What if social distancing with no public gatherings permitted is the norm for the next six months? What will that mean for your church?**
  - How will your church continue to grow, disciple others, and fulfill God's mission under a lengthy lockdown?
  - What considerations do you need to make for a prolonged stay-at-home order?




*Questions for  
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- **What if, when groups are permitted to gather again, those groups are size-restricted to, say, 50 people or less?**
  - How would a meeting-size restriction affect your church? For smaller churches, it may not. But for larger churches, what contingency plans are you making for this eventuality?
  - What are your values around this question?



*Questions for  
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Answer*


- **What does it say about a church to be content-driven versus mission-driven?**
  - Churches, naturally, scrambled to provide content. As the dust settles, is this the best approach? How does it help you fulfill the mission of your church?
  - Are the values behind content-driven ministry and mission-driven ministry mutually exclusive?



*Questions for  
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- **What if contributions fall significantly (say, a 66% reduction) in the next three months?**
  - What if people stopped giving? What if, after you can reassemble, you find that you lost a significant percentage of people? How would this affect you?
  - How do you carry out ministry without money?






*Questions for  
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- **What is the “biblical minimum” for a church to be a church?**
  - A “church” exists where there are “up,” “in,” and “out” modalities, that is, where people are committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, in community with each other, and coalesced around God’s mission. The size of this group doesn’t matter.
  - The first church expressed its minimum as devotion: to the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the prayers, and the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42-47).
  - What are your categories or ways of determining what must exist for your church to function as a church? Why is this important?



*Questions for  
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Answer*

- **How are you focusing on God's mission in the present and for the future?**
  - The coronavirus situation caught most of us off guard. Things happened quickly, and within a week, most churches went from a full slate of activities to scrambling together online formats for worship.
  - When the crisis hit, how was your church carrying out God's mission? What has changed? What will this look like in the future?



*Questions for  
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Answer*

- **What is the purpose of delivering content and how is it fulfilling your churches vision?**
  - As churches scrambled to offer online formats, many churches tried to reproduce their regular worship and class offerings online. Many of these offerings remained unchanged from how they would normally be delivered; only the venue changed (screens in homes rather than stages in church buildings).
  - What is your greater strategy and purpose in delivering content to your church? How is it helping people grow in your vision?



*Futuring  
Around Five  
Images and  
Five Values for  
the Church*

In the next two pages, I'm supplying five images and five values that will provide you with raw material for brainstorming the futuring questions.

I would love to have a focus conversation with you. Look on the last page for how to contact me.



*Futuring  
Around Five  
Images and  
Five Values for  
the Church*

## **Five Images for the Church**


- Family of God (Titus 2)
- Body of Christ (Romans 12:1-8)
- A community of “one another’s”  
(1 Corinthians 12)
- Holy Priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-10)
- Missionary movement (Acts 8:4-7;  
13:1-3)



*Futuring  
Around Five  
Images and  
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## **Five Values for the Church**

- Sacramental (baptism & Lord's Supper; Romans 6 and 1 Corinthians 11)
- Word and prayer focused (Acts 6:4, 7)
- Devotion (Acts 2:42-47)
- Kingdom-embodied (Lord's Prayer)
- Mission-driven (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)



*More Questions  
for a Futuring  
Church Leader  
to Ask and  
Answer*

- Which of the five purposes most describe your church?
- How can you vision the future around these five purposes?
- Which of the five values is best expressed in your church now?
- How can you vision the future around these five values?
- What eventualities do you need to consider that weren't mentioned in this paper?
- What images or values would you add or take away?



*Contact Me to  
Help You Future  
Your Church*

I would love to have a focus conversation with you to help you begin processing these questions! I specialize in helping church leaders identify their core values and link their practices and mission to those values.

Contact me at  
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