



A Podcast Pause

Episode 51

Stuart Kellogg Transcript

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TRANSCRIPT:

Welcome to the post COVID church podcast with your host, Stuart Kellogg.

Stuart Kellogg 0:12

Hello. This podcast is a lot different than any of the others. And the reason is not because it's simply the 51st, therefore I wanted to do something special, but because it's just going to be me, and it's also the last podcast for a while. Probably for a couple of months. It's because I'm going to stop doing podcasts for a couple of months. So I can concentrate on my new book that I'm writing **The Post Covid Church**.

My wife Beth suggested that I use all the information I've gathered over the last year and a half. At first, I resisted for some reason. But then I realized, as I often have during our 42 plus years of marriage, that she's right. So thank you, Beth. I have a lot of material to work with. And it fulfills our mission. And our mission is "Helping the church share more of the Good News in the face of persecution, hostility and disinterest."

The project, **The Post Covid Church**, started in the spring of 2020, right when everything was shutting down. I was seeing how different churches reacted. Some leaned right in, were so creative in what they did to fulfill their mission of making disciples being the hands and feet of Christ in the middle of this. Others, I deemed them turtle churches, they hunker down, actually stopped doing a lot of things, basically waiting for everything to return back to normal.

I first put together a column, looking at what various churches were doing, put some commentary in there, did some interviews with folks. But then I pondered, "What am I going to do with this? How is it going to have really an impact?" I was working in the yard thinking about that, and the name Joe Stranger popped in my head. Joe and I hadn't talked in about five years. He runs Edge Theory, is an entrepreneur in social media. And I said, he can help me. I'm gonna reach out and so texted him and again, hadn't talked to him in about five years,

texted him. I got an immediate response. He said, "Let's talk today at five. I love what you're thinking." So I shared with Joe, what I was doing, and he loved it.

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He saw the different churches reacting in different ways. He said, we got to get this info out. You can't just do a newspaper column. What happens then, you've got to do social media. And because of his background, I was all ears. So he helped me set up a Facebook Group, and then a podcast. And it just started this conversation. Got a lot of reaction right from the beginning, people responded, not just to what others were doing, but also to commentaries and sharing surveys. It grew.

I started making videos to give it a different look. began the YouTube channel where all the videos are right now; you can look at that. And then with Matt Ayars, he's now president of Wesley Biblical Seminary, I'm an alum there. I shared with him what was going on. He said, "Hey, you really need a website." So with his guidance, went in and built a website, a lot of help from Mat. But also I was able to do a lot, which was shocking that I was able to do that.

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Built that and then got with Brad McMullan. Brad and I used to work together in television. He's a founder of BFAC, an APP development company, very successful APP development company. He was excited about what we were doing. He said, "I want to build an APP for you. I want to donate it to you." His brother Brooks took care of that. And that was just terrific. So many people have shared so much.

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I'm so thankful to all those who've shared expertise with me. For example, Bob Chandler, he's a retired hospital executive and recruiter. He did a full analysis of the project helping me better focus the message and content. Hank Price, one of the most gifted and respected local TV executives in the nation, unashamedly modeled Christ in the workplace. In retirement is helping others through writing and mentoring. He shared with me wisdom on how to strengthen **The Post Covid Church** project.

And I've gotten to talk to people from around the country. Again, 50 podcasts before this one. And talking to these experts. I got to hear ideas, and commentary and different thoughts on how to the church should act and react in the face of all that we were going through. And even got some nationally known folks who graciously gave their time and advice to this unknown podcaster. George Barna. They call him the most quoted man in church. For more than a generation, he's done his research. Jim Denison has hundreds of 1000s of followers for his Christian worldview commentary. John Stonestreet, the head of the Colson Center. Greg, Koukl, Stand to Reason founder. I mean, these people willing to say, "Sure, I'll come on and talk." And it really made a difference.

And it was exciting to be able to hear from these folks. as well as folks who were simply getting things done in their churches. Great ideas, often small ideas, often from small places. An example is Jonathan Pokluda, from Harris Creek Baptist in Texas. He's one church. But he talked about saying, as soon as the shutdown came, as soon as we knew we had to do so much more from the technological end, added digital responsibilities to every staff member. What an idea, but it said, "Look, we've got to be in this world. So you have got to do whatever you're doing. You're going to have to tie in technology." Reverend, Rusty Rabon. He's got 180 member church, The Grace Chapel in South Carolina. This small church knew that even when things started to reopen, that the older members were not going to be comfortable there. But

they wanted to have the church experience. Well, he had a member of a church, a retired engineer, he knew where to find the right equipment, and they built a small radio station. It didn't go far, only about a mile. But folks, the older folks were able to come in, sit in the parking lot and listen to the service instead of going in because there was no vaccination yet. Great idea.

Brother Devon Adams, Word of Christ Church in Mississippi, one of the most memorable quotes of this whole project, he didn't think "many worshipping drinking lattes and coffee in their PJs" would be coming back to church, and turns out he was right. But he never shut down, kept serving the community and in fact, is getting more support than ever from outside of Mississippi because they knew his church would distribute out to the folks in need. Also in Mississippi, Pine Lake Church, Pastor Chip Henderson. Multiple campuses throughout the state, 10,000 members. Well, all of those members were called multiple times at the beginning of the shutdown just to see how folks were doing. They started with the elderly in the single moms. But eventually everybody was called multiple times, as I said. In fact, a good friend of mine, Mayo Flynt, and he's the president of AT&T Mississippi said, "Here they are calling me just to see how I'm doing." And that contrasted with folks, and I know a lot of them and a lot of places, they've never been called by their church, even in the middle of all that shutdown. And the staff still there. They're being paid. In fact, a lot of churches took federal money. And you're wondering, "No one's coming in. What are they doing? Why can't they at least call?" You know, some of the ideas are pretty simple. Some are a little more elaborate. But the idea is to share how can we connect in the middle of all this as things reopened,

I decided to pivot to podcasts only, still use all the other media, but they are to support the podcast. Why is that? Well, one thing, I went and looked at the top 100 Christian podcasts in America, and not one of them was doing what **The Post Covid Church** project is doing: looking at how the church can be stronger after the pandemic. And so I said, hey, there's an opportunity. So that's why I went the podcast route.

I've gotten a lot of feedback on how to make it better, obviously read and research but just listening to folks. One of the things for example, Dr. Phil Walker, former pastor of mine, he's retired now, and as we shared and he's helped me a lot during this project. But as we talked about it, he said, "The podcasts are great, but hey, if I'm listening to it while I'm out, and I hear some things I'd like, I'm not going to listen to it again. So if I can't take notes, I'd love to see a transcription." I hadn't even thought about that. As I researched, in fact, a lot of folks who do podcasts, a lot of the interaction comes through transcripts. So, found a company that through artificial intelligence, it's able to help me do the transcription. So all the podcasts, since we've gone to exclusively podcasts have been transcribed. And that makes it again easier for folks to get the information. So ideas like that make a difference.

So now I'm going to put together all the information, all the ideas in the book. A lot is going to be about leadership. I have been able to talk to some of the top leadership experts in the country. And a lot, of course, common sense ideas, but some ideas people hadn't thought about. As we reopen, we know there are far fewer, attending. Just a couple months into the shutdown. Barna Research showed that a third of Christians who normally worship were not coming back either in person or online. And we're seeing a major cultural shift. Certainly, it's going to be more costly to be a Christian, to stand up for basic Christian values. We're already seeing that. So, you can put your head in the sand, pretend it's not a problem. You can say "Oh, my!", throw your hands up and say we'll never get out of this. Or you can be like Dr. Bill Wilson, the director of the Center for Healthy Churches. During my interview several months ago, he's said, "There's never been a better time to be a church." Now, **that's** the attitude you want to have. There are a lot of folks in need, even those most ardently standing up and screaming against the faith. There's a need, can we solve that need? Can we be winsome?

Can we be engaging? Can the church regain its position of influence? But more importantly, can the church make more disciples to make more of a difference in the culture? Of course, the answer is yes. And part of the answer is, hey, how can we share ideas? How can we be stronger? So that's what I'm gonna try to do with the book.

Thank you for listening and commenting, for sharing. I'd love to hear from you now.
stuart@thepostcovidchurch.org.

I'll return with more podcasts in September and God Willing a book in the fall that I pray will help **The Post Covid Church** not just survive, but thrive.

I'm Stuart Kellogg.

Announcer 12:50

Thank you for listening to **The Post Covid Church Podcast**. You can find much more at **The Post Covid Church** group on Facebook or on the website,

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