

**Sheffield Methodist District –Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
**COVID-19 GOD’S WAKE UP CALL?**

**DID GOD SEND COVID AND WHY?**

**The book of Job - a dialogue about God and Disaster**

- (i) Does theology provide answers? The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Job 28.2).
- (ii) What do you see happening on planet earth?

**The book of Micah - a book about justice**

Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a controversy with his people...  
What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (6.1 -8)

**OPTIONS**

<b>Secular</b>	Covid-19 was an accidental event in Wuhan.
<b>Determinist</b>	God sent Covid -19
<b>Indirect</b>	God allowed Covid-19
<b>Interpretive</b>	Covid -19 is God’s wake up call

**HOW SHOULD THE EXPERIENCE OF COVID CHANGE THE CHURCH?**

**Practice**

*What lessons are we learning?*

- We have discovered ways of working which have by-passed church buildings. The future viability of many is uncertain.
- We have discovered ways of conferencing, meeting and enjoying fellowship without having to travel.
- Many more people are tuning in to services online than were previously actually going to church.
- Lockdown has exposed the gap between those familiar with online technology and those without it.

**Priorities**

*What are the priorities of your church?*

- To proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth.

A smaller, less centralized, dispersed Church with its focus on the edges rather than the centre.

**Nature**

*What will the future church look like?*

The Church is first of all a kind of space cleared by God through Jesus in which people may become what God made them to be. What we have to do about the Church is not to organize it as a society but to inhabit it as a climate or a landscape. It is a place where we can see properly – God, God’s creation, ourselves. (R. Williams)

Ephesian images: ‘commonwealth community’, ‘Household of God’ ‘a holy temple’, ‘body of Christ’ (2.12,19,21:4.16).

Cruise ship.....yacht.....maritime debris