

How to Seize This Once-in-a-Generation Moment

“From the sons of Issachar, those having understanding of times and what Israel should do” (1 Chr. 12:32). Assuming we want to aspire to this level of prowess, how then are we to understand the coronavirus we are in the midst of, and what ought we to do? Instead of a simple impulse response to the immediate situation, let’s back up and examine the larger implication of this outbreak, and see if there are gleanings that could help with strategic imperatives for the future.

The level of global fear—not just of the virus, but regarding the financial implications of the economic shutdown—may be on the level of World War II. The confidence in the economy, jobs, careers and future has been obliterated, causing, all that can shake to be shaken (Heb. 12:27). While this may be very heart-wrenching to us personally, at least we still can put our trust in our Father.

Those without an authentic relationship with Christ are bankrupt of hope. Especially those Millennials and Gen Z generations who have not really known any hardship, and can barely imagine the days of the Great Depression several generations removed. Their confidence in living in a land of abundance has softened their grit and created large-scale entitlement.

It is not unlike the Jewish nation where, when they experienced seasons of blessings and peace, they quickly strayed from the Lord over and over. This entitlement culture we have today has made it even more difficult to deeply impact the younger generations, and hence, the massive exodus from church has ensued.

This “shaking” is our moment to be fountains of hope to weary

souls, and to compel them to escape from their focus on existential happiness to the transcendent reality of connecting with Christ. We can help them realize that all that brought them happiness can disappear in a moment, understanding that just because practical desires are met, these do not fill the soul. We were meant for more than simply food and drink. Man does not live on bread alone, but by the Word of God coming alive!

This kind of global 'aha' moment does not come along very often. Now is our moment to rise and steward the openness that this shaking has introduced. But how?

We can take a page out of the book of best practices that churches from around the world are using right now that are growing exponentially. I am not just referring to the newly discovered "streaming church" that has been forced upon many churches around the world, or even those more innovative using virtual reality (more about this in another article). Of course, we should leverage technology as internet use will grow from 4 billion in 2020 to about 8 billion in 2025.

However, the exponentially growing churches I examined in my recent doctoral studies have done this for quite a while and a whole lot more. Some of their best practices include:

- The senior pastor owns the focus on getting the gospel to the next generation.
- They are intentional about reaching those most likely to come to Christ (under 20 years old).
- They have a sticky growth plan (discipleship) that is life-giving and magnetic!

How they implement these practices varies, depending on their location in the world, but all are impacting profoundly the next generation and their churches are growing exponentially! Their practices embody this statement:

When we focus on reaching and discipling those most likely to come to Christ, we will build an exponential church that is deep, wide and multigenerational.

Since we are in a time of dramatic paradigm shift anyways, perhaps we can examine other paradigms that have inhibited our growth (I will do this in another article) and together leverage this moment! Let it be said that after the coronavirus, with the largest impact for the gospel in the history of the world, church leaders rose up to reach and disciple those whose confidence in the world's systems were shaken and who instead found their confidence in Christ! {eo}

*After speaking to 3 million youth in arenas and stadiums, and authoring 30 books for youth, parents and leaders, **Ron Luce** has just finished hosting Jesus Global Youth Day with 50,000 attendees live and more than 10 million youth in churches all over the world with the global broadcast. Ron has just completed his doctoral project and now book, titled Faith at the Speed of Light, where he documents multiple exceptional churches from all over the world that are growing exponentially by reaching the next generation. He is now taking these best practices and his 30 years of experience and consulting churches. Visit his Exponential Pastor Facebook page or email him at Ron@.*