

12 Positive Shifts in the Church and Culture During the Coronavirus

There have been many tragedies, such as sickness, death and downturns in the economy, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Amid these many tragedies, there have also been many positive shifts that can make a permanent impact. I am not a Semi-Gnostic Dualist; therefore, my theology allows for God being involved in this pandemic (whether God initiated it or merely allowed it is not the subject of this brief article). For those who are learners and adaptors, I believe the church and culture will never be the same. It is not the “learned,” but those who continue to learn, who will inherit the earth!

Furthermore, while many believers are praying for revival and spiritual awakening, our initial response should be introspection and repentance. Ignoring this present God-given opportunity, which should bring about a purging of sinfulness, will result in superficial Christianity. It's vital for the church to experience a permanent, pervasive transformation both individually and systemically.

12 Potential Positive Shifts:

1. **The church should no longer depend upon crowds in a building.** For too long, the term “church” was equated to what took place within the four walls of a building on Sunday mornings. The success of a congregation was primarily gauged by how many people were present for service. We even call the facilities that are being used for service, “church.” The coronavirus pandemic has proven that the church can no longer be defined by a single Sunday morning service. Many churches have

learned how to stay connected and serve their community despite prohibitive lockdown laws. Churches that have refused to adapt will have a hard time surviving in this season.

2. With restrictions on travel, the focus has to localize.

Now that there are restrictions on travel and public gatherings, many leaders, such as myself, have had to focus our efforts locally. We are spending significant time at home, expending hours of energy on our biological and spiritual families within our geographic proximity. All genuine systemic change begins locally and, in my opinion, this reset has been a good thing.

3. People have to connect in small groups. There has been a lot of strategic planning centered on keeping people connected through small groups. Before the ban, groups of 10 or less were meeting. They continue to meet via Zoom video and other online resources. Many churches are contacting each individual in their congregation to make sure they are OK. With less emphasis on the large crowd, many church initiatives have collapsed down to personal touch rather than programmatic persuasion.

4. People have to depend upon one another for resources.

During these days, there are many great stories of heroism, altruism and philanthropy. Every crisis brings out the worst, such as survivalists hoarding and fighting over food, but it also maximizes magnanimity in humanity. For instance, people are checking in on the elderly, serving free coffee and food to health care workers, and demonstrating kindness to neighbors. This deconstruction of independence and isolation in communities is catalyzing many relationships.

5. Dependence upon God is not merely a theory. Although many churches utilize apps for online donations, some churches have refused to do that. As a result, they are

experiencing a substantial drop in giving. Fear of job and income loss will negatively impact giving. Some have estimated that it will drop an average of 20% in the U.S. Now, more than ever, the church will have to go to another level in faith and dependence upon God for their sustenance. Those who lack experiential faith and intimacy with God during these days will either pursue an encounter with the living God or experience deep despair and failure. Scripture says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

6. **People are learning to face reality sans entertainment and busyness.** With people lacking the typical diversion of their hectic commutes and competitive sports, they have more time to ponder their life and purpose. This drastic shift has created more internal space for self-reflection and awareness, and some people may not like what they see when they look in the mirror. Hopefully, this pause will change us forever!
7. **People are learning gratitude for simple things.** Things we have taken for granted in the past, such as physical health, income, health care workers and hospitals, entrepreneurship, and the freedom to gather for worship, are now appreciated more than ever! Hopefully, this will result in long-term, attitudinal appreciation.
8. **People are facing their mortality.** The massive proliferation of this virulent outbreak has caused every person to consider their fragility and mortality. According to the "Song of Moses" (Ps. 90:9-12), this awareness can result in having a heart of wisdom.
9. **The pride of humanity is humbled as God shakes nations.** God not only saves individuals, but also shakes nations. In a short period, God has shut down the activity and economy of the developed nations of the world! God,

being the sovereign judge over the nations, is the theme of numerous passages in the Bible, such as Psalms, the books of Daniel and Revelation. He is also the focus of much of the content of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and more. The retributive “Day of the Lord” that humbles the pride of humankind is experienced by nearly every generation. They need to be reminded afresh that Yahweh alone is the true sovereign Lord (see Isa. 2:10-22, 24). The arrogance of humankind, seduced by its self-focused affluence, makes this generational visitation a necessity.

10. People are open to preventative health measures. Most of the mortalities of the coronavirus befall those with a pre-existing health issue. As a result, many are now waking up to the fact that they need to care for their physical health. This is especially true since the health care system is over-run and unable to accommodate every sick person. Proper nutrition, sleep and dependence upon the Lord are all things we can control. Proactively following these principles greatly enhances our immunity, making it less likely we will fall ill to the coronavirus. This is because viruses attach themselves to weak (endogenous) cells that are more prone to proliferate with a bad diet. Hence, those who consume only live foods (and avoid ultra-processed foods), who consistently exercise and who proactively practice preventative health (instead of depending upon prescription drugs to alleviate the symptoms) will more likely maximize their days and fulfill their divine assignment. God’s medicine is not just utilizing faith for divine healing, but also orbiting around the original plant-based diet given to Adam (see Gen. 1:29). An intense study of the health benefits of each fruit and vegetable will be a life-changing experience.

11. Families are spending time together. With schools

canceled and parents working from home, people are being forced to spend time together and families are having dinner together regularly. Hopefully, mothers, fathers, siblings and spouses are taking advantage of this season of geographic and social proximity, and connecting in a meaningful manner.

12. **Home schooling is now a viable option.** With the advent of radical sex education in public schools, many parents have considered private education and home schooling as a better alternative. In the past, many states, and even nations like Germany, have made it extremely difficult for parents to take responsibility for educating their children at home. The coronavirus has made both online schools and home schooling a viable option. Consequently, many parents of young children have taken the responsibility to educate their child away from the State, which comports with Deuteronomy 6:6-9. This can result in precluding the radical Left agenda from indoctrinating millions of students with their secular worldview. The potential for Christian educational institutes to step into this vacuum and provide robust curricula cannot be overstated.

In closing, God is never surprised by any crisis or problem. His people are to adopt and advance in challenging times. I pray the church does not miss this divine opportunity to stand in the gap, love, serve and provide solutions by representing Jesus to this hurting world.