

5 Ways God is Reforming His Church in 2020

Recently I have heard several people mention that they believe 2020 is a year when God will reform His church. I believe this to be true.

The following are five areas where I sense the Lord challenging and shifting His church:

1. The restoration of true biblical standards for Christian leadership

Last week, I dealt with this point in part 1 of this article ([read more here](#)). However, let me add the biblical principle stated in 1 Peter 4:17, that judgement begins first in the house of God. Whether or not this relates to a chronological application of judgement that involves a cycle of seeing judgment in the church prior to judgment in the world systems, I don't know. That being said, what it definitely means is that the church never gets a pass from the Lord. The Lord promises that He will judge His people (Heb. 10:30). Hence, when we see scandalous sin exposed in church leadership, it is a sign God is still moving and demonstrating His sovereign will.

2. The unique role of the church

I believe that 2020 will begin a process when the understanding of the glory and uniqueness of the local church will continue to manifest globally. Also, the fact that Jesus is the head of the Body, which is the church, will also be unpacked further. Consequently, I like to use the term "Body of Christ" even more than the word "church"—since this illustrates how organically inseparable Jesus is from His people.

Scripture teaches that Jesus is coming back for a “glorious church” (Ephesians 5:27). This has to do with a pattern of the church looking and acting like Jesus—not merely waiting for the phenomena of the glory cloud (or gold dust) to fall in a church gathering (see 1 John 4:17).

3. The church’s role in culture as Salt and Light

When we read the gospels, we are struck with the fact that Jesus spoke overtly about inaugurating His Kingdom rule. This proclamation challenged the powers of Rome, which was the main cause of His crucifixion (John 19:12-16). That being said, when we read the epistles of Paul, Peter, James and John, we do not seem to see the same focus on the Kingdom of God challenging worldly powers and systems. We must not be looking hard enough because Luke described Paul’s content as the proclamation of the Kingdom (Acts 20:25, 28:31). However, once we look closer at said epistles, we are actually seeing how the worldly powers were challenged and overturned.

Paul mentioned that part of his calling was to show the “administration” of the mystery (NASB in Ephesians 3:9). This had to do with unpacking the practical implications of the role of the church—which (as His body) is the physical manifestation of the invisible Christ. That being said, Paul’s teaching on marriage, family, spiritual warfare, gender, economic equality in Christ, prayer, as well as the criteria for choosing leaders and how believers were to behave toward one another, were all revolutionary constructs (in the context of their pagan culture) that manifested His Kingdom rule in the subculture of the church (1 Tim. 3:15).

The result was that, as the disciples of Jesus worked in the marketplace and filled cities with His teaching, the world was turned upside down (Acts 4:28, 17:6).

4. The weakness of the leader-as-CEO and corporate model of the church

The crowd-based CEO model of church continues to disillusion young people looking for true community, authenticity and a people to call family. Those viewing the profound discipleship movement that is christianizing nations like China and Iran (without big buildings, budgets, social media marketing, paid staff and worship teams) are longing for the same kind of biblical pattern in Western churches.

I believe 2020 is the year when more and more leaders will attempt to build “disciple making movements” rather than mere convert-based churches. The corporate business model of doing church—which took off in the 1980s—has proven that, irrespective of the crowds they garner, they usually fail at disciple making. Jesus proved that focusing on disciple making was the key to building the largest and most effective movement the world has ever seen!

This will be the year when disciple making will gain the traction needed to eventually challenge the assumptions of the “CEO convert driven” model of church.

5. The move back to simple faith for miracles and breakthrough

I believe this is the year when a new generation of young believers will arise that will be weary of all the impractical “theologizing” in the church that produces nothing but talk. (I myself have an advanced degree and have spent my life studying Scripture as well as theology; however, my focus has always been either devotional or missional).

Luke called his historical narrative “the book of Acts” (or the book of Action), not “the book of theology or philosophy.” The Scriptures were written to tell the story of our missionary Father/God, who loved the world and gave up His only Son to save every tribe, nation and people. Those who are truly hearing the heart of God will read the Bible with a missional lens and desire to demonstrate the power of God to a

lost and dying world!

In the context of the church, they will live to empower disciples for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12) and in the context of the world, they will desire to manifest His power in a way that proves Jesus rose from the dead. Consequently, many new evangelists will begin to arise (as we saw in the “voice of healing” movement in the 1950’s) and some will eventually fill stadiums, proclaiming the gospel and praying for the sick. (In the past decade, we have only seen a trickle of what is to come!)

May the reformation of the church that started in the 16th century continue until the Lord Himself comes back for His bride. May all of us who read this article have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to His Body!