

On the Cusp of a Great Harvest of Souls

The church of Jesus Christ is at a crossroads. We stand on the cusp of what could be the greatest harvest of souls in human history. Some are predicting that up to a billion people could come to Christ in the next decades. The Scripture confirms this great harvest, saying there “was a great multitude [in heaven] which no one could count, from all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues” (Rev. 7:9). For the first time in history, we are actually on the verge of this prophetic passage becoming a reality.

This is an exciting prospect. But if we’re honest with ourselves, we must admit that the church of Jesus Christ, in the Western world, is not quite ready to reach and disciple a massive harvest of souls. We need a new reformation of our values and priorities if we hope to be ready for what God is about to do on the earth. We must learn to do church as a family

I gave my life to Jesus in 1974, toward the end of the Jesus Movement. I was radically transformed by reading the Gospels and the book of Acts. However, it didn’t take long for me to realize that the 20th-century church I was saved into was only a distant echo of the glorious church of the first century. After a season of training, I joined a church planting team in the city of San Francisco in the fall of 1977, where I met my wife, Diane. We planted a Vineyard Church in 1984 that became one of the largest churches the city had seen in a generation. It during these years that we began to understand what it means to “do church as a family.”

Reformation 2.0

After leaving the city in 2010, I wrote a book with Banning

Liebscher called Revival Culture: Prepare for the Next Great Awakening. This book begins with a documentation of some of the challenges we would face if we received a massive influx of new believers into the body of Christ. If a billion souls came to Christ in the next decade, we would need to raise up 10,000,000 new pastors to care for these new believers at a 1-per-100 ratio. This is a huge number of new leaders. It would take a thousand Bible colleges, graduating a thousand pastors per year for 10 years to provide this number of new leaders. (1000 times 1000 times 10). In other words, it's a practical impossibility given our current rate of training of new pastors in the body of Christ today. In order to meet the challenges of a new great awakening, we will need an entirely new strategy: The maximized mobilization of every member for ministry.

On October 31, 2017, the church commemorated the 500-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. It was five centuries ago that Martin Luther sent the 95 Theses to his bishop and was eventually expelled from the priesthood. Out of all the corrections that Luther sought to identify and implement in the church, three stand out as critically important: 1) the authority of Scripture, 2) salvation by faith alone and 3) the priesthood of every believer.

On the first two, we did fairly well, but we dropped the ball on the priesthood issue. Prior to the Reformation, a select few people performed the ministry, and the vast majority of believers simply attended and watched. Sadly, after the Reformation, still only a few people performed the ministry, and the majority simply watched. In other words, the priesthood of each member was never implemented, and the majority of God's people were relegated to the role of spectator and consumer.

According to Scripture, the full power and expression of the body of Christ depends on every member fulfilling their unique role as part of the body of Christ. (Eph.4:16). But

unfortunately, most churches are operating with less than 20% of its members serving, and the vast majority are spiritual “couch potatoes.” It’s no wonder the church seems so powerless in the face of the challenges of current culture.

The Kingdom of God Is Family

The good news is that God is in the midst of shifting the church in a huge way in our generation. Some are calling this a new reformation, but I like to think of it as Reformation 2.0! It is high time we take a fresh look at the mandate of the Church and return to some of the core values and priorities that characterized the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. To accomplish this, I believe God is introducing new ways of doing church that are certain to increase the mobilization level of every church that embraces what God is doing in our day. The foundational shift is learning to do church as a family.

In my current role as a catalytic consultant, I am privileged to coach pastors and churches around the world, and when I ask a pastor about their vision, almost always they will respond like this. “We are building a family!” Unfortunately, most pastors define family as “a safe place to belong.”

My usual response to this definition is, “Yes, if you are 6 months old ... but if you are 30 years old, you will be sitting in my basement in your underwear, playing video games”. In other words, family must be more than a place to belong. It must be a place to become.

In this series of articles, we will share with you some practical ways to do church as a family and mobilize every member according to their God-given design and destiny.

Some people define this massive shift as a move from a pastoral-based church to an apostolic-based church.

Michael and Diane Brodeur served as a pastors in San Francisco for more than 33 years, and by God's grace, established one of the largest churches the city had seen during that time. Michael and his family moved to Redding, California, in 2010 and have served in a number of ministries, including Jesus Culture, Global Legacy and the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry. He launched in 2014 and is equipping and coaching hundreds of churches around the world. He is the author of several books, including *Revival Culture: Prepare for the Next Great Awakening*. He also travels globally as a conference speaker and catalytic consultant for churches and organizations.