

Why God Used the Pandemic to Reset the Church

Crack!

The pain radiated through my body nearly from head to toe. I could feel it intensely. What was meant to be an innocent joke or having a little fun ended up with my shoulder being broken—just boys being boys.

I was about 7 years old. It was a frigid Midwestern school day, and the bus hadn't arrived yet. Our bus stop was located on the corner of a park next to some basketball courts. As we waited for the bus, we found a patch of ice on one side of the court and were taking turns sliding across, mostly to show off in front of the girls who were huddled on the other side of the court.

When it was my turn, I took off into a smooth slide—until I went airborne and then slammed down to the ground. Then the agony set in! The kid who chose to trip me didn't mean to injure me, but our moment of fun ended in extreme pain for me.

I quickly went from an ice pack to a trip to the emergency room. I remember staring at the X-rays. Then the doctor came into the room, telling my mom that my shoulder was dislocated and my collarbone had a hairline fracture. He explained that my shoulder would have to be reset (popped back) in place.

This process was extremely painful. Then I was given a shoulder support brace that I would be required to wear for the next six to nine months. I couldn't raise my hand above my head, and I would need help just to get out of bed. Even simple movements like climbing up the school bus steps required assistance, or I would suffer searing pain in the injured shoulder.

The problem was simple. I had a crack in my shoulder that had to heal. The dislocated shoulder needed to be reconnected properly—and that would take time. Resetting my shoulder was almost instant, but the healing took around seven months. Through the process, I learned how to become totally dependent on others for the simple things in life that I had taken for granted. Getting a glass of water with my injured shoulder was tough sometimes. Trying to get through the school day without my friends goofing around and forgetting I had a painful injury was the worst!

Why Is God Using the Pandemic to Reset the Church?

When the pandemic started, we started hearing many pastors and teachers using the word reset to describe what was taking place in the world and the church. The word “reset” refers to something being set again or renewed. God allowed the world to stop so that He could reset His church. Before the pandemic, we had become detached from the Lord’s purposes and plans—and too attached to the world. We went from worshipping Jesus for who He is to worshipping Jesus for what we can get from Him.

Sometimes we placed more emphasis on the impressive “show” during worship—the lights, camera, smoke machines, tracks of extra instruments and vocals, and even the worship leader or the style of worship—leaving out the main ingredient for worship, which is the Holy Spirit.

We went from Holy Ghost, on-your-face-crying-out-to-God prayer meetings to church growth seminars designed around the “corporate America” business model concept. Sadly, we turned many of our platforms into ridged programs performed to perfection from one service to the next. Sunday after Sunday, we checked the box on another well-executed agenda. But in all our striving for “perfection,” we lost the true fire. Rather than being passionate about Jesus, we applaud each other for the great job we did by our own abilities. How sad!

The result of this delusion was that we took the flock entrusted to our care and distorted their view of what it really meant to serve the Lord. By infusing our messages with everything else but the Word of God, we convinced God's people that they are there to serve our annual church-growth campaigns in order to fulfill our five-year building programs. We based our ministry success on the number of people who enter through our church's doors instead of the quality of life each person has who sits under our care.

God wants substance—not a cheap substitute. He wants quality and not quantity. This is not the heart and purposes of God for His people. That's why God had to slam the doors shut.

God's Resetting Plan

"Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:10-11, NLT).

Just like the doctor had to reset my shoulder and create a means to support my cracked collarbone, God used the pandemic to reset the local church. He is resetting us so that we are properly joined to other believers and the body of Christ as a whole, as well as being properly joined to Him.

Just like my shoulder was still connected to my body when it was dislocated, it had to be reset for it to function again. Once it healed, my shoulder hasn't given me trouble since.

Similarly, God is resetting us for His church to function better and be made whole. We'll get through this together. Happy resetting! {eoa}

Andy Sanders *has been involved with writing and book publishing since 1999. He is a prolific writer with a leadership-type message to the church. He coaches and assists*

writers through the publishing process and works at CS Book Design. Andy has a B.A. from Evangel University and a master's and doctorate in Christian education from Freedom Seminary, graduating with honors. He and his wife, Cathy, reside near Daytona Beach, Florida.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.