

The Reemerging Church

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There are points in time in the life of a person and in the life of a church where God gives us an opportunity to reemerge, to reset, to reinvent, to revive, to reposition ourselves for a better quality of life and ministry. Covid 19 has forced us individually and collectively as a nation, a community, and a church to pause, adjust, rethink, and respond in new ways. We have all been challenged, some much more than others. We have had to ask certain questions:

How will do life under these conditions?

How will we maintain a quality of life that is meaningful and fulfilling?

But as a church, it is essential that we do not miss this opportunity to emerge from this crisis more effective, more focused, and more committed to attaining the quality of life God expects of His people.

Eph.5:15-17: “Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.”

Where is the opportunity in Covid 19 for the church, not just while we are in isolation, but as we reemerge?

We have learned to DO some things better:

Technology

Care Zone Connections

In 2010 there was a devastating earthquake in Haiti that killed over 250,000 people. Haiti is still reemerging from this tragedy-and it seems in the past 10 years the leaders have learned nothing. I am not sure what the church has learned.

In 1992 South Florida was hit by a devastating Hurricane named Andrew, and Homestead was destroyed. As people came out after the storm, they knew life would never be the same. Certainly building codes changed, but Homestead never fully revived.

In August of 2005 the nation witnessed the devastating effects of Katrina on the Gulf Coast of LA and MS. They have not fully recovered to this day.

Our biggest challenge will be to reemerge from this crisis qualitatively stronger than when we began to shelter. If we do, it will have to be intentional with a commitment to not just DO better but to BE better than we were-Better at:

- Fulfilling our Mission Statement: It is the mission of the Central Church of Christ to lead people to have an authentic relationship with God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - Attention to how we LEAD others to this
 - Attention to AUTHENTICITY in ourselves and then in others
 - Attention to RELATIONSHIP-saving and sustaining with the Father
 - Attention to THROUGH JESUS-showing Him to be the only way.
- Reviving the Marks of the Church-not reinventing them
 - Evangelism
 - Has Covid 19 created a more fruitful ground for reaching people?
 - Are we ready to capitalize personally on harvesting fruit from this crisis?
 - Does the presence of “death” remind us of how fragile life is and how urgent reaching the lost is?
 - Has this worldwide pandemic given us a more compassionate heart for our brothers and sisters around the world whose circumstances are much worse than ours in the US?
 - Discipleship
 - Do we sense the need for a deeper commitment to grow in our relationship with Jesus?
 - Have we taken for granted the discipleship training opportunities we have had in the past-like Bible classes, online trainings, personal one on one training-and are we more committed to participating in these when we reemerge?
 - Benevolence
 - Has our compassion for others increased during this time?
 - Are we more aware of needs and more eager to meet those needs?
 - Worship
 - During this period of isolation have we found a new appreciation for corporate worship?
 - Do we have an eagerness to join in the singing, prayers, Lord’s Supper?

TWO Illustrations:

Return from Babylonian Captivity:

Haggai: READ Hag.1:1-11 Neglect of the rebuilding the temple while rebuilding their own houses led to:

Planted much harvested little

Eat but never satisfied

Drink, but never refreshed

Clothes, but not warm
Wages, but holes in pockets
One solution is to “Give careful thought to your ways.”

Acts 8:1-4, The Persecuted Jerusalem Church Scattered

They reemerged stronger and instead of defeat, the crisis led to a greater spread of the gospel than before.

We have some choices to make individually and collectively as a church. When we come out of our shell what kind of chicken are we going to be; when our hibernation is over what kind of bear are we going to be; when the storm passes and we emerge from our homes, what kind of neighbor will we be.

As much as I appreciate updating websites, establishing new lines of communication, and improving the quality of our online presence, if these do not reflect the heart of our people to be qualitatively and spiritually different it will be like driving a clunker down a super highway.

Church we have an opportunity and a challenge before us. What if God is breathing new life into us? What if God is saying to Central and to other churches, you have had a time out period, a time to give careful thoughts to your ways, a time to be quiet and look at your life, your family, your devotion to Me, and now as you begin to come back out and resume your activities what is going to be qualitatively different? We are always on the edge of either mediocrity or greatness, existing or living, walking or running, good enough or more. Our Father has great aspirations for his people. Now is the time for the light of the gospel to shine brighter than it ever has.

Let's do this together! Do I hear an AMEN?