



How COVID-19 is Producing Prayer

By Mark Powell

During the current pandemic, something of a spiritual revival occurring which the mainstream is starting to acknowledge. And that is, a significant number of people are turning to God in prayer. The Wall Street Journal is even calling this, A Coronavirus Great Awakening? According to Premier Christian News:

As the global coronavirus pandemic continues to worsen, the number of people Googling the word “prayer” has dramatically increased. This is according to Jeanet Bentzen, an economist at the University of Copenhagen, who released a report on her findings, titled: “In Crisis, We Pray: Religiosity and the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Throughout the world, a remarkable thing is taking place. Doctors and nurses are taking to the rooftops of hospitals to pray for their patients and cities. Maybe this is because as Christianity Today rightly observes, “Disruption is now the daily theme of our workplaces, campuses, homes, and even our inner world.”

Phil Moore, a teacher and evangelist at Everyday Church in London, calls this kind of spiritual season we are in, The Corona Virus Experiment. Moore refers to the early twentieth-century missionary, James O Fraser, who was the first to take the Gospel to the pagan Chinese of Lisuland. The Lisu are an immense, formerly unreached people group, originally located several hundred miles west of Wuhan. Although they are now spread throughout China, Myanmar, Thailand and beyond.

Last year I had the great privilege of travelling too Northern Myanmar and Thailand to meet with these now largely Christian people. Their love for Christ and His Gospel was inspiring. And

their zeal for mission is something which would have made James O Fraser weep with joy, especially when one considers the many hardships he endured.

For instance, Fraser was often physically prevented from visiting the villages that he had brought the Gospel too because of the often-inclement weather. What the missionary decided to do during these times, though, was to earnestly commit himself to prayer. As Moore references Eileen Crossman as writing in her biography of Fraser, Mountain Rain:

If I were to think after the manner of men, I should be anxious about my Lisu converts - afraid for their falling back into demon worship. But God is enabling me to cast all my care upon Him. I am not anxious, not nervous. If I hugged my care to myself instead of casting it upon Him, I should never have persevered in the work so long - perhaps never even have started it. But if it has been begun in Him, it must be continued in Him.

This is especially challenging for those of us who are pastors of Christ’s flock. All of a sudden our priorities have been exposed. And we no longer have the excuse that we are ‘too busy’, as if that was ever and acceptable, for our praylessness. Moore speaks for many when he writes:

As a Christian leader, I feel a little stressed right now that I am not going to be able to gather together in person with the people that I lead for the next few Sundays. I’m busy pastoring many of them via email and social media, and I’m busy preparing online services so that I can serve them well over the next few Sundays. But I’m challenged that I can do far more to serve them than to take my pastoral overbusyness online. God isn’t

just encouraging me to transfer my face-to-face meetings into Skype and Zoom conference calls for a season instead. He is inviting Christian leaders all across the Western world right now to rethink the whole of their ministry and to trust him that their inability to gather people to them for a season is an opportunity for them to gather themselves to God on behalf of the people.

Amen! May the Lord God Almighty pour out His grace upon us at this time that we would re-commit ourselves to interceding before Him in prayer.

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