

Creative leadership needed in a crisis

There is a saying that is very relevant today for every leader who wants to not only survive, but thrive in this time of crisis: “necessity is the mother of invention.”

Today, creativity and inventiveness in leadership is not an option but a necessary tool for any organisation to not only sustain itself, but also to find new ways of growing and developing.

Businesses and companies have to find new products, new methods of sales and service and new ways of marketing. All of this can only be done if the Leaders and their staff are open to the new paradigms.

An example of a new paradigm is that access to Wi-Fi is no longer a luxury but a necessity and will become increasingly so.

New ideas can only come from a new way of thinking. There is a verse in the Bible (Romans 12:2) that makes the point that true transformation can only come from a change of thinking.

To be set in your ways is not a luxury today, but a serious risk. For example, parents and schools who do not conform to the new way of schooling will not only be left behind, but could well damage a whole generation of learners.

In technology, there is the infamous example of Nokia which refused to adapt to the changes in the mobile phone market and went from leading to almost non-existent. Thus, people and communities who are not willing to adapt to the new normal might not survive and might even pose a greater threat to others who are.

Even in the church, there are Leaders who just cannot come to terms with all the challenges and who want to continue with the status quo.

The days of crowds gathering in one building for church services are suspended indefinitely for the near future.

Church leaders who are waiting for this to change and are not making new plans to evangelise, disciple and shepherd might not have a flock left to shepherd when things do return to normality.

The sooner church leaders accept this the sooner they can start to realise that the church has shifted from the building to the homes and to the market place.

This physical shift of manpower should be seen as an opportunity rather than as a setback.

It should be seen as an extension of the ministry and purpose of the church.

It is also an opportunity for leaders of families to be equipped to be the “pastor” in their homes, and for marriages and families to be enriched on an individual basis.

Funnily enough, this is how true ministry and church was supposed to be.

Is the hand of the Lord maybe taking advantage of a crisis to push us into our true purpose as His Church? Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28 seems to confirm this!

There are also those individuals in our communities who are not willing to accept change and are becoming a serious health risk to those around them.

No matter how many times they are told to sanitise, wear a mask and social distance, they continue in their stubborn refusal to accept these changes.

They do this thinking that our present crisis does not pose much of a threat or that they themselves are safe from this virus and will not contract it.

The tragedy is that the cost of their ignorance and stubbornness could be extremely high – the possible deaths of those around them, including loved ones.

Concerning this, there is an attitude that all of us have to adopt when it comes to our interaction with others – “I sanitise, wear a mask and keep my distance because I am more of a threat to you than you are to me!”

If all of us can maintain this attitude especially in the coming winter months, we will see a sharp decline instead of a spike.

Let me conclude on a positive note.

In this time of crisis, how do I as a leader start the process of change in my life and ministry?

Firstly, be prepared to shift yourself from your old mind-sets and comfort zones.

Secondly, all mind-set changes or paradigm shifts only happen when new information or data is accessed, interrogated and accepted. Read, research, question, and listen to the advice and opinions of others, especially those who are already embracing the changes with a level of success.

Thirdly, new information leads to new thinking which will lead to new goals. Setting new goals will necessitate that you communicate these new goals and adapt your personal use of time, staff and resources in alignment with achieving these goals. Time and space do not allow me to fully share this process but allow me to shortly phrase it in Afrikaans, “Nuwe DATA...Nuwe DENKE (thinking)...Nuwe DOELE (Goals)...Nuwe DADE (Actions)...Nuwe DINGE (Things).

The Chinese word for “crisis” includes two sentiments, “danger’ and “opportunity.”

As leaders in this time, which one are we going to focus on?

My prayer is that a new generation of leaders will arise who will responsibly seize the opportunities that this crisis affords us and not become paralysed by the dangers that we soberly admit are also there.

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