

Cross-Cultural Perspectives from the Director



“Missionary, what season are you in?”

The Wise Man said, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Paul, a missionary role model proclaimed, “Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2, *NIV*)

In North America, we are used to four seasons (winter, spring, summer and fall and some of us are presently longing for spring). Other parts of the world may experience fewer seasons and may call them by different names. One missionary spoke of two seasons. One, wet. One, dry. Another: one, hot. One, hotter. Whew!

Seasons exist in both the natural and spiritual realms. God provides a variety. He takes us through diverse times in our lives, ministries, and works. Farmers, including spiritual harvesters, identify seasons. They know when to prepare, plow, plant, persevere, and produce.

Myles Monroe, in *Seasons of Change* says that seasons denote transition of time—the point of convergence when two seasons meet. Inherent in the seasons are the concepts of:

- ▶ Change.
- ▶ Transition.
- ▶ Difference (replacing one season with another).
- ▶ Temporary conditions (seasons are not permanent).
- ▶ Time periods (present conditions are subject to time).

Bill Hybels in *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs* includes a chapter entitled “You’re Always in a Season.” He asserts that a pivotal task of a leader is to be able to recognize the particular season the church is in. To him, an easy period to identify is a season of *growth*. During this time, every effort should be made to promote explosive growth. Another season is *consolidation*. Here, you build an effective infrastructure to protect recent gains. Consolidation done correctly will enable the church to move into future growth. Another familiar season is one of *transition*. Sometimes staff or key people leave and things seem out-of-balance. Local economy or external factors may be the cause. A season that leaders hate is *malaise*. “Things are unusually somber, stale, and just plain stuck.” At such times, the organization must be shaken up to prevent permanent failure. Then, there is *reinvention*, a time for every ministry to be put under the microscope and “discern whether it needs a facelift, an overhaul, or a funeral—a necessary pruning exercise to make room for future growth.”

Hybels concludes, “You’re always in a season, leader. It’s your role to know which it is and what to do about it.” Well said. Missionary, what season are you in?