COVID-19 PANDEMIC: REASONS FOR HOPE

Nothing has brought the world together in a fight against a common enemy more than COVID-19, since 1918. There are many conspiracy theories floating around as to the source of COVID-19. Whatever position one holds, what is most important long-term should be how we minimize the reoccurrence of such pandemics and their destructive effects. In the short-term, we have an urgent need to lower the rate of spread; and discover a vaccine and/or other appropriate treatments.

The question that should engage all of us in conversations, irrespective of our positions on the source of COVID-19 is this: What lessons can we, as humanity, learn from this COVID-19 crisis? I am sharing here 3 important lessons as a contribution to the ongoing conversations.

WE BELONG TOGETHER

Though we claim different nationalities, ethnic and language groups, we all form ONE HUMAN COMMUNITY on planet earth. Our diversities notwithstanding, we face common challenges, and aspirations.

Something that goes wrong in one country or region can result in a pandemic that locks down the rest of the world in a few weeks. It is a case of, “When one loses, all lose.”

At the same time, during such a pandemic, when one part of the world succeeds, it does not really eliminate the threat until all other regions of the world succeed. So, “No one wins, until everyone wins.”

These realities call for transparency in sharing our experiences; and the commitment to ensuring every nation has adequate capacity to both prevent and respond to such pandemics.

WE SHOULD LIVE RESPONSIBLY WITH THE REST OF CREATION

How we interact with the animals and plants have a direct impact on the quality of human life. One of the explanations for virus migration from animals to humans is that the animals experience increases in their stress levels due to human activities. These activities include being killed for human consumption, magic, and even sports. The increased stress in the animals lowers their immunity and increase the expression of the viruses. This in turn increases the likelihood for the viruses to infect humans. How we relate to other animals has a bearing on our quality of life.

A lot of the medication for human diseases including virus infections are in plants. Once again, humans destroy precious trees and plants for sale, mining, construction projects etc. When these happen without those plants and trees being replaced, we lose our collective capacity as humanity to respond to such pandemics. At the same time, the right consumption of these plants go a long way to improve the quality of human lives.

The destruction of trees and other plants also result in pollution, as more carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere.

Humans should therefore pursue ecological equilibrium with the rest of creation—that is the dynamic negotiating of co-existence with the rest of creation that is ultimately life-enhancing.

GOD’S LOVE FOR HUMANITY GIVES US HOPE

A third lesson from COVID-19 is that science is not enough to meet all the threats facing humanity. It is not enough to provide hope in uncertain times.

We should always use all our scientific instruments to help protect and improve the quality of human lives. But science does not have all the answers.

What if there is a Force that is more powerful than all other forces? What if this most powerful Force is on the side of humanity? I presume this will give us hope that no matter the threat, we have a Force that can intervene on behalf of humanity.

The good news is that there is such a Force. He is the very God of creation. He has unlimited intelligence and power. But is He on the side of humanity? The most reassuring answer to this question is found in the scriptural statement, “For God so loved the world. …” (John 3: 16) God loves humanity so much that He does not want even one person to perish. It therefore makes sense to believe that He does not want all humanity to be destroyed. God loves humanity because He created humans in His own image. Because of His perfect love for humanity He sent His Son into the world. The Son provides a connection between humans and God. God is perfect immortal, invisible, and perfect within Himself (Numbers 33: 20). The Son makes the otherwise invisible God visible to humans (1 Timothy 6: 16; John 1: 18). The Son also makes the otherwise unapproachable God, reachable (John 14: 6). In essence, the Son is the self-communication and self-explanation of God. Without the Son, God will remain unreachable and unknowable to humans.

The truth that God loves humanity so much so that He sent His Son to prevent humanity from destruction is our reason for hope. Because of God’s love for us we will not be consumed (Lamentations 3: 22, 23).

We should pursue scientific breakthroughs as though it all depended on us. We should at the same time place our trust in the God of creation as though it all depended on Him. The working laws of science were instituted by God. To discover and utilize them for improving the quality of human life is therefore a godly pursuit. The more we explore and understand the world through science, the more we learn about the wisdom and power of God. Science and faith converge to provide us with reasons for hope.

In the midst of this COVID-19 threat, we have to remember this truth: “For God so loved the world.”

In conclusion, we can learn three things from the COVID-19 pandemic. The first lesson is that we as humanity belong together. We either win together or we all lose. Secondly, it is in the interest of humans to pursue ecological equilibrium with the rest of creation. Thirdly, we should bring in the God-factor in order to have reason for hope. Science is not enough.