

## **Perspectivas de la Pandemia: Struggling with Voices**

**By Osam Edim Temple**

Should this lockdown continue, or should it end? Should we open up a little bit, a great deal or gradually? Epidemiologists are talking. Economists are talking. Health workers are talking. The labor unions are talking. The politicians are also talking. Amidst this cacophony of voices, what is the Christian voice? I am not an expert and I do not know which voice to follow. Even experts have been known to mislead us many times in the past. The Bible says, "My sheep hear my voice..." Dear Lord, help us to hear your voice clearly.

Epidemiologists say if we open the economy millions will die. They argue that there is no reason to expose people to a new virus that no one understands because the human toll may be catastrophic. What is their solution? Lockdown the cities and let people stay at home for a while to mitigate the spread of the virus. Some economic voices argue that if we continue the lockdown, we could wipe out our economies; companies will fold up, currencies will crash, millions will walk the streets without jobs, and many will still die. What is their solution? Let's get back to work! Let a few millions die but let us keep the economies going. Meanwhile, many politicians are vacillating. For many of them, truth depends on opinion polls and whatever will affect their electoral chances.

I may not understand all these arguments, but one thing I know is that I don't want to die; neither do I want to see anyone dying. If we cannot find a way to protect lives and prevent hunger, then we may have spent all these years building a world system that is unsustainable. We have lived for years with the virus of poverty, inequality and racism. Today, we have added to our vocabulary another virus called Covid-19. I fear that amidst all these voices, political pressure may take the upper hand. And humanity may be sacrificed! The other day, some Lebanese workers took to the streets chanting, "Corona...Corona... We don't care about Corona." In the USA, protesters want their jobs back. Are these protesters really saying they don't care about life? I don't think so. They are just hungry and asking for a better society. We run a consumerist civilization that cannot pause for a month or two without people starving and dying.

Romans 8: 19 says the whole of creation is waiting earnestly for the manifestation of sons of God. And I keep asking, when are the sons of God going to manifest? Why are they waiting so long to manifest? Where have they been hiding all these years? Then it occurred to me that the sons and daughters of God whom the universe has been waiting for are all hiding in the churches. They go to church every Sunday, but their light is not shining in the society. They have not started living the idea that they are the image of God, they host the Holy Spirit in their bodies and have divine authorization to influence their world. When Egypt did not know how to proceed, it needed Joseph to take leadership. When the kings of Babylon needed answers, they found Daniel. If the world is hurting and cannot find solutions it means that there is a shortage of Josephs and Daniels in our churches. Jesus said, "we are the light of the world." To what extent have we contributed to economic, social and political thought in our different countries in the last century? To what extent have we brought our redemptive influence to bear on peace and justice in the society? To what extent have we promoted the politics of sacrificial love?

The badge of our Christianity should not be found on car stickers or in the direction we drive our cars every Sunday. The badge of our Christianity should be found in our engagement with the world. If the world is looking for answers the world should come to us. In the midst of too many voices, let the Christian voice be clear and distinct.