

## Covid-19: A Great Possible World Unifier?

If you were a Christian, you would say, God being “my refuge, my place of safety,” I can live in peace. But, why has the world been gripped with so much fear? Outside your home, anyone you meet in the street or at any gathering is seen to be a carrier of Covid-19? Inside your own home you feel unsafe because your child who left the house briefly to go to school or to attend a church service comes back home, assumed to have been infected with the deadly virus!

It is not surprising that the Covid-19 pandemic that is raging furiously world-wide, continues to be the subject mostly spoken about everywhere. In personal conversations and in the social media, whether in the villages, towns or cities, everyone seems to be aware that there is a killer virus around that cannot be seen with the naked eye. No one, not even the FBI or CIA seems to know the origin of this deadly virus.

Nevertheless, there is common understanding worldwide, that the attacks of this virus on individuals can be thwarted when people observe certain strict protocols - wearing face masks and /or shields, keeping social distance, and paying attention to personal hygiene, such as frequent washing of hands, etc. These protocols have come about from scientific studies that show that the virus attacks the human body, principally through the nose and the mouth. Other findings indicate that the resistance to the virus is more effective when a person's immunity is high. So, anything one does to increase one's immunity - intake of certain vitamins and minerals, exercising the body physically, etc. - are seen to be an asset. Could this common understanding of the existence of this common enemy and the way to combat it, be the beginning of the world coming together to appreciate the need to care for one another, being our neighbour's keeper?

The attacks of the virus have affected all areas of human endeavour, some for our good, and some for bad. The impact of the pandemic has compelled governments to enforce lockdowns; some, partial, others total, to mitigate the loss of lives and to help stabilise national economies that are struggling with massive job losses. The industries that seem to have been hit most seem to be trade, aviation, tourism, and education. In education, for instance, intermittent closures of schools and universities threaten formal education in more ways than one, especially in most Third world countries where teaching and learning by virtual means is almost a totally new venture. This is because institutions in these developing countries have no or very few ICT- trained personnel, and these institutions are ill- equipped with appropriate physical facilities to meet the challenges at hand. Moreover, the pandemic has helped to expose the shallowness of our curricula and the inadequacy of the training we give to staff to whom we do entrust the future of our societies – our children, and their descendants! Has the pandemic then become the wake-up call for us to come together to find a common solution to the survival of human existence?

The social lives of all people in every part of the globe have been shaken very badly. Africans are especially known to express their togetherness through shaking hands and dancing. They enthusiastically communicate more fully through bodily expressions. Hence, being compelled to obey the Covid-19 protocols at meetings in churches and mosques, and at funerals and weddings, is tantamount to being anti-social! One could ask, "of what use is it to be introduced to a masked person at a family gathering, and later fail to identify that person anywhere else?" This is not to imply that the pandemic has not led to many fruitful changes in Ghana, in particular, and in the world as a whole. We have, for instance noted above the good or bad (depending on who is speaking) in education. In other areas, Covid-19 has brought knowledgeable persons together to find solutions to emerging problems, although, I dare say there has been evidence of racism and unnecessary competition, even in these good ventures. The challenges threatening human survival which have caused governments to call for the manufacturing of vaccines is a case in point. Those people, mostly blacks, who live in tropical areas where malaria continues to be the major killer disease are asking, "why do we need vaccines for the Covid-19 killer whilst there has never been any call for vaccines for malaria?" Is the reason because people in the West are not affected by malaria? The many conspiracy theories surrounding the origin of Covid -19 and the call for vaccines make many people suspicious and therefore afraid that the developed countries where these vaccines are being produced have bad ulterior motives. The plan which is being discussed openly and freely on social media, and even by academicians is that underlying the seemingly good idea to combat the pandemic via the use of vaccines are monetary exploitation of the poor by the rich and the extermination of the black race by the neo-fascists' minority in the West. So, even though the emergence of the pandemic can be a basis for the rich and the poor to work together for human survival, the opportunity can be undermined.

There appears to be no end in sight for Covid-19 and its recently-discovered variants. Therefore, barring divine intervention, humanity may have to live with this pandemic for a long time. Some Third world countries have scientists that can pursue research side

by side with those in developed countries, but there seems to be no willingness on the part of the developed countries that have billions of dollars to spend on research, to involve their counterparts, especially in Africa. This negative attitude on the part of governments and their institutions in the West cannot easily and openly be explained.

One can conclude that on the whole, the world does not seem to have the type of leaders who "have understanding of the times, to know what the world ought to do" to eradicate the Covid-19 pandemic. In the globalised society that we boast of today, we should consider the pandemic as a blessing in disguise. It should cause every nation - powerful and rich or weak and poor- to realise that inward-looking is not the answer. Together we stand, divided we fail. No one wins, until we all do. So, to conquer the pandemic at this point in time when there is -knowledge explosion, abundance of material goods, and globalisation is at a level the world has never known - we are faced with one choice. That one choice is to believe that that nothing exists by chance. The world should, therefore, consider the pandemic as a possible unifier, and to agree that no one country will achieve safety through an inward-looking attitude, until all countries do in the globalised world. Hope for early victory over Covid-19 in a post-Trump era could be brighter, provided, by the grace of God, all the countries in the United Nations show a determination and a commitment to cooperate with each other.

All said and done, this editorial cannot, but emphasise two decisions: Firstly, fighting an unseen enemy with human weapons will lead us nowhere; so, those of us who believe in the power of God should pray for His intervention. Secondly, no one nation will be able to eradicate Covid-19 completely unless the deadly virus with all its variants is eradicated in every country. So, we should not allow the Covid-19 pandemic to divide and destroy us. Rather, we should consider the pandemic as a possible world unifier - an opportunity for a united world with one vision, to fight a common enemy and thereafter learn to live as one people on planet Earth.

End.