

## Wake-up call

As the global pandemic continues to cause unprecedented problems, many are asking “Is this a wake-up call?” Nurses, doctors and medical superintendents face countless urgent issues. Economists and politicians wrestle with a financial melt-down caused by massive job losses. But what about the average person on the street? What is uppermost in his/her mind? Poor people are stressed about day-to-day survival including food supply and housing.

There is, however, a concern that all humans share in common: no one wants to get sick with Covid-19. Underlying the many drastic measures being taken to avoid infection is a deep fear of dying. No one wants to die. Ugo Betty made a simple statement in his book, *Struggle to Dawn*, “Every tiny part of us cries out against the idea of dying and hopes to live forever.” King Solomon stated this undeniable truth three thousand years ago, “God has set eternity in the human heart.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

God fearing people around the world are asking, “Is this epidemic a wake-up call from our maker?” The title of Ugo Betty's book includes the word “dawn”, an image that tugs at our hearts. Interestingly, the Psalmist speaks of “morning” while meditating on the brevity of this earthly life. Speaking about godless people, he says, “They are like sheep and are destined to die; death will be their shepherd (but the upright will prevail over them in the **morning**). Their forms will decay in the grave, ... But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead; he will surely take me to himself.” (Psalm 49:14-15, bold added, NIV)

The prophet Moses also wrote a meditation on death, saying, “If only we knew the power of your anger! Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due. Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Relent, Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the **morning** with your unfailing love” (Psalm 90:11-14, bold added, NIV)

Solomon also spoke about **morning** sunlight, “The path of the righteous is like the **morning** sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. ... In the way of righteousness there is life; along that path is immortality.” (Proverbs 4:18; 12:28, bold added, NIV)

Death is a reality we all hate very deeply. How can we escape it? Scripture says that people “cannot redeem themselves from death by paying a ransom to God. Redemption does not come so easily, for no one can ever pay enough to live forever and never see the grave. ... But as for me, God will redeem my life. He will snatch me from the power of the grave.” (Psalm 49:7-9,15, NIV)

I mentioned earlier how politicians are facing overwhelming financial and health challenges caused by the pandemic. In Canada where I live, one hardly ever hears high officials mentioning God as having a meaningful role in our life as a nation, much less acknowledging a connection between God and pandemics. What a contrast this is to what happened in Israel three thousand years ago when King Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, saying,

When I ... command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will **humble** themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:13-14, bold added, NIV)

How encouraged I was to see President Cyril Ramaphosa recently petitioning God in prayer for the nation of South Africa (hopefully sincerely). If only this kind of **humility** was the norm across our world but sadly it seems to be the exception. Realizing the world continues to be in the grip of the pandemic let us **humbly** acknowledge what “the exalted One says, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is **contrite** and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the **contrite**. I will not accuse them forever, nor will I always be angry, for then they would faint away because of me—the very people I have created. I was enraged by their sinful greed; I punished them, and hid my face in anger, yet they kept on in their willful ways. I have seen their ways, but I will heal them; I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners,” (Isaiah 57:15-19, bold added, NIV)

If you want to read more about **humility** check this article: <https://tinyurl.com/y8paev5x> You may also want to read an article that explores a worldwide pattern of denial or cover up regarding Covid-19: <https://tinyurl.com/ybwpar7d>

An important, if unstated, principle underlying the coronavirus pandemic is people's fear of death. You may want to read the article titled, *Is death the end?* It explains how Jesus Christ is the only prophet who foretold he would rise victorious after three days in the grave. He claimed to be the resurrection and the life, thereby abolishing death. As a result those who believe in him are freed from bondage to the Devil who holds the power of death and enslaves humans to the fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15; 2 Timothy 1:10) <https://tinyurl.com/y7y5ya9s>

Another key theme mentioned in this article is light. You may want to read *Lighting up the Darkness and Meditation on Light* available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd4h3sry> <https://tinyurl.com/y9ehxywk>

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