



Chinese International Missions, Inc.

07.01.2021

After A Year of Pandemic

~David Chiang

The coronavirus pandemic has been with us now for more than a year. When the outbreak first appeared outside of China in early 2020, hospitals around the world weren't prepared for the flood of stricken patients. Places like New York had scary daily death statistics, and many Christians started to repent and pray openly asking God for help. By now the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates about 4 million people worldwide have died from COVID-19, but the actual number is likely higher.

It's amazing how disruptive and deadly a virus invisible to the naked eye can be, but we should remember that it's also a God's creation. Romans 8:28 states: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." So what is the good for us when God allowed this virus to appear and cause the pandemic? I think there are a few lessons here.

God is reminding us that we're not the master of the world. With rapid advances in technology in the last few decades, mankind created impressive new products such as self-driving cars and powerful computers with artificial intelligence, as well as sending spaceships to Mars and watch videos from the planet like it's routine. We human certainly can be proud of these accomplishments, maybe even a bit arrogant. But a parallel can be seen with the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis. A proud mankind who felt it was approaching God's level, through the progress in advanced technologies, is again humbled by God.

God is reminding us that we can't rely on worldly gains and plans. The lockdown orders caused majority of businesses to suffer financially. Established supply chains suddenly halted because no one thought to prepare for a pandemic disruption. Many well-known companies have gone bankrupt; global stock markets initially had heavy losses due to the shock and uncertainties. The virus was able to deal major blows to a strong global economy and wiped out achieved gains almost overnight, and threw many workers into unemployment without any recourse. Nobody even dreamt this could happen.

God is reminding us that we need to focus on Him. The government's "Shelter in Place" order to stem infections is may be better worded for Christians as "Shelter in Peace" with God. We can find biblical examples in David, who once sought refuge for his life. In Psalm 118:8~9 David wrote "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes." The biblical definition for refuge is a stronghold where enemies can't harm us so we can be at peace. During the pandemic the world may seem to be falling apart and out of control, but God is actually always in control. Luke 12:31 reminds us to "Seek His kingdom" as His followers and God will fulfill His promise with our inheritance from heaven, then all the chaos around us won't seem to be so insurmountable. Furthermore, God reigns over everything in the universe, including the coronavirus and the timetable when the pandemic will pass. We just need to keep our faith in God.

God is reminding us that we're the church, not the building. It had been difficult for churches to adapt to online meetings at first, but with God's grace and devoted brothers and sisters, it has become routine now. Sure, many people yearn for the face-to-face human interaction, but had Satan wanted to sabotage the church via the pandemic then it was a total failure! Churches carried on with worship and fellowship meetings online, as well as Sunday school classes and prayer meetings. Many people also took the opportunity to attend other distant churches' online services and connected with the extended family of God, which would've been unthinkable before in "normal" times.

God is reminding us of the cataclysm as described in Revelation. Unlike in past major disasters that the effects were more or less limited to the surrounding areas, the coronavirus pandemic is truly the first global disaster that affected worldwide at the same time. Everyone on Earth, regardless of nationality, economic, social, financial, or religious status, is affected. That'll also be the case in the cataclysm at the end of the world, but with much more severe and horrifying effects as described in the Bible, with which what the world suffered through COVID-19 will be of no comparison!

The pandemic situation in the U.S. now has vastly improved due to strong vaccination efforts, but that's not the case elsewhere, especially with new virus variants in rampage. Most of Asia is still battling a strong resurgence of infections that again have put their healthcare system in crisis. Similarly in both Brazil and South Africa, where we have our CIM missionaries, the pandemic is still raging amid a slow vaccination rate. Let us continue to be steadfast in our faith and trust the Lord to deliver us through this valley of death.

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PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Pray for the Lord to give Rev Douglas and Whitney Wu the perseverance, determination, and sufficient physical strength, as well as grace from God, to honor Him and benefit others.
2. South Africa has resumed its secondary lockdown policy on May 31. Please continue to pray for the COVID 19 epidemic in the country. Pray that the progress of vaccine delivery across the country can be quickly and effectively be administered. May God intervenes to quell the epidemic.
3. Pray for the Lord to grant Rev Wu to write sermons quietly, to receive God's grace from the word, and to properly break down God's will!
4. The PECCC plans to resume physical worship in June, so that co-workers can also resume their service in the church, Ask the Lord to protect and review His will.
5. Please pray for Alex and Nicole have wisdom and grace in preparing teaching materials and allocating time well for preaching, Bible study and fellowship. Pray also for their safety as they serve outside every day and ask the Lord to care for them.
6. Pray for the Belém Chinese Christian Church established on the 20th of June. May the local Chinese Christians participate in Sunday worship either live or on line starting at 2pm on Sundays.
7. Pastor Luo is leading Bible study classes, discipleship training Tuesdays at 10am, and one-on-one evangelism classes in the evenings. The main members are Sister Zhang Qiong from Belém Church, Zhou Guanlin and his wife from Salvador Church, Sister Wang Guiying and Macha from Meijing Church Zhu Hengpeng, and Liu Guiming from the church.
8. Pray for healing for CIM Canada board member, Siu Lui Ho, as he continues to recover from cancer treatments.
9. Pray for travel safety as CIM Canada worker in Ghana, Janice Wong, who will travel back to Canada for home assignment from July to September.
10. Pray for the recruiting effort underway to fill job vacancies in CIM for a Director of Ministry to oversee STM and daily operations, and an Executive Director successor.
11. Pray that God will move more brothers and sisters to join the ministry so God's kingdom would be more prosperous. Pray for God's abundant provision for all the financial needs of CIM.

NOTE

Beginning March 1, please call 408-596-4567 to contact CIM for questions or comments. Thank you for your continual support.

FINANCIAL REPORT

May 2021

As of May-			
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General	\$4,636	\$1,100	\$3,536
Missions	\$8,042	\$8,001	\$41
Total	<u>\$12,678</u>	<u>\$9,101</u>	<u>\$3,577</u>

To contribute to CIM ministries:

- 1) Make checks payable to "CIM" and mail to: P.O. Box 700185, San Jose, CA 95170-0185, USA
- 2) Donate online via credit card, go to: www.cimusa.org
Click on "Give" and follow directions. Thank you!

