**Lessons The Church Can Learn From COVID-19**

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“Keep walking beside us every night, every day

And giving us courage for the fray, Lord.

We need You to guide every step of the way,

Don’t forsake us [not], O Lord we pray.”

– In Your Hands, Rev Allan F. Kirton

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is wreaking havoc in the world, and the Church is not exempt from its far-reaching effects. Today, Easter Sunday, a day celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, would normally see churches,the world over, packed to capacity with worshippers celebrating the occasion.

However, that won’t be the case this year as social distancing has effectively cancelled all of those plans.

But motivational speaker and author Paul Blake says that during this time, there are many lessons the Church can learn and on which it can capitalise from what is happening.

Blake shared with **Family and Religion** that among the lessons to be learnt in this crisis is how the church can exercise resilience and emerge even stronger and more powerful.

“Who would have guessed that the world could come to a virtual standstill in 2020 because of a virus? For a long time, we were convinced that we hold all things in the palm of our hands. God has a strange sense of humour. When we think we have it all together, He gently reminds us we are children playing a game of chess,” Blake quipped.

The first lesson, he said, is realising that God has always been in control, and we don’t have to stress about getting things done. For Him, it is all about making yourselves available and willing, leaving the ultimate results up to God.

“Just look at it. The people that offices thought they could not do without are suddenly confined to their homes, and the business is still afloat. Church doors are closed, and messages are still being preached,” he pointed out.

**GOD STILL AT WORK**

Blake said God is still at work even in the crisis.

Pointing out that contrary to the belief of some unlearned Christians, “God does not just disrupt our lives for His good pleasure. He does not send plagues and pestilence to get our attention, (although sometimes He should). If that were the case, He would have gotten out attention a long time ago”, said Blake.

One key lesson for both Christians and non-Christians to learn, according to Blake, is the ability for “humanity to reset itself”.

“It appears we were in self-destruct mode and something had to happen to bring us back to reality. Things may be bad now, but at times, what seems a lost cause can turn out to be a great blessing (Genesis 50: 19-20).

Christians also have a chance to see God’s blessings and His sure mercies. Some believers were so involved in church ministries that they didn’t have time to take a break.

“It’s not that they were being pressured, but their natural sense of purpose and ministry saw them wanting to do things … now, they have no choice but to rest,” Blake said, adding that some didn’t eat or sleep properly because they were too busy.

“If they had continued like that, then one day, they would have to pay the piper, so better to have COVID-19 slow them down now than waiting for the inevitable. As bad as it is, let us thank God that we can get a bit of rest for the road ahead,” he opined.

Another ‘COVID-19 blessing’, according to Blake, is the opportunity for Christians to minister and make a difference to lost souls’ lives.

The suffering and lack created by job loss and other cutbacks, he said, have opened the door for believers to show the love of Christ through their welfare ministries and care.

Blake said in this season, broken homes can be rebuilt, fences can be mended, and conversations of healing can get under way. “Friendships can be rediscovered, feelings expressed, and needs long forgotten finally met. Parents can talk to children rather than talking at them, and children learn to express themselves with beautiful words. Spouses can wake up to the sweet sound of each other’s voices because there is nowhere to go in a hurry. Sometimes pressing the reset button is necessary so that we can recapture the stuff that is essential to life,” he said.

Blake advised that both Christians and the unsaved should utilise the opportunity to rediscover love and appreciation for one another.

“COVID-19 could be God’s way of calling us back to being the people He created us to be. We ought to start behaving like His people and loving humanity the way He does. The greatest lesson we can learn from this pandemic is how much we still need the one who holds the world in His hands,” he shared.