



The Information

"I must turn aside and look at this great sight..." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses" And he said, "Here I am." Exodus 3 vs 3-4 (NRSV)

September, 2021

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Perspectives on Vaccination



Rev. Algernon Lewis
Chairman of PEC

It is an understatement to say that we are living in a time of great distrust. Conspiracy theories abound and there is a sense that someone is out to get us. This is happening at a time when trust is more important than at any other time in history. In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are lingering questions about the origin and spread of the virus. This has been the source of great speculation and has caused many to be hesitant about what they believe and who they believe when it comes to this virus. However, while we are stuck on the origins, COVID-19 continues to claim lives and livelihoods.

People of faith are not left out of this conundrum. There are sections of the church that advocate for following the directives of the media and science, and there are sections that see this COVID-19 pandemic as part of the end games, the eschaton, or the end of times. Is this really about a take over by the masters of the universe? Is it part of God's

righteous dealings with the world? Is it just one of those things meant to remind us that we are finite human beings? Sorry, but I do not have the answers. What this article will do is posit ways to look at this pandemic and vaccination from a Christian, social, and common-sense perspective.

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

A biblical story would have been perfect here to draw principles from to inform our approach to the pandemic in general and vaccination in particular. However, none was revealed to me. It is my conviction, that the pandemic is part of God's plan for the world. In my limited view, if it is not, then the sovereignty of God comes into question. As Creator of the universe, God has the final word on what happens in the world. I believe Matthew 10:28-30 supports this view and gives me great comfort. Sparrows typically live between three and five years, yet God is there for the final rights of a sparrow. The text suggests that it is God who sets the end date. If God cares so intimately for birds, God's care for humanity, the pinnacle of the created order, must be much greater. God alone knows why we are in the place of confusion, disruption, darkness, and selfishness. Only God has that universal knowledge.

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Vision Statement

**A Church - Transformed,
United,
Victorious in Christ**

Mission Statement

By the grace of God, we seek to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ; without distinction, we use all that we possess to call all peoples to the truth of the Gospel through worship, evangelism, discipleship and service.

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Perspectives on Vaccination Continued from Page 1

Could it be that the conditions are being created for the church to shine light over the face of the deep? Could it be that the confusion, disruption, and selfishness are exactly what is needed for the church to imitate its Lord, look away from personal things, and look to the things of others? It was the way of Jesus. The Apostle Paul also picked up this theme in Philippians 2: 3-4: *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.*

The world has become a very selfish place. Even in church, many people have lost sight of the community we are called to serve and have focused much of our resources on bigger and better things. Yet, we have been called to serve the world around us. One of the often-repeated mantras over these months of the pandemic is “none of us is safe until all of us are safe!” One commentator of a news programme noted that it is not a humanitarian gesture for the United States to share its vaccines with others. It is really a matter of national security because when others visit the United States, they will bring whatever strain of the virus that resides in their country. In other words, the United States protects itself from new strains of the virus by ensuring that others are vaccinated. By sharing, they play the role of the older sibling taking care of the younger. The church is called to serve not to be served (Mark 10:45). Christ-followers are to look to the interests of others.

Looking into the interests of others has specific application when COVID-19 infections are exploding. Wear your mask, wash your hands, watch your distance, sanitize. The protocols must be observed not because we like it but because we are looking out for the interests of others. No one wants to sing the hymns of the faith muzzled. Wearing a mask for sixty to one hundred and twenty minutes in a warm sanctuary, comes close to cruelty. Yet we do it because we are our sister's and brother's keeper. In doing this we represent Jesus who goes before us as the servant of all. Jesus laid down his life so that we might have life. It was not because we are worthy, but because he loved us, he preferred us ahead of himself.

Being an intentional Christ-follower is to imitate the ways of Christ. Jesus acted for the world. Rather than responding to fear, Jesus faced the challenges he met with confidence in the omnipotent God. He knew that God was with him and kept moving ahead. Fear is a major factor in the positions

many have taken as it relates to the vaccines. Fear that it will cause harm at the least or that it is the mark of the beast or some other evil concoction from the pit of hell. I am not a medical mind but I know that fear immobilizes. Fear keeps us doing nothing, looking for better signposts. People of faith must act in the knowledge that God goes before us and that God calls us to act in harmony to build community and prefer others ahead of ourselves. Being inoculated against COVID-19 allows for the church community to come together and be an active presence in society. I see this as God making a way where the way was blocked.

When I think how the scientific world came together to produce these vaccines to offer a resistance to the unhindered spread and mutation of the COVID-19 virus, I see that the science community was able to put all their differences aside and allow the care for their brothers and sisters to drive them to create these varied responses to a common threat. In my humble opinion, divine fingerprints are all over these scientific responses.

Those same divine fingerprints are still on the church. We may live in a time of uncertainty, but our God is still on the throne and God watches over God's own. Our God calls us to follow Jesus and not be selfish but to be humble, preferring the interests of others above ourselves.

SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all social events. It has become difficult to plan any event with any degree of certainty. Cultural events such as carnivals, food fairs, fund raisers, fellowship activities have all been affected by the virus. In some places events were held to test the waters. However, as soon as the restrictions are relaxed, the numbers rise again. Socializing now has become a hazard. No one knows who has the virus which means that staying away from others is wise counsel.

The education system has experienced major disruptions because of the pandemic. Students no longer get to socialize and develop those skills needed in life. Classroom banter, corridor chats, interactions with a teacher have all been upended. No one knows what will happen to already underdeveloped social skills for some of our youth. Graduations and proms have evolved into new forms that are less social and less affirming.

The scientists are telling us that the only way to live within this construct is to follow the protocols of hand-washing, mask-wearing, sanitizing, and physical distancing. In addition, accessing the COVID-19 vaccines provide a line of defense.

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THE CHALLENGE OF SUICIDE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC A PASTORAL RESPONSE Part 1 The Rev. Neilson Waithe

Some of the challenges associated with the disruptions to our lives during the COVID-19 Pandemic, including stress, depression, loneliness, physical and mental illnesses, have caused some persons to move to the extreme in an effort to facilitate their own relief.

The physical and mental health challenges associated with illness, or difficult recovery from the illness seems to be too much for some to bear.

Some would want to find some other kind of relief and would not want to be, as they perceive, a burden on their family, so they may have suicidal ideations (thoughts), even though only a few persons would actually go to the extreme level and commit suicide.

The Pandemic and the Challenges associated with it, including illness, unemployment, financial ruin, dislocation and loneliness among others seem to have presented our societies with an upsurge of persons opting to commit suicide.

There is a need for Pastoral Care-Givers, Clergy and Laity, family, friends, work colleagues and friends to do what they can to provide support to persons who feel that they are not able to cope, and who may have suicidal ideations, and may even move towards a definitive plan to end their lives.

Let us together examine the nature of suicide and let us see how we can arrive at an effective Pastoral Response. Please note, a pastoral response is not limited to the pastor, but all “representatives of the body of Christ.” Pastoral Care is therefore the responsibility of all who name the name of Christ.

Why Do Persons Commit Suicide

The average “church person” may say that a person commits suicide because they lack “sufficient faith.” Unfortunately, it is not always as “simplistic” as not having enough faith. One can very well ask the question; who among of us has enough faith?

Jesus while he walked on earth, found that there was a lack of sufficient faith even among the persons he was training daily to carry his message to the rest of the world.

St. Mark 4: 40 “Why are you so afraid?” He asked. “Do you still have no faith?” 41 Overwhelmed with fear, they asked one another, “Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

Jesus was not very far physically from them, they had experienced what he had done and could do, yet they were lacking in faith.

Illness and personal challenges may drive a person to the precipice, where doubts may overtake faith. It is not that the person does not have enough faith, it is that the situation that they may be experiencing can cause them to doubt or even deny their faith.

The Apostle Peter, the one on whom Jesus said he will build his church, when confronted with an experience that was overwhelming to him, had this response when he was asked if he knew Jesus; “I know not the man.....St. Luke 22:56ff

Change: Suicide is a way to change how the person feels or what is happening in their life at a given moment.

Choice: Suicide is a way to assert or make a choice during circumstances in which there are no choices or when important choices are being taken away. It is often a final way to assert the only choice the person feels they have open to them.

Control: The suicidal act is an attempt to stop the person’s behaviour, to control events or to effect some change in others.

Self-punishment: Suicidal behaviour can be a means to relieve guilt or punish the person for their actions.

- **Punish others:** The suicidal act is intended to inflict harm or punishment on others.

Mental Illness: Some are unclear and their mental ill-health can be a factor.

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Loneliness
- Male
- Alcohol/ drug misuse
- Other psychiatric disorders, particularly depression
- History of previous self-harm (particularly if avoided discovery)
- History of psychiatric treatment
- Family history of psychiatric disorder (previous self-harm, depression, alcohol/ drug misuse).
- Hopelessness
- High suicidal intent:
- Choice of violent method of suicide (e. g. hanging, shotgun)
- Access to means of suicide
- Plans for death (e. g. will changes, family farewells)

*The Challenge of suicide during the COVID-19 Pandemic
A Pastoral Response Part I, continued from Page 3*

- Unemployment
- Personality disorder (particularly co-morbidity with other psychiatric disorders)
- Physical problems, e. g. cardio-vascular, peptic ulcer, particularly in elderly males
- Life events:
 - Bereavement and loss (last two years)
 - Financial problems
 - Legal problems/ recent forensic history
 - Abuse past or present (sexual, physical or emotional)
 - Relationship problems
- Loss of parents through separation or death during childhood
- Exposure to suicidal behavior

Next month, in Part 2, I would like us to be able to look at effective ways we could respond to risk factors from low risk – medium risk – high risk.

Until next month, I would like us to ponder some of the questions that were raised by participants who attended a panel discussion where I was able to share, along with a leading Psychiatrist.

It is important that Pastors and all who provide PastoralCare be fully aware how they can improve their knowledge and Pastoral Care-Giving Skills to be able to provide effective care for persons in our congregations and communities.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS AT A MORAVIAN CONGREGATION PANEL DISCUSSION

1. What aesthetic changes can the church make to become a safe haven for the mentally ill?
2. What conversational or other tips can we employ as a church to allow people to explore their feelings and express their anger, if any, towards God?
3. Have pastors received training on how to recognize the wide spectrum of mental illnesses?
4. Has there been any refresher trainings?
5. What should be the response of the congregation to leaders and pastors with mild to severe depression or other mental illnesses?
6. Confidentiality in the church is a prevailing issue for some congregants. What can the church and its leaders do to rebuild trust with visitors and congregants alike to better facilitate discussions on mental health?
7. Do you know what is the church's position on suicide? Does your personal view of suicide conflict with the church's position?

Perspectives on Vaccinations, continued from Page 2

This defense is not a cure but builds the body's immune system to defeat the virus on the body and prevent long-term COVID sickness. There is no magic bullet but there are vaccines that lessen the impact of the virus on the body. When I hear of the effects of some who have survived the disease and the number of deaths from COVID-19, I know we have a social responsibility to ensure that we take down this giant.

All the international, regional, and local health organizations have been forthcoming with the findings. One thing that is clear with this virus, is that it continues to offer new information and updates which make it difficult to stop. However, with all the changes, it continues to respond positively to the vaccines, reducing the ability to shed the disease to others, and reducing the possibility of hospitalization. These vaccines are a lifeline to the new normal. With increased vaccinations, we get to visit friends and family without worrying if we will shed the virus to others or receive it from others. There will be less uneasiness when receiving family and friends from abroad. The vaccinations open that path for the fellowship of believers and the building of community. Pope Francis declared that taking the vaccine is an act of social love. To the best of our ability, we need to show that social love.

COMMON-SENSE PERSPECTIVE

There are some people who are not bothered by the many doctors who share the information about the make up of the vaccines. They are not bothered by the celebrities that endorse the use of vaccine. They are not even moved by the incentives or the threats surrounding vaccination. Such persons need to know that personal rights are not absolute. At some point, rights collide, and an adjudication must happen. Given that the pandemic is a health crisis, the rights of the state will supersede personal rights except in exceptional circumstances. This tweet from @KenTremendous is instructive, "You are not allowed to claim something is a 'personal choice' if it affects literally everyone else you come into contact with. A 'personal choice' is what movie to watch, or what colour pants to wear. Doing something that endangers the lives of others is an 'everyone choice.'" Let me hasten to say that I do not support forced vaccination. We must find other ways to bring people to accept their social responsibility.

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Perspectives on Vaccinations, continued from Page 4

I hope that common sense and social responsibility will be activated when those who refuse to take the vaccine realize that their lack of communal responsibility contributes to the collapse of the healthcare system, the emotional disorientation of medical personnel, the breakdown in the education system, the destruction of livelihoods, and the general decline of the living standards in the country. At some point people need to understand that they are the ones inflicting the harm on others and should stand down. Have you thought about where governments are getting the money from to keep our economies afloat? How long will we be paying for the economic impact of COVID-19. Lord have mercy!

On another social note, choose the source of your information. The issue has become politicized, and the utterances and pontifications of political figures can affect our common-sense response. Political operatives need to know that the less said or the less strident their utterances, the greater the encouragement for some people to migrate from the positions of hesitancy. It can be a point of embarrassment for someone who vowed not to take the vaccine to change that position. The embarrassment is greater the smaller the community. Grace and camaraderie are needed since we are in this together.

Christ-followers, let us act for our neighbours, for our students, for nations, and the world. Let us show the love of Jesus by doing what is required to move to the next stage of our journey through this wilderness (pandemic).

Day of Prayer for the Surviving Spouses of Ministers

Sunday, September 19, 2021, will be observed as the annual day of prayer for the Surviving Spouses of Moravian Pastors in the Eastern West Indies Province. On this day, we pray for the spouses who were partners in the work of ministry. Please remember in prayer:

Sis. Margaret John	-	Tobago (Antigua)
Sis. Dorothy Graham	-	Barbados
Sis Ida Browne	-	Antigua
Sis. Deborah Challenger	-	Antigua
Sis. Myrtle Miller	-	USA
Sis. Gwendolyn Jacobs	-	USVI
Sis. Lynda Prout	-	Trinidad


As we pray, a special offering will also be taken as a token of appreciation to our sisters for the tremendous role they played in the ministry of the Moravian Church Eastern West Indies Province.

MORAVIAN CHURCH - TRINIDAD CONFERENCE
LAY ACADEMY INVITES YOU TO

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT 1

STARTING SEPTEMBER 18, 2021 AT 12:30PM

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS AWESOME OPPORTUNITY FOR
A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD OF GOD



Please click on the link below to register.

FURLOUGH

The Rev. J. Sean Roberts who serves as the pastor of the Bethany and Gracefield Congregations in Antigua, applied for and was granted furlough from September 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021.

Please keep Bro. Roberts and family in prayer.

VACATION

The Chairman, Rev. Algernon Lewis, will be on vacation leave from September 13—September 24, 2021. In his absence, the Rev. Dr. Errol Connor will act as Chairman.

Quote of the Day

Knowledge is power.
Information is liberating.
Education is the premise in every society,
in every family.

Kofi Annan



To Celebrants - September 16th-29th

Sis. Callisha Greenidge Mark	16
Sis. Paula James-Roberts	17
Bro. David Rossington	22
Bro. Devon Mannix	23
Bro. Dave George	23
Sis. Lynda Prout	29

To Celebrants - October 02—15th

Bro. Winston Jones	02
Sis. Shanelle Chase St. Hill	04
Sis. Georgette John-Cotton	06
Sis. Nicole Wellington-Barker	09
Bro. Joseph Nicholas	15



To Celebrants—September 24th—30th

Bro. Conrad and Sis. Sonia Spencer	24
Bro. Frank Alvin & Sis. Gloria Barker	27
Bro. Keith Horsford & Sis. Cicely Athill-Horsford	30



Ordination Anniversaries in September

Bro. Alban St. Hill	September 11, 1996
Bro. Jeremy Francis	September 07, 2003
Bro. Jr. Sean Roberts	September 14, 2003

Ministers' Covenant Day

Ministers' Covenant Day is celebrated each year on September 16. To mark the moment, Ministers throughout the Unity, intentionally contemplate, once again, the call of God on their lives. As we mark Covenant Day 2021, we do so noting that the fields are ripe for harvest (John 4:35), but harvesting requires greater sensitivity to God and some new tools.

Let us pray for all Ministers as they covenant anew to serve God in this season.

Acting Superintendent of the Moravian Church Virgin Islands Conference

The Provincial Board announces the appointment of the Rev. Dr. Cortroy Jarvis as the Acting Superintendent of the Moravian Church, Virgin Islands Conference. Br. Jarvis currently serves as the Pastor of the Memorial Moravian Church in St. Thomas. This appointment takes effect from September 1, 2021.

The Provincial Board expresses sincere thanks to the Rev. Eulencine Christopher for her dedication and diligence during her seven years serving as Superintendent of the Virgin Islands Conference and her twenty-seven years serving as a Minister of Christian Education in the Province.

May God continue to bless the work of her hands and order her steps as she proceeds on Leave of Absence.

Dreams, Visions and Prophecies

All the words listed below are in the puzzle - left, right, up, down or diagonally. Find each word and click its first letter then its last letter to highlight it. After you have found all the words, click the leftover letters to form the **mystery answer**.

Ananias,	Elijah,	Moses,
Baker,	Ezekiel,	Nineveh,
Beast,	Fire,	Pharaoh,
Bethel,	God,	Plagues,
Brothers,	Heaven,	Prophet,
Burning bush,	Isaiah,	Rain,
Cedar,	Jacob,	Reign,
Centurion,	Jeremiah,	Saints,
City,	Joseph,	Seven heads,
Daniel,	Kings,	Seventh seal,
Descendants,	Ladder,	Statue,
Dragon,	Lamb,	Temple,
Drought,	Light,	Wings,

Witnesses



- Who continually says, Holy, holy, holy around God's throne, according to John's vision? (Revelation 4:8)
- What are the last recorded words of Jesus in the Bible? (Revelation 22: 20)
- In the vision of the end times, what special ability did the 144,000 people have? (Revelation 14:3)
- Who is the mother of harlots in the book of Revelation? (Revelation 17:5)
- How long was David's reign? (2 Samuel 5:4)
- In 2 Sam. 6, who was killed for steadying the ark of God? (2 Sam 6:7)
- When David danced before the Lord in 2 Sam. 6, what was he wearing? (2 Sam 6:14)
- Which prophet did David consult about building a temple? (2 Sam 7:2)
- What sort of shields did the servants of Hadadezar carry? (2 Sam 8:7)
- Judeans were taken into exile where? (1 Chronicles 9:1)
- How did the Israelites declare David their new king? (1 Chronicles 11:3)
- What army did David become part of in 1 Chronicles 12? (1 Chronicles 12:19)
- In 1 Sam. 4, what did the Israelites bring to aid them against the Philistines? (1 Samuel Ch. 4)
- When Christ returns, those who are saved will meet him where? (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- Where does God ask Jacob to build an altar? (Genesis 35:1)

Moravian Multipurpose Complex

Conference Center & Apartments



Conferences

Weddings

Banquets

Meetings

Dinners

Graduations

Only ten minutes away from the stores, shops and banks in St. John's. Our International airport is also just ten minutes away.

Our balcony provides a refreshing view of undulating hills and valleys.

The Conference Center has a seating capacity for 200 persons.

We are situated on a hill over-looking the picturesque out-skirts of the city of St. John's, Antigua.

There are **EIGHT LARGE APARTMENTS** which are available for rental. Each room is self contained with kitchenette. The rooms are air-conditioned with available internet cable TV. All utilities are included with the exception of telephone.

Mystery word *REVELATION*

- Answers to Bible Trivia*
1. The four beasts
 2. Surely, I come quickly
 3. Singing a song no one else can learn
 4. Babylon
 5. 40 years
 6. Uzzah
 7. Linen Ephod
 8. Nathan
 9. Gold
 10. Babylon
 11. Anointing with oil over his head
 12. Philistine Army
 13. The ark of the Covenant
 14. Air
 15. Bethel