

**COVID-19: Did they tell us more than they intended us to know?** by Rev. Tom Aicken

There is so much talk these days on COVID-19, with contradictory information going back and forth, and it has left many people utterly confused. As a result, I have determined that I want to write on this subject as little as possible. Nevertheless, there should always be room to offer reasonable solutions to immediate problems, and I propose to present one such solution here.

The other day, the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General of BC published a news release regarding what they call non-essential travel restrictions for our province, the idea being that they want to limit the movement of residents between health regions. These questions, however, need to be asked, “How in any way is that going to keep the transmission rate of this coronavirus under control? Would it not be better to enforce protocols, particularly in areas where there is a high rate of transmission, and would that not be a more effective means of controlling the unwanted spread of the virus?”

Two things have become very clear over the past year: (1) government solutions to the present crisis have not been well thought out - there are too many inconsistencies and countless examples of blatant unfairness; and (2) the solutions inflicted upon us reveal more of a power-grab, an attempt to control people more than the virus, and with that to rob us of our basic constitutional rights.

Quoting the news release mentioned above, “During the first weekend of the new travel restrictions, BC Ferries vehicle traffic was down more than 25% fleet-wide, and passenger traffic down more than 30%, compared to the weekend before. Resort communities and accommodation businesses have contacted the Province to note significant declines in out-of-region visitors and bookings, and BC Parks has reported more than 5,000 cancellations in the past few weeks. Building off this success in limiting non-essential travel, the province will authorize site-specific, clearly marked police road checks to further curb recreational travel.”

Wait a moment. Did they just tell us more than they intended us to know? Notice, it does not say, “Due to a rapidly rising coronavirus death rate,” or “Due to overwhelming numbers of people admitted to the intensive care units of our hospitals,” or even “Due to an explosive increase in those who have tested positive to the virus” - no, the news release is clear, it’s building on their success in limiting travel that they determine to curb it even more.

And why are they so glib about all this? Why do they speak of these debilitating lockdowns and tragic losses of income for businesses in terms of a success for which they may be proud? The news release goes on to say that this is “to protect us all

from the spread of COVID-19,” but it offers nothing to explain how this could even be possible.

The fact of the matter is that lockdowns have proved to be unsuccessful in containing the virus. It's reported by the media how a teenager has died as a result of contracting the illness - and that will be repeated several times, totally out of proportion to everything else - but it's not reported how suicide rates among our young people have shot way up on account of the lockdowns, or how domestic abuse is seriously affecting children whose parents have lost their source of income and see no hope of securing another job. We are constantly being told that these lockdowns are for a very limited time, that we should be patient for the end is in sight. The truth of the matter is, though, that these lockdowns are repeatedly extended, and that further restrictions (such as this one for non-essential travel) are regularly added.

I cannot say that I have an answer to all this. We are to pray for those who rule over us (1 Tim. 2:1,2), and, whenever we have opportunity, we are to elect those who are just, ruling in the fear of God (2 Sam. 23:3). Yet as long as there are politicians who care more for themselves than for their constituents, and as long as there is an unenlightened citizenry that is content to keep them in power, we will probably continue to lose out and get more of this kind of government we so rightly deserve.

Have you noticed - and this is a telling observation - that those who legislate the rules and regulations for others are not adversely affected by those same regulations themselves, and in too many cases will even break their own rules (secretly, of course) so as not to inconvenience themselves in any way? The mandate is right and good for thee, in other words, but not for me. How is it that the rich, and those who are in no danger of losing their own salary, are constantly dictating what it is that the poor and others who are vulnerable must do? It's right here that I would like to propose a reasonable solution to a very real and immediate need.

It's reported that our provincial health officer makes an annual salary of \$350,000. I am citing her as one example, but there are others, both elected and unelected, who share the privileges of her highly elevated position of power. What I am suggesting for her, therefore, is a principle that I would apply to all who legislate such laws for the general public. I recommend that lockdowns never be imposed, except in the most extreme circumstances, and that, when they are imposed, those who make the rules automatically receive only 10% of their salary, and that this reduction in salary (not to be made up later) continue throughout the duration of the lockdown. This equitable solution would give them skin in the game. This one action in itself would greatly reduce the number and severity of lockdowns; it would at the same time be a powerful incentive to open things up again and to move the economy forward.

Let us move, in other words, to a system of power which mandates what is right and good, not for a privileged few, but for all of us, which gets rid of inconsistency and blatant unfairness, and which at the same time seeks to enshrine those God-given rights and constitutional liberties that our forefathers fought so hard to preserve on our behalf.