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EMPTY EVERYWHERE; OUTFLOWING WITHIN

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Abstract

In the light of the lockdown due to COVID-19, this article offers a theological reflection on the emptiness of the streets and the churches and how this pandemic has facilitated the outflow of contemplative richness from within the hitherto untapped wellsprings of many believers and the creativity of the Church. The pandemic has generated forthcoming narratives related to the victorious Peoples' War, xenophobic Orientalism, electropollution, pharma-elitism, genetic studies and ecological factors. Moreover, this pandemic has ushered in the era of mysticalone in which there is a heightened awareness of the actions of *Ru'ah Elohim* in the age of pneumatocene in terms of contemplativity, sacrificial spirit, and spirit of Prophetic voice.

Keywords: Capitalocene; Colonial Temporality; Contemplativity; Electropollution; Mysticalocene; Pneumatocene

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis that affects the life of the Church at the local, regional and universal levels. What is reportedly empty public streets and squares are replicated in the churches with empty pews and empty spaces in St Peter's Square. But the spatial emptiness is a Kairos for many sojourners to be in touch with

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Immanuel who is God-with-us and allow the igniting of an outflow of inner strength from within that overflows into family life, life in the residence and in society and Mother Earth, making us realize in silence and solitude that we are all interconnected.

1. Whither the Earth, the Religions?

From Wuhan to Singapore, Delhi, Bagdad, Uganda, Tehran, Yemen, Buenos Aires, New York, empty public places is a metaphor iconic of our desolate world, stricken by mass hysteria and flat panic, all sacred places of worship, from mosques, spirit-houses, temples, St Peter's Square in Rome, this global pandemic has infected over 10 million, with a death toll at 489,000, (and still rising); more than 5.2 million people have recovered.¹ Governments' and states' hospitals are overwhelmed, caught unprepared. National and world economy are at a standstill, leaving almost 1.6 billion people in immediate danger of having their livelihood destroyed by this pandemic. The IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva reported that "some \$8 trillion in fiscal stimulus has been poured in by governments to stave off collapse was not likely to be enough. She is expected to argue... for more debt relief for the poorest countries."² Thus far, ninety countries have applied for Emergency Finance from the IMF which offers a \$1 trillion in lending capacity and are placing it at the service of member countries. Gita Gopinath, IMF Chief economist, predicted that the "world is likely to lose a cumulative \$9 trillion in output over two years—greater than the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of Germany and Japan."³ The World Airline is reported to have lost 300 million in this global economic standstill.⁴ Oxfam opines that the pandemic "could push an additional half a billion people into poverty, demanding that world leaders contain the economic fallout and cancel \$1 trillion of developing countries' debt payments in 2020."⁵

¹ Data from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/global-coronavirus-cases-exceed-15-million-live-updates-200408233108539.html>, accessed April 9, 2020.

² "IMF Says 'worst recession since Great Depression' is likely," <https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/imf-worst-recession-great-depression-200414125253286.html>, accessed April 15, 2020.

³ "IMF Says 'worst recession since Great Depression' is likely."

⁴ Al Jazeera Live English News, April 14, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/live/>

⁵ "Coronavirus could Push Half a Billion People into Poverty: Oxfam," https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/coronavirus-push-billion-people-poverty-oxfam-200408192048642.html?utm_source=website&utm_medium=article_page&utm_campaign=read_more_links, accessed April 15, 2020.

Refugees, migrants, the jobless, the homeless in the border-camps, informal settlements, and slums are most vulnerable as these public places are left without food, healthcare, and security of any kind. Delivery of aids to refugee camps is impossible due to lockdown in Syria. Small and even medium business are forced to close. Nations in the global South, like “Nigeria’s economy is being threatened by the twin shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated sharp fall in international oil prices.”⁶ Emergency financing is needed for developing nations, medium and small businesses and low-income and single-parent families. Healthcare workers, from doctors to nurses, caregivers, shop and emergency workers, have become the new emblems of sacrificial leadership and self-forgetful services at the frontline, risking infection, even death. Return to the scenes of service after recovery is not uncommon among these emblematic service-providers.

2. Forthcoming Narratives

The emerging and conflicting narratives suffer from inconsistencies and gaps, ranging from a victorious people’s war, a Xenophobic Orientalism, high frequency electropollution, the Pharma-Elitist Power and Mandated Vaccine, the Genetic study, and Ecological Factors.

2.1. A Victorious People’s War on COVID-19 in China

There are allegations of cover up, espionage and counter-espionage within the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic entanglement between US and China, even illegal trade in a specimen of virus, involving a shootout with a vial containing the virus shattered. What captured the world’s attention has been the declaration of the people’s war on the corona virus, rallying and sending 30,000 medical personnel from the 29 provinces of China to staff the hospitals in Wuhan, the building of the Huashenshan hospital with 1000 beds, completed within a record time of 10 days, to accommodate the infected. Residents in Wuhan are videoed, cheering each other to keep the spirit up with chants of “Jia You” or “add oil,” during the massive lockdown of 40 cities that has proven to be effective. At the same time, there is a boom for the tech-sector, driven by innovation and technology, with the use of AI technology to monitor the movements of residents infected with Covid-19, with an unprecedented surge of 1.1 million hits to connect with doctors with the help of smartphone

⁶Press statement, Christina Georgieva, IMF Managing Director’s April 7, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/04/07/pr20137-nigeria-statement-by-imf-managing-director-kristalina-georgieva-on-nigeria>, accessed April 9, 2020.

apps. Shenzhen as the Silicon Valley (Huawei, DJI, Tencent Holding) is on target to realize the 2025 dream of “made in China.” Social media has carried the moving scene of Wuhan residents, bidding farewell to frontline health workers after 53 critical days.

2.2. A Xenophobic Orientalism

According to Marius Meinhof, a German sociologist of the University of Bielefeld, the orientalism evolves from sinophobic racism that occasions blatant accusation of the Chinese for “the outbreak due to cultural traits, such as eating bat soup, and now were going to spread it to the West.”⁷ Then racism morphs into a second attitude known as the “new orientalism” that recourse to the lens of suspicion, using a liberal/authoritarian framework, debating with vehemence the demise of the communist regime while casting total suspicion on all information released from China. This framework suffers from blurring political critique with racism, equating the epidemic with “Chinese virus,” “Made in China,” with the Wall Street Journal publishing a demeaning article entitled “The Real Sick Man of Asia” which resurfaced the hurtful memory of the colonial invasion of Chinese territories after 1895, including the genocidal invasion launched by Japan.⁸

Now the west is witnessing a third attitude called “colonial temporality” that uses the lens of modern/backward. This lens shores up an inflated arrogance of the west, priding itself on a more advanced medical and healthcare system that can handle the outbreak far better than the developing world, only to realize how unprepared they were in the UK, US, Spain, Italy and France. Unfortunately, “This, too, contained an element of *othering* and thus made it implausible to perceive COVID 19 as something immediately threatening Europe.”⁹

Most lamentably, this othering of the virus also leads to a selective implementation of the authoritarian solution, imposing the lockdown and self-quarantine at home, without the accompanying measures of mass testing, home-to-home follow-up by medics, strong protection of healthcare workers, with provision of apartment and daily food and needs, pulling of resources, ranging from facilities to medical personnel to curb the outbreak, and swift interventions from the central government. Such biased selection of the “Chinese solution”

⁷ Marius Meinhof, “Othering the Virus,” <https://discoversociety.org/2020/03/21/othering-the-virus/>, accessed April 10, 2020.

⁸Meinhof, “Othering the Virus.”

⁹Meinhof, “Othering the Virus.”

without an openness to learn from China regarding the strategies that ensure success of curbing the outbreak is perilous to the wellbeing of the populace.

2.3. High Frequency Electropollution

Little known is the narrative on immunotoxicity due to electromagnetic field (EMF). Paul Doyon, a researcher and building biologist, postulated the relation of the outbreak of COVID-19 to the high radiation of the 5G antennas.¹⁰ As early as 1985, Dr Robert O. Becker warned of the hazard perils of electropollution.¹¹ The 2007 and 2012 republished Bioinitiative Report and updated in 2014 and 2019, stated that the electromagnetic fields and wireless technologies (radiofrequency radiation) posed perilous risk to health with “damage to DNA and genes, effects on memory, learning, behavior, attention, sleep disruption, cancer and neurological diseases like Alzheimer’s disease. New safety standards are urgently needed for protection against EMF and wireless exposures that now appear everywhere in daily life.”¹² In 2020, the global surface will be dotted with about 600,000 5G base stations, with 130,000 in China, 75,000 in South Korea, and 10,000 in the U.S.¹³ Wuhan alone boasts “3,000 macro base stations and 27,000 micro base stations” and the “5G network will cover every corner of the city and be available at an affordable price.”¹⁴ The fact that China launched the 5G network, just less than two months before the COVID-19 outbreak, left researchers with a quest to seek the relation, if any, between this 5G wireless radiation and the outbreak of COVID-19.

¹⁰ Paul Doyon is a Building Biology Practitioner (BBP) and Electromagnetic Radiation Specialist (EMRS) with the International Institute for Building Biology and Ecology (IBE). He is also the founder of the website EMF Refugee. See his article, uploaded on March 5, 2020, “China, 5G, And The Wuhan Coronavirus: The Emperor’s New Virus,” <https://www.electricsense.com/5g-coronavirus/>, accessed April 11, 2020.

¹¹ See Robert O. Becker, “The Body Electric,” New York: Quill, 1985.

¹² The BioInitiative: Press Release. (2007, 2012), <https://bioinitiative.org/media/press-releases/>

¹³ See A. Weissberger, dated Oct. 31st, 2019, “China to launch 5G mobile networks on Friday with a huge government backed push,” IEEE ComSoc (Communications Society) Technology Blog. <https://techblog.comsoc.org/2019/10/31/china-to-launch-5g-mobile-networks-on-friday-with-a-huge-government-backed-push/>, accessed April 6, 2020.

¹⁴ General Office of Hubei Provincial People’s Government (April 16th, 2018). “5G Network Coming to Wuhan,” http://en.hubei.gov.cn/news/newslst/201804/t20180416_1275769.shtml

2.4. Pharma-Elitist Power, Mandated Vaccine

The coronavirus (CV) pandemic exposes the global asymmetrical power relation and its relation to the global economy. A top MIT Biological Engineer, Dr Shiva Ayyadurai asserted that the Deep State has allegedly exploited CV for self-preservation of their elitist power and implementation of their globalist-imperialist agenda at the service of crony capitalism.¹⁵ The Deep State is linked to the Gates Foundation, Mark Zuckerberg, Clinton Global Initiative, which congealed with the UN to “manipulate the economies, suppress dissent, and push for Mandated medicine,” Dr Shiva Ayyadurai tweeted.¹⁶

The pharmaceutical conglomerates and vaccine manufacturing industries will benefit from this fear-mongering about CV which has been pedalled as the “bogeyman” that only vaccine can eradicate. Dr Shiva remarks, “vaccines are pure profit, no risk, no liability... use this vaccine for the common good. It is an amazing recipe for fascism.”¹⁷ Already, this vaccine, he adds, is being administered in Denmark, aided by the police and military. The giant pharmaceutical corporations, aided by the media, the lawyers and lobbyists, will advertise the vaccine as a “saviour” which will be made mandatory for all the citizens. The vaccine will not stop the virus replication process but will destroy an immune-compromised people, living on diets with high sugar and salt, victimized by dirty air, dirty water and dirty food. What is needed is an uncompromising focus on beefing up the people’s immune-health, through consumption of dark rich vegetables and fruits for Vitamin A, exposure to the sun for Vitamin D, and Vitamin C from consuming garlic and onions. In the final analysis, Dr Shiva advocates a choice either for “truth, freedom and health” or “power, profit and control.”¹⁸

¹⁵See Dr Shiva Ayyadurai, MT PhD In biological engineering and the 14-year? boy inventor of Email has unabashedly admitted his status as a Dalit who hailed from Mumbai but immigrated to the US. See his twitter.com/real/DonaldTrump... and the Feature Interview with Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, “Top Doctor Exposes Everything The Deep State is Trying to Hide About CV,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcE73gyfij4>, accessed April 15, 2020.

¹⁶Ayyadurai, “Top Doctor Exposes Everything the Deep State...”

¹⁷Ayyadurai, “Top Doctor Exposes Everything the Deep State...”

¹⁸ Onions of all colours (including white) are good sources of vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium and folate, while garlic is rich in vitamin C, vitamin B6, thiamin, potassium, calcium, phosphorous, copper and manganese.

2.5. Genetic Study, UK and Germany

The Archaeogenetics Research community at Cambridge, UK and Germany of Peter Forester¹⁹ and colleagues have used the phylogenetic network analysis or PNAS study to help identify undocumented COVID-19 infection sources.²⁰ The researchers used data from 1,001 “virus genomes sampled from across the world between 24 December 2019 and 4 March 2020” which revealed “three distinct “variants” of COVID-19, consisting of clusters of closely related lineages, which they label ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’.”²¹

The closest type of COVID-19 to the one found in bats in Wuhan is known as type ‘A’, “the original human virus genome” or a “founder event” in Wuhan, or “resistance against this type of COVID-19 outside East Asia. Surprisingly, the city’s predominant strand was type ‘B’ and was prevalent in patients of East Asia which “could be immunologically or environmentally adapted to a large section of the East Asian population” but requires further mutation outside of East Asia which seems slower than elsewhere at this initial phase of the pandemic.²² Americans who have lived in Wuhan carry the mutated version of ‘A’ and in patients in the US and Australia. Found in early patients from France, Italy, Sweden and England is the major European type belonging to the ‘C’ variant. This strand is absent from the study’s Chinese mainland sample, but seen in Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea. The PNAS research further indicates “that one of the earliest introductions of the virus into Italy came via the first documented German infection on January 27, 2020, including “another early Italian infection route was related to a ‘Singapore cluster.’”²³

¹⁹Peter Forester is a fellow of the McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research Institute at Cambridge, as well as the University’s Institute of Continuing Education.

²⁰The phylogenetic network analysis or PNAS study conducted by Peter Forester and team was first pioneered in New Zealand as early as 1979, and then developed further by German mathematicians in the 1990s and caught the attention of Professor Colin Renfrew, founder of the first Archaeogenetics research groups in the world at the University of Cambridge, UK.

²¹See “COVID-19: Genetic Network Analysis Provides ‘Snapshot’ of Pandemic Origins,” <https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/covid-19-genetic-network-analysis-provides-snapshot-of-pandemic-origins>, accessed April 11, 2020. Peter Forester and team’s findings are published today in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*. The software used in the study, as well as classifications for over 1,000 coronavirus genomes and counting, is available free at www.fluxus-technology.com.

²²“COVID-19: Genetic Network Analysis Provides ‘Snapshot’ of Pandemic Origins.”

²³“COVID-19: Genetic Network Analysis Provides ‘Snapshot’ of Pandemic Origins.”

The PNAS method has the edge of “accurately traced established infection routes: the mutations and viral lineages joined the dots between known cases” and “could be applied to the very latest coronavirus genome sequencing to help predict future global hot spots of disease transmission and surge” and more poignantly, help to “identify undocumented COVID-19 infection sources, which can then be quarantined to contain further spread of the disease worldwide.”²⁴

2.6. Ecological Factors

Ebola, Sars, Mers and COVID-19 are among the three quarters of the new or emerging viral zoonotic diseases that originate from animals which subsequently infect humans. The natural habitat of animals acts as a buffer zone between the virus-carrying and/or infected animals and humankind. Human activities, from large scale agro-plantations, extractive industries, expanding industrial zones and residential areas, have drastically reduced the animals’ habitats, shrinking the available “wilderness” areas, removing the protective zone humans need, according to Dr Thomas Gillespie of Emory University.²⁵ In the face of their habitats’ destruction, species crowded together in degraded environments, while cities, with the population explosion, are herding more residents in unhealthy slums. Not only is humankind turning the world into “an immense pile of fifth” (LS 21) but also impoverished ghettos, most hazardous to health, in the face of genocidal pandemics like COVID-19.

Arguably human actions like deforestation, large scale chemical agro-farming, toxification of sources of water, emission of toxic pollutants into the atmosphere from industries, have adversely impacted climate change. The rise of zoonotic illness, according to Aaron Bernstein, director of Harvard University’s Center for Climate, Health and the Global Environment, is attributable to climate change, especially when “air-cleaning forests are replaced by large ‘steakhouse’ livestock farms, which in turn serve as a source for the spillover of infections from animals to people.”²⁶ Inversely, the polluted air is lethal during respiratory disease pandemic like COVID-19 for humans have turned clear air into “a chain smoker of diesel fumes and CO₂” which lowers our immunity.²⁷

²⁴“COVID-19: Genetic Network Analysis Provides ‘Snapshot’ of Pandemic Origins.”

²⁵See Jonathan Tulloch, “Nothing can Ever be the Same Again,” *The Tablet*, 4 April 2020, 8-9.

²⁶Tulloch, “Nothing can Ever be the Same Again,” 8.

²⁷Tulloch, “Nothing can Ever be the Same Again,” 9.

3. Wither the Church?

The solitary figure of Pope Francis, braving the pouring rain, as twilight darkened the sky, addressing an empty, deserted St Peter's square, is iconic of the crises Christianity and all the religions are experiencing. With the lockdown ordered by the civil authorities, most, if not all, places of worship are atypically locked down and desolately empty. With the economy at a standstill, finance from Lenten appeals, mass collections and intentions, has drastically diminished for funding agencies, the parishes and dioceses, and those ecclesial organizations and movements.

Jim McManus opined that

we owe each other a duty in justice to do everything we can not to spread this infection... God may act, but expects us to act, too. And that action should be in service and witness... St John of the Cross once said that we should be able to pray anywhere not just in a fine cathedral... actions of care and service to the most vulnerable must be joined with acting to protect other beings infected or dying for treatment being available, by staying at home so far as possible.²⁸

At the same time, McManus also admitted that he and many in his inbox mail "felt the pain of not being able to enter a church and pray."²⁹ A letter to the editor of *Catholic Herald*, Tony Meehan captured the sentiments of not a few Catholics: "A new force we take to be more authoritative than the commands of God has brought down a barrier, locked a gate, raised a drawbridge between the altar and its people."³⁰

The papal curia, the curial dicasteries, all religious congregations' curia in Rome, and, most episcopal curia, have gone digital/virtual, livestreaming their weekend masses, especially during the year's Holy week.³¹ Social media, like GoToMeeting, Skype and Zoom are the most expedient means of mass communication, even online meetings and teachings for religious educational programs. Online streaming of the liturgy of the hours, novena, rosary, and the daily Ignatian retreat and short courses have proven to be most helpful to sustain the faith communities, in the religious houses, nursing homes and families.

²⁸Tulloch, "Nothing can Ever be the Same Again," 9.

²⁹Tulloch, "Nothing can Ever be the Same Again," 9.

³⁰Tony Meehan, "The Lack of Mass is Hard to Bear," *Catholic Herald*, April 10, 2020, 27.

³¹In 2020, the season of Lent for the (Latin) Catholic Church began on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020, with 5 weeks of Lent, culminating in the Easter on Sunday April 12, 2020.

Pope Francis aptly summarises the mood of the People of God: "I'm living this as a time of great uncertainty. It's a time for inventing, for creativity." This creativity is demonstrated in the livestreaming of his 7 a.m. mass which many people follow and appreciate, as well as the addresses he has given, and "the March 27 event in St Peter's Square. Hence, too, the step-up in activities of the office of papal charities responding to the needs of the sick and hungry."³² This creativity has closed the physical distance between the ordained ministry with the baptized community of believers in the house-churches.

Though commendable that some governments prioritise health and livelihood over economic growth, Pope Francis remains critical of the prevalent neo-Malthusianism influences in "the way people are selected according to their utility or productivity: the throwaway culture..." "from the beginning to the end of life" in the use "of prenatal selection" and the observable absence of "Down's Syndrome people on the street when the tomograph [scan] detects them, they are binned" and the "culture of euthanasia, either legal or covert, in which the elderly are given medication but only up to a point" and the "homeless continue to be homeless" or "put in quarantine. And the hotels were empty. But the homeless cannot go to a hotel."³³ Hence the Pope urges Christian families, the *domus ecclesia*, to go beyond such utilitarianism by "opening up new horizons, opening windows, opening transcendence toward God and toward people, and in creating new ways of being at home."³⁴

4. Wither God?

4.1. A God Asleep

Many believers are wondering, "Is God asleep on the boat of planet earth during this pandemic?" (Mk 4:35-38)³⁵ Perhaps, the God purportedly asleep, is allowing nature/virus, in the words of Arundhati Roy, to disrupt and mock "immigration controls, biometrics, digital surveillance, and every other kind of data

³²Austen Ivereigh, "Pope Francis on Living with COVID-19: 'A Time of Great Uncertainty', April 8, 2020, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/time-great-uncertainty>, accessed April 10, 2020.

³³Ivereigh, "Pope Francis on Living with COVID-19..."

³⁴Ivereigh, "Pope Francis on Living with COVID-19..."

³⁵Pope Francis aptly use the "asleep" metaphor in his "Urbi Et Orbi Blessing," Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, presided over by Pope Francis, Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica, Friday, 27 March 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/urbi/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_urbi-et-orbi-epidemia.html, accessed April 15, 2020.

analytics, and struck hardest – thus far – in the richest, most powerful nations of the world, bringing the engine of capitalism to a juddering halt.”³⁶ Moreover, this virus has made “the mighty kneel” and acknowledge that this tragic rupture that has befallen us and “offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves” so that we can break with the past and courageously walk through a portal, with little luggage, “ready to imagine another world” and “ready to fight for it.”³⁷

Is not Mother Earth not exposing “our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities” and “shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities.”³⁸ The viral pandemic is a time of our judgement as humankind, certainly “a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.”³⁹

4.2. Kairos of the Spirit

The Spirit blows where she wills (Jn 3:8). God’s Creative Spirit (*Ruâh Elohim*) is blowing gently yet mightily, across the face of the earth, inflaming hearts, setting the world on fire, “*impassionating*” sojourners with the spirit of contemplativity, flooding hearts with inner strength, outflowing from within, arousing the spirit of sacrificial and self-forgetful services at the frontline and solidarity at the margin, and prophetic courage of speaking truth to the powers.

4.2.1. Contemplativity

A contemplative spirit has enabled many sojourners to behold the glory of God that is manifested in nature—in the still silence and solitude of the mesmerizing morning, thick with the aromatic scent of flowers in the refreshing air, the melodious chirping of the birds before sunrise, the countless dew-droplets on the blades of the grass and shrubs, the gentle flow of the river water, the golden moon lingering in the night sky, the breaking of dawn at the horizon, the flying of innumerable species of birds in the sky, the ducks afloat on

³⁶ Arundhati Roy, “The Pandemic is a Portal,” https://amp.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca?segmentid=acee4131-99c2-09d3-a635-873e61754ec6&__twitter_impression=true, accessed April 15, 2020.

³⁷Roy, “The Pandemic is a Portal.”

³⁸Roy, “The Pandemic is a Portal.”

³⁹Roy, “The Pandemic is a Portal.”

the water, and the dancing of peacocks at the traffic crossings. All these scenes enable not a few Ignatian sojourners to exclaim, “All of you are the glory [*doxa*] of God.”

4.2.2. Inner Strength

Many sojourners have moved from the outer world of glittering lights, noise pollution and preoccupation with their smart gadgets, and stepped into their inner sanctuaries, untapped the springs of interiority, and drunk of the water that gradually quenches the unheeded thirst in the parched deserts of their hearts. The inner sanctuaries are now lit up with thousands of lights of calm, compassion, courage, joy, justice, hope, peace and reconciliation, within themselves, in the homes, and within the extended family and clan.

4.2.3. Sacrificial Spirit

What abounds in this special time is the spirit of sacrificial services. Pope Francis remarks, “We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women,” even emergency relief workers who ensure that food supplies are transported to the migrants and refugees, hurdled in makeshift shelters and camps.⁴⁰ Families in the neighbourhood have reached out to those elderly, to run errands for them so that they have sufficient food and medicine at home. Countless of agencies, Churches mosques and temples, have set up shelters for the homeless and the migrants who have decide to walk home after they lost their jobs in the major cities after the lockdown, only to return to homes where hunger and starvation await them, and also temporary centres for offering relief-aids to the families who have filed for bankruptcy, having lost their small and medium-size enterprises when the local-global economy came to a standstill.

4.2.4. Spirit of Prophetic Voice

God’s Spirit has emboldened critics like Marius Meinhof to decry colonial temporality of the west and Dr Shiva Ayyadurai to speak the truth to the powers behind the Deep State. From Asia, the President of the FABC, Cardinal Charles Bo, SDB, has become an emblematic voice in his address:

⁴⁰ Pope Francis, “Urbi Et Orbi Blessing,” Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, presided over by Pope Francis, Sagrato of St Peter’s Basilica, Friday, 27 March, 2020.

Let me be clear, [the cardinal asserts,] it is the CCP that has been responsible, not the people of China... But it is the repression, the lies and the corruption of the CCP that are responsible... the CCP... is a threat to the world... this regime is responsible, through its criminal negligence and repression, for the pandemic sweeping through our streets today... For the sake of our common humanity, we must not be afraid to hold this regime to account.⁴¹

5. Mystique with a Personal Mystagogy

This lockdown has foregrounded the emergence of the era of mysticalocene.⁴² The silence and solitude have disposed many sojourners to the promptings of *Ruâh Elohim* in the age of “pneumatocene” to plummet the mystery of life in the Cosmos.⁴³ I feel like a ‘stardust-sojourner’ [‘ss’], taking the next small steps in this nurturing mystique of life which I treasure since 2017. I find myself like a neophyte under the illuminating ‘guru-ship’ of *Ruâh Elohim*. What is unique in this sacred sojourn is this ‘new shift’ in my experience of being ‘tutored’ in the presence of the Triune God to understand further about Trinitarian Cosmicism⁴⁴ which enhances my personal communion not only with the celestial hosts of ancestors, angels and saints but with the countless stardust-particles in the Cosmos.⁴⁵ At the same time, I gained a further understanding of the close relation between the outpouring of God’s spirit and the renewal of the face of the earth.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Cardinal Bo Speaks the Unspeakable,” <https://www.ucanews.com/news/cardinal-bo-speaks-the-unspeakable/87714>, accessed April 15, 2020.

⁴²I become aware that the age of ‘mysticalocene’ has never been lost from human civilization that abounds in great mystics and sages, but it has been ostensibly eclipsed in the age of ‘Anthropocene’ and what Ducan Kelly called the ‘Capitalocene,’ two periods that illustrate the conjoined histories of capitalism and ecological exploitation as Jason Moore alluded to in his books: *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*, London: Verso Press, 2015; Jason Moore, ed., *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*, Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016; also see Ducan Kelly, Chapter 4 “Ecological Debts,” in *Politics and the Anthropocene*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019, 68.

⁴³I feel that the era of mysticalocene is very much the age of *Ruâh Elohim* that blows in the Cosmos, over the face of Mother Earth, gently and mightily, thus recreating the Cosmos to become a New Creation.

⁴⁴With my prayer experiences thus far, I formally named this experience related to the Trinitarian Cosmicism.

⁴⁵Diarmuid O’ Murchu opines that the Cosmos with the innumerable stardust-particles therein move towards ‘an enlarged horizons and even flow in patterns, albeit chaotic sometimes, toward a preferred sense of direction’ in his book, *In The Beginning Was The Spirit: Science, Religion, and Indigenous Spirituality*, New York: Orbis Books, 2012, 46, 73.

⁴⁶This is akin to the Contemplation of Pentecost in the 5th Week of the Spiritual Exercises on the Trinitarian Conversation on sending the Third Person into the world.

Conclusion

The spatial emptiness is metaphoric of the places of worship of all the religions. Emptiness, occasioned by the inability to deal with the deafening silence within, leads to boredom, frustration and even panic. The crisis due to the economic standstill and the emptiness of the locked down churches have both contributed to the financial crises of the churches, dioceses and funding agencies in the global North, and monetary insecurities of the ecclesial movements dependent on such financial institutions.

Yet the emptiness without has opened individuals to the “transcendental stirrings” of God’s Creative Spirit which outflows within the hearts, deepening in sojourners a sense of contemplative interiority, sacrificial services, and prophetic boldness. More poignantly, this outflow represents the living fountain that nourishes and nurtures a mystique of life steeped in Trinitarian Cosmicism that intensifies communion with the celestial host in the presence of the Triune God who is *Ruâh Elohim*. This Creative *Ruâh* is fluid, slipping through closed doors, sips into the interstices of power, becomes food for the jobless and homeless, the migrants and refugees.

Indeed, the spatial emptiness in the *chronos* pales in significance compared to the boundless outflow of the liberating creativity in the *Kairos*.