



Jesus did not come to solve problems, but *to heal the pain*

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It feels like chaos, a mess. Every day there seems to be more of it. By now my grief for the death toll of COVID 19, for the political divisions and partisanship in our country, for the prejudices and the racism that divide us, for the unjust death of every black and brown body, have turned into deep sorrow, sadness with tinges of despair.

Chaos is defined as a gaping void, an abyss of emptiness. A mess is defined as a state of confusion and mayhem. What's next? I wonder...

Then I remember that in Genesis 1 "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep..." It was Chaos, an abyss, a huge mess when God said, "Let there be light," hence unfolded the dawn of new creation.

This thought comforts me. I can feel a glimmer of hope. Although we need comfort in the midst of such chaos and heartache, we also need courage for bold vision to discover how we can be part of God's labor to birth a new creation.

The chaos we're experiencing in world and church needs ordering. The mess we're living in calls for renovating. Our whole broken world needs healing and new birth. I believe God is again saying, "Let there be light" and nudging us toward a new creation in all aspects of our lives, including church.

In my last article I wrote about our culture that prides itself in solving problems. We see life's issues and messes, social, political, religious, economic, etc., as problems to be solved, while many of those issues are not problems but are about pain, hurt and heartache.

And pain needs healing not solution. Hurts and aches need salves, not fixes. Perhaps that is why Jesus did not come to solve problems but to heal the pain.

Chaos and COVID are not problems to be solved but are the realities of our time causing us deep grief and anxiety, pain and hurt. They do not have quick fixes, hence they scare us, and make us uncomfortable. But, they also call us to a new thing - a new way of responding.

Today, I believe, as the Church and as a people of faith we are called to envision new ways of being, new ways of churching, of being community, of relating to one another and of being one humanity. This call feels overwhelming. Yet because we walk in the footsteps of Jesus who carves the way, and follow the Holy Spirit within us to trek the way, we can partner with God and with one another to give birth to a new creation with a new order. There are no quick fixes, only mending wounds. There are no or cookie cutter solutions, only imagination for purposeful healing and mending the heart of a broken humanity, including our churches.

The present is chaotic yet creative, messy yet filled with possibility. May our hearts be open to the still speaking, still creating God, for out of chaos emerges a new creation, out of the mess rises new life.

Don't forget. Wear your face masks!