

## The Christian case for Covid-19 vaccines

Tattered at best, but mostly deeply shaken, uprooted, and disoriented by Covid-19. Livelihoods have been destroyed. We are robbed of the comfort of close friends and family.

We feel the pressure.

Current circumstances confront us with extremely important questions. How do we live faithful, trustworthy, and caring at a time like this? What constructive choices should we make given the dire straits we experience?

I propose a few cardinal, singularly important choices.

Firstly, we all need to be vaccinated as soon as possible.

This is the single most effective way to break the power of the virus.

Let us follow Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu's lead. He recently vowed to be vaccinated against Covid-19 as soon as one becomes available.

“Vaccines have eradicated terrible diseases such as smallpox, and we are close to using them to make others, such as polio and measles, history. Yet many people are scared or wary of this simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against infectious diseases before they even come into contact with them. There is nothing to fear,” Tutu said in a statement.

Secondly, we need to overcome our propensity for conspiracy theories.

Sound scientific and medical responses to Covid-19 are bedevilled by all kinds of suspicion. The suspicion flames fear for vaccination, denies of the seriousness of Covid-19, and cultivates mistrust in the very medication we need to overcome the raging pandemic.

Some theories, such as a flat earth or a faked moon landing, are funny and probably harmless.

Others, such as the notion that vaccines are part of a scheme to cause mass harm are quite dangerous. It prevents effective treatment. It paves the way for continued illness, loss, death, and destruction.

Why are we so easily enticed by conspiracy theories?

Unfortunately, we all know of real conspiracies to hide the truth and to harm others. Furthermore, we know events are connected, the dots need to be connected.

Trouble is we may lay faulty and far-fetched connections, leading to unfounded conspiracy theories. It is fuelled by fear and disruption. A critical, discerning stance is a good thing. Beware, it may go haywire when we err in the way we correlate events.

Interventions to curb Covid-19 are a matter of life-and-death. It is not a time to be overcome by our biases that set us up to find conspiracy where there is none.

Thirdly: Choose to acknowledge expert opinion. Be humble about our own insight and ability to judge complex medical data. Many people are gullible and think a few Youtube-videos transform you into an expert, able to refute proper scientific recommendation.

True insight into the complexities of creation is always humbling. Therefore, we need to listen to well trained, respected Christian scientists and their insight. Trust them and act on their advice.

One example. Dr Ena Bromley, internationally renowned geneticist, is a committed Christian, active church member, and an excellent example of a trustworthy scientist whose judgment we can rely on.

As a South African who obtained a PhD in statistical genetics in 1994 and did post-doctoral work in the USA, Bromley and her husband also founded Mission Hope, a non-profit focusing on feeding, schooling, and support of orphaned children.

In a recent discussion with theologian Stephan Joubert, she endorsed vaccination and basic Covid-precautions. Since the advent of Covid-19 a miracle happened. Like never scientists collaborate world-wide to find a solution.

A vaccine packs the harmless "signature" of the virus in such a way that your body recognizes the danger and respond swiftly and effectively. There is no way that your DNA is changed. It is also developed ethically sound.

It is important to immunise a large part of the population, Bromley says. In this way we limit the scope of the virus to wreak havoc. "Immunisation is my deed of love and care for the protection of others."

Fourthly and conversely, some Christians demonise scientists or theologians who support responsible Covid-prevention.

This needs to stop immediately.

Some Christians fear a new world order, the antichrist in an injection, propelling the demonic 666 straight into their DNA and see the flames of hell waiting for the so-called unenlightened who follow sound medical consensus.

Geneticist Dr Ena Bromley says misinformation is from Satan. God created a coherent world that can be understood and employed to benefit health.

By God's grace, therefore, we can develop proper medication. Bromley affirms God works through scientists. We must overcome fear for what we struggle to understand. Christ frees us from fear. We can thank God for medical intervention.

Fifthly, keep on keeping your social distance, wearing your mask, sacrificing physical contact with family and dear friends. Do not underestimate the importance of every wise deed to combat the spread of Covid.

Taking preventative measures are deeds of love. As is taking the vaccine.

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