

The Good Samaritan is alive and well!

As one of many pastors and clergy in this city, I am truly grateful to my colleagues and their congregations for the remarkable work they are doing in all sectors of our metro, both prior to and during our current epidemic.

One often hears people asking, “so what is the church doing about all the many problems facing our society”?

From personal observation, much is being done.

I am humbled by the remarkable unity and resolve amongst them as they tirelessly serve the poor, feed the hungry and unemployed, minister to the sick, counsel the broken, encourage the youth, care for the elderly and so much more, most of which is done behind the scenes, in homes, hospitals and dark alleys where there are no spotlights.

Thank you!

I also realise that much of this ministry is done sacrificially and at great emotional and financial cost, like it cost the Good Samaritan in the story told by Jesus in Luke 10.

While these good deeds deserve the limelight, we all know that they are done in love and obedience to the Greatest Samaritan, Christ Himself, who told the story in Luke 10 to illustrate that our love for God must find demonstration in our love for our neighbours, irrespective of their background, culture, language or belief.

This does not imply that my colleagues in the city are silent. In fact, quite the contrary!

With regard to prevailing matters such as crime, gangsterism, corruption, poor service delivery, lack of water, poor education, inequality and all the other matters that are ravaging our city, I am encouraged to read the regular articles in which these issues are tackled fearlessly and head-on.

But there is also much more to this than mere talk and warning. I am personally aware of numerous city-wide, provincial and national initiatives where these matters are being addressed face to face with the powers that be.

Thank you for speaking up for the voiceless, for taking up weapons for the defenceless, for fearlessly refusing to be silent in matters that matter to God.

In so doing we are not only and willingly dealing with the symptoms of a broken society, but also addressing the root causes.

A good Levite or Priest in the story of the Good Samaritan would have both ministered to the injured man and addressed the problem of crime prevention.

Obviously so much more can and should be done, but perhaps those asking the question about what the church is doing are often the very ones who should be putting up their hands and volunteering for the many current feeding, training, education, prayer and other initiatives that have been launched by our churches in the city.

Thank you to all those in our congregations who have responded to God's call to get involved and get their hands dirty.

A particular thanks to all our health workers, educators, security forces and so many more who continue serving in the midst of great personal danger.

We thank God for you, for the church and for our church leaders. We are not perfect, but we are available and willing to continue making a difference.

The challenges we face are huge and our individual efforts might seem insignificant, but thankfully the Good Samaritan did not avoid that one victim on his path, because he regarded that one individual as significant.

We can all make a difference – today.

Start with the next victim you come across or throw your weight behind the initiatives of your local church and make a collective difference.

The church is here for a time such as this.

In our metro, there might be dark and threatening clouds in our midst and numerous challenges on our path, but as long as the Good Samaritan and His church are alive and well, and they are, there is hope for all in the city.

Many hundreds of unsung heroines and heroes in our city can say: "Our hearts are willing; our sleeves are rolled up and our hands are dirty".

How about yours?

Pastor Daan Botha, Harvest Christian Church