Covid Cover up & Confession

As of March 20, 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic has spread to 185 countries and the death toll is 11,398. Governments are instructing people to take great precautions about cleanliness, keeping a safe distance from others and staying at home. Many businesses have closed, workers are laid off and stock markets have plunged. Fear is spreading faster than the coronavirus. Officials are on the horns of a dilemma, knowing they must contain the contagion yet also wanting to manage public anxiety and minimize panic. Faced with such a crisis we need wisdom.

Scientists are working urgently to find a cure but how long will that may take? Of course, we all wish that a remedy will soon be found, even as politicians like the Prime Minister of Canada hold out hope of a "strong economic rebound" after the crisis is over. (But how long til then?) If we focus on finding a solution we may deceive ourselves. Instead, why not humbly reflect on what happened in China and Iran when their leaders denied and covered up the problem resulting in a terrible death toll.

Speaking of transparency reminds me of a wise saying by Solomon, "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy." (Proverbs 28:13)

Did China and Iran suppress the truth?

Initially their leaders denied they had a problem of a deadly virus. They even tried to cover up the danger as Gordon Chang, a senior fellow at Gatestone Institute, has noted. President Xi Jinping "allowed the coronavirus to spread for six weeks in December and January before he publicly acknowledged the disease." Likewise, Carl Gershman wrote in the Globe and Mail, "the communist regime in China has handled the spreading coronavirus epidemic" by suppressing the truth. He explained, "Eight doctors in the city of Wuhan were punished in December for raising the alarm about the virus, including Li Wenliang, the 33-year-old ophthalmologist at the city's central hospital who was forced to sign a statement apologizing for doing so, as it constituted 'illegal behavior.' Mr. Li became a national hero, but then became a martyr as well, with his death on Feb.

7 triggering an outpouring of rage and grief online over the regime's lying and concealment." ([Source](#))

This cover up has had disastrous consequences. The Guardian reports the findings of a study done at the University of Southampton, "But if the interventions [by Chinese authorities] could have been brought in a week earlier, 66% fewer people would have been infected, the analysis found." Furthermore, "The same measures brought in three weeks earlier could have reduced cases by 95%." ([Source](#)) Marcus Kolga, a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute's Centre of Advancing Canadian Interests Abroad and an expert on foreign disinformation, further explains how very serious this is in an article in Macleans Magazine. Kolga is ([Source](#))

As in China, so too in Iran, the initial spread of the virus was officially met with denial and cover up. As Reuters reported, it is no secret that "Iran is the epicentre of the outbreak in the Middle East as most of the cases reported in the region are either people who were in Iran or who caught the virus from people who had visited the country." Dr. Amir A Afkhami, an Iranian doctor noted that,

> "Iran began reporting coronavirus fatalities in the city of Qom as early as February 19. Travelers from Iran to Canada and Lebanon tested positive for the virus over the next two days, signaling a much larger outbreak than Tehran was willing to admit and prompting neighboring Afghanistan, Armenia, Pakistan, and Turkey to close their borders with Iran.
> Although President Hassan Rouhani dismissed the domestic concern surrounding the pandemic as unwarranted hysteria, a whistle-blowing parliamentarian from the city of Qom accused the government of covering up the crisis, claiming that 50 of his constituents had succumbed to the contagion." ([Source](#))

On February 24th Iran's deputy minister of health, Iraj Harirchi, emphatically denied these reports. The very next day, he was humiliated, being forced to admit that he himself was infected with coronavirus! Over the next several days vice-president Masoumeh Ebtekar and 23 other parliamentarians were infected which forced the government to close parliament.

Meanwhile Dr. Afkhami published another article, *Pandemics Ravaged Iran Long Before the Coronavirus* with a subtitle implying a powerful rebuke, *But Instead of Learning From the Past, Tehran Is Stuck There.* Afkhami explains how Iranian authorities allowed such a horrific tragedy to unfold. He wrote on March 3rd in Politico magazine,

> "Since detecting the disease's presence in Qom, the [Iranian] ministry of health has refused to establish quarantines in or around the city, wrongly characterizing the measure as outdated. The administration has failed to adequately identify, isolate, and treat people who have come in contact with the virus, and the infection has consequently spread to other parts of the country. The health ministry did request closing Qom's religious landmarks, including the Fatima Masumeh Shrine, but religious officials refused. A surrogate of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei concurred with that decision, declaring that any attempt to restrict access to the shrine promotes a nefarious plot by the United States to make the holy city appear to be unsafe." (Source)

A week earlier, on February 26, a similar critique was offered by public health expert Kamiar Alaei. In an interview with the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) he rebuked the Iranian authorities for not "admitting that they're facing a major outbreak." The report continues, "CHRI has meanwhile been informed by a credible source that two doctors have died from the COVID-19 in a hospital in Tehran. But the deaths have not been officially announced and their colleagues have been warned by unidentified state agents to refrain from publicizing the news, according to the source who requested anonymity for security reasons." (Source)

On March 6th, nine days after CHRI's report, the Iranian news channel AVATODAY presented a list of 65 doctors who have died from Covid-19, listing them according to name and city!! (Source)

Ari Lieberman gives more evidence of the Iranian regime's cover up citing a report from Radio Farda in Iran quoting a representative of Iran's health minister;

"On March 8, Iranian authorities claimed that 194 people had died from the coronavirus. But on that day, a representative of Iran's health minister in the northern province of Gilan stated that more than 200 people had died of coronavirus in that province alone. The number of dead in a **single Iranian province exceeded the total national figure of 194** announced by the government." (Source 1, 2)

Meanwhile, eleven days after this report on Radio Farda, Dr Afruz Eslami issued a warning on Iranian state TV saying that if Iranians would comply even moderately with a new government initiative to contain the virus "there will be 300,000 cases and 110,000 deaths." What an astonishing admission compared to earlier emphatic denials by top government officials! (Source)

In light of these cover ups is there any hope? The second half of Proverbs 28:13 gives hope, "if they confess and turn from them [sins], they will **receive mercy**." (bold font added)

One wonders, "How could this apply to Iran?" Imagine, for a moment, what would happen if God/Allah providentially allowed American or Israeli researchers the privilege of discovering a cure or vaccine for Covid-19! Do you really think they would selfishly keep it to benefit their own people while refusing to share it with China or Iran? Would they not, rather, show kindness in keeping with God's instruction through Solomon? "If your enemies are hungry, give them food to eat. If they are thirsty, give them water to drink." (Proverbs 25:21-22; cf. Romans 12:19-20; Matthew 5:44)

The real problem with the pandemic, of course, is humanity's deep underlying fear of death. This universal fear is addressed in a must-read article, "Is death the end?" It explains how Jesus Christ abolished death and frees us from the Devil who holds humans in bondage to the fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14-15; 2 Timothy 1:10) This article is available here:
http://answering-islam.org/authors/clarke/death_end.html

If you have any comments or questions, I'd love to hear from you: rolandclarke1139@yahoo.com