

# **Editorial: Trusting God while living in a world beyond our control**

February 17, 2021

As I write, Texas is experiencing a deep freeze. Tuesday morning, many of us woke up to single-digit temperatures and a subzero wind chill. Millions have been without power for days. Some have reported temperatures *inside* their homes in the 30s. We and the rest of our state are at the mercy of a weather system beyond our control.

Texas and the rest of the globe are enduring the continuing coronavirus pandemic. Despite the United States having one of the world's premiere medical systems, we find ourselves unable to control a new microscopic, deadly and mutating virus.

Social, political and economic unrest abound, problems that seem so much bigger than us, despite the extent of our role in them.

We can do certain things to conserve energy, stay warm, look out for each other and improve the well-being of our communities. Yet, there is a limit to our abilities. Not everything is within our control.

How do we live in a world like this?

## **What seems like an absurd way to live**

As absurd as the question might seem, the answer—in the world's estimation—is the real absurdity. To live in a world beyond our control, we need to trust God.

Trusting God many times looks like foolishness to the intelligent and failure to the successful. Even worse for those who need to be in control, who want to take matters into their own hands, who have waited long enough already, trust in God looks like lazy, do-nothing passivity.

Trusting God doesn't mean we do nothing, and it certainly is not passive. Trusting God means we unclench our fists, slow our racing minds, stop trying to fix everything ourselves, and rest in God. For some of us, that's real work.

Trusting God also doesn't absolve us of our responsibilities in this world. We still have to make decisions, pay the bills and do the normal things a person needs to do for oneself and others—while giving our best to doing these things.

What really drives some people crazy is trusting God means we do counterintuitive things like giving up the right for revenge, letting others go first, serving someone else without any consideration of the return on investment.

This kind of life often looks like idle time and wasted efforts. We don't believe we can afford to live this way in the world as it is.

## **The part we play**

The world is as it is in large part due to failures in human initiative, planning and provision—what most charitably could be called laziness or passivity.

[Failure to prepare](#) for an anomalous winter storm left the Texas power grid unable to cope with high demand. The shortcomings of [privatized interests and self-reliance](#) also contributed. Millions now bear the consequences.

Failure by some U.S. officials to take SARS-CoV-2 seriously is a significant

reason the United States has [the highest number](#) of infections and COVID-19-related deaths in the world. The shortcomings of [individual freedoms](#) are another significant factor. Again, millions bear the consequences.

Likewise, our political, economic and social unrest is attributable to a host of human failings, including pride, greed and malice.

In a world beyond our control, we hardly can afford to fail at what we can control.

We may not be able to hold back deadly winter storms and microscopic viruses, but we can trust God's ways are right and true, and do the things God commands us to do. For example, we can choose humility over self-promotion. We can put aside our own wants to look out for others' needs. We can care for other people the way we hope to be cared for.

Among all the things we can do to embody our trust in God, there are two things we can do that look a lot like lazy, do-nothing passivity—and not just to the world.

We can pray and wait.

## **The really hard part**

How many have been praying and waiting through a power outage, through the pandemic, through joblessness? How many have been praying and waiting for God to work a miracle in their family, their church, their community, in our country?

At the end of a long and difficult year and the beginning of another year so poorly started, praying and waiting feels like a summer rain drop on hot pavement. Can it possibly do any good to trust in God?

The ready answer—“Yes. Hold on. Keep trusting.”—may seem no more than motivation. Yet, we base that answer on the witness of Scripture and Christian history.

We can't say how the prayers will be answered or how long the waiting will be. That's a realm beyond our control.

To live in this world where so much is beyond us, we trust. But not in just anything or anyone. That small kind of trust, too easily broken, is no match for a world beyond our control. No, we trust in God who made it all, holds it all and will restore it all.

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