

Looking at Society and Family Through the Parlance of Disaster

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INTRODUCTION

The word disaster has been known to us in many types and forms. The most common manifestation of disasters are in the form of landslide, earthquake, flood, lightning, forest fire etc. These disasters can have devastating impact on our surroundings physically and mentally. According to experts, we are literally sitting on top of the earth that can tremor anytime with high seismic designated as “Zone V”. It means that disasters can always catch us on the hop. We tend to care much less for tomorrow and expect that the sun will rise in the east and sets in the west as usual, while we stroll away our day with our own petty tasks. Sadly, we do not know when and how disaster will hit us. When it does so, it creates much more havoc than it should have been and provokes even greater outrage and shaken our faith. Humans can only do so little to prevent themselves from such an unprecedented disaster. This kind of disaster can be summed up as a natural disaster. It is not a novel thing, a common tragedy faced by our past generations for the umpteenth time. However, our today’s, discussion would be on the second category of disaster called man-made disasters.

What is it that human orchestrated disaster to be called a “man-made disaster”? These include crimes, mob violence, social disorder, cyber-attack, etc. These disaster occur some with intentions and others by accidents. Human’s intentions frail more badly than expected. However the content of this discussion will weigh heavily on the cause manifested from a broken family that has been a common trait in our past and present generations. We can see some of the confronting problems spun out from a broken family such as orphans, widow/ widower, and even a perpetrator in a society etc. We take it for granted that the causes of societal disorders are those disasters played out only by nature; it is evident that a relentless broken family impacts our society negatively to a comparable (greater) degree than by a natural-short-lived disaster. The Paite maxim, “Inn gua hah lou a gangua hah” speaks about those people who are mindful of other people’s affairs while their own family affairs remain in disarray. Those people look grim and tiring inside their house and all rosy when they meet with others outside. They show greater concerns for other family over their own. They display a selfless attitude towards others over their

own. This can escalate to further complications than are sought for. After all, our hearts are filled with jealousy. The story of Cain and Abel bears witness to these tendencies. When the needs of family affairs and issues demand urgent care and attention, such people are preoccupied with problems faced by others. Like torn clothes that cannot be stitched back to their original form, this complexity will arrive at a point when it cannot be mended. No wonder, it lends itself to family’s conflict and even wreaks havoc against siblings.

If we are determined to protect ourselves from this man-made disaster, then we must bring our attention to the importance of knowing the value of a family, clan, community and race. This man-made disaster has potential to produces dispute in family, which in turn impacts the neighbours and society. The role of parent is preponderance in enhancing the quality of an individual in a family. For a parentless family, the yoke lends on the eldest son/daughter. We

must also try to avoid such disaster at best on our individual level. If we feel that parents are incompetent in carrying out their responsibility, then, the onus must be on the siblings to help each other out. Cooperative responsibility in the family that transcends the bouts of children relying fundamentally on their parents until their strength is withered away must be avoided at all cost. Having said that, there is lack of “patriarchal mind-set” in our family. We do not consider the help our siblings need and lampoon each other. The practise of property inheritance passed down to the eldest son in a family is an age old custom. Its practise varies with other tribes as its tradition. Hmar and Mizo passed down the inheritance of property to the youngest son in a family while for the paite, the eldest.

Which one is more fearsome to you – natural or man-made disaster? Its answer may vary from person to person. However, as both are under the pile of disaster, they are both terrifying as they are prone to cause “losses”. To prevent ourselves from this disastrous impact, we must try our best in building up our defence mechanisms. Each of us is blessed with a family that we can build each other up. However if our household are not strengthened, it may befall us as a canvas of hell on earth. Our parents did not choose the humble condition of their destitution when they were born. Their present lifestyle gives

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them the edge of believing in themselves as underprivileged and disadvantaged. Our parents climbed up the ladder of this hard stricken life with utmost determinations. However, some do not reach their desired living standards. For we may have great ambitions, but is only God can enable us to reach our goals. Inbuilt vulnerability can be seen mostly in poor families, while it can also be seen in well to do families as they grow up, At the same time, those without family have been disadvantaged to experience greater vulnerability and hollowness in their heart throughout their life. All of these including poverty, destitutions, and nothingness in life, injustices and problems faced by individuals and in groups amount to man-made disaster. Stricken with such conditions makes us humble to be deserving a place in churches and in society. By this, we wanted to talk about human-made disasters that led to conflict and disorder in society.

How do we circumvent this stigma that has disrupted our normal rhythms of behaviour in a family and society? This question should self-reflect upon us. We cannot always expect the church to provide solutions to family problems. If our family does not make an effort to combat this man-made disaster/vulnerability, it will swell up to the brink of paroxysm where even the family council finds it hard to solve. We do not mean to assume the lack of church and household council dominancy. But there are things a family is capable of dealing with themselves. Church and Family council are secondary to family and they can play decisive role in keeping the mile markers of stability in our society even at a distant. We need to take advantage of their role in keeping our family and church connected. However for some people, they are the first and last resort of council. But as many important roles the church has value in a society, some people find it hard to reach the alms of the church because of their self-conscious vulnerability and humble condition. If we are subjected to these portents of family conflict and instability and our hearts still yearn for God, then we must take up the cause with preparations. As the saying goes "The nearest way to heaven is a contented family", we should focus on our own task and live up to washing off unwanted muck in our own surroundings. All this tenacious object including family problems, societal immorality and selfishness must be done away with while embracing humbleness in our walks of life.

Each individual has a responsibility to prevent the impending his or her family disaster. If we must clamp down the impending disruptions life on time, the outcome will yield a contented family, peace with our neighbours and stability in society.

Conclusion

I am confident to say that all of us have experienced the above mentioned problems at varying degrees. One way to counter this

is to promote community resilience by helping one another, expanding our inner circles of goodwill and changing our conventional perspective to a more inclusive and charitable outlook. Meanwhile, one of the things we lack is what is written in the book of Galatians 5:22-23 which reads "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law [The Holy Bible, NIV]. If we could follow tenderly what is written in this passage, I believe we can easily overcome any towering disaster even if they are right in front of our eyes. If we don't show kindness and concerns for our families and closed ones, we cannot expect others to put effort when we struggle. So, let us instill in our mind and make every possible effort to what is being said here, then we may see a healthy family, churches and society.

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