



Momentum

The God Who Sees Me

David Hearn, President of the C&MA in Canada

The news report was matter of fact. BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, stated there were two more deaths over the May long weekend. Information like this had become part of the daily routine of reporting deaths caused by COVID-19. What made this report different was that one of the deaths was my wife Agnes' dad, Abe. Abe passed away at 9:45 p.m. on Sunday night after struggling for five days with COVID-19.

The pandemic hit the seniors home where he lived several weeks earlier; however, communication from that home was very limited and contact with family allowed intermittently. We have no idea how much or how long Agnes' dad suffered, but we do know he was often alone. No family could sit with him, hold his hand, or pray over him. We take comfort in knowing that God never left his side. To God, Abe was not just another casualty of a pandemic—he was a man deeply loved and valued by the God of the universe.

One of the most touching scenes in the Old Testament is the encounter Hagar had with God when fleeing from her unbearable domestic situation (Genesis 16:1–13).

Denise Kohlmeyer in Hagar and El Roi, the God who Sees¹ describes it like this:

She'd been mistreated by her mistress. She'd not wanted to do what was asked of her, but as a slave with no rights or opinions, she'd had no choice. Out of desperation, she'd finally fled because she couldn't take the abuse and the pain anymore; and she quickly found herself alone and defenseless, without shelter or sustenance. And pregnant, no less. To say she felt scared, lonely, and unloved is an understatement. She wondered, in her despair, if anyone cared about her or what was happening to her. Or her baby.

In that moment of complete aloneness, Hagar discovers that the God of all creation had not forgotten her.

The angel of the Lord found her near a spring in the desert and called her by name, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8). Earlier in the chapter, when Hagar was addressed by Abraham and Sarai, she is referred to as "my slave" and "your slave" (Genesis 16: 5,6). It seems that she is treated more like a commodity than a person.

Yet, in God's economy no one is a commodity. No one is nameless; rather all are precious, valued, and wanted. I wonder how powerful it was for Hagar to hear God use her name. The conversation was so life-changing that Hagar gave God a name that reflected her experience. She called God El Roi, which means the God who sees me. She declared, "You are the God who sees me...I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13).

"You are the God who sees me...I have now seen the One who sees me."

For many, long-term isolation and physical distancing has resulted in higher levels of insecurity and anxiety. Cues received by being in the physical company of others are no longer present. Even though Zoom is a great tool for getting business done, it does not compensate for social contact. The word virtual is becoming increasingly irritating. Those who live on their own are particularly vulnerable to waves of sadness and discouragement. On a personal level, I have experienced more gloomy days emotionally than I have for a long time. I did not realize how much of the enjoyment and energy of my ministry world was in the context of the physical presence of others.

The emerging reality is that the emotional fallout of COVID-19 is more debilitating than any of us could have imagined. Many find themselves in a desert, wondering if anyone understands or sees their needs. Take heart—the God who sees, sees you! He knows your greatest fears; He engages in your deepest anxieties and understands your darkest emotions. You are not forgotten. You are not nameless. You are not a commodity.

I don't know what my father-in-law's last days were like. He was in the advanced stages of dementia. I am sure the confusion of his illness and the absence of familiar contact was difficult. However, in stillness of his last moments when no one else was present, El Roi, the God who sees was with him. The God who holds the planets in their orbit knows Abe. In the midst of the challenges this pandemic is creating lies an opportunity for us to have an intimate encounter with God—a time to explore the God who sees me and declare from our heart, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). Abe matters, and so do you!

¹Kohlmeyer, Denis. Hagar and El Roi, The God Who Sees. Christian Living, <https://www.christianwoman.co/hagar-and-el-roi-the-god-who-sees/>



The Christian and Missionary
Alliance in Canada

Global Advance Fund Update

The Global Advance Fund (GAF) covers the costs of sending and supporting international workers (IWs) overseas—salaries, benefits, and the costs associated with ministry in various countries. Some is also designated to training IWs.

Through the GAF, IWs take the Gospel to people groups, where few or none have heard the name of Jesus.

Year to date (as of July 17, 2020)

Total 2020 Faith Goal	\$16,067,161
YTD Income	\$7,058,968*
Excess/Shortfall	(9,008,193)

*43.93% of total 2020 Faith Goal