

Two months ago on March 15th, as news was ramping up about the whole Covid situation we chose to conduct a live service at our building as talk was already swirling that public gatherings would be restricted.

We weren't sure what the immediate future would look like and I felt like the Father wanted me to have the whole service be a "Family Business" time – talking about what may lay ahead and lay a biblical foundation to move forward.

I started that time by saying, "We are here in this age, in this day, at this time, with whatever this really is, or isn't – it really doesn't matter – something is happening on our planet and God has put us here to be His hand extended. How exciting! We were made for this – what were we made for? We were made to be God's Ambassadors on this planet, especially when things start rocking."

Looking back, I feel even more passionate about that statement.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since that Sunday. We have had a tsunami of information, misinformation, restrictions, regulations, proclamations, directives, etc.

There are so many layers to this whole scenario and I just want to spend a little time talking with you as your Kahu. I wish we could all join together in person right now and I could see your faces and share my heart for KMC and our community, unfortunately, this method will have to suffice.

As I've been praying for our KMC Ohana and our Island during this time, I realize a lot of folks are getting fatigued. We are all in the same storm, not in the same boat.

My heart goes out to those who are suffering through this time, regardless of the nature or source. Some are struggling emotionally, some financially, some spiritually, some philosophically, some physically.

Paula and I pray often for you in these areas.

I've thought about the high-level categories of response as I think about this whole situation and have reduced it to 4 main categories:

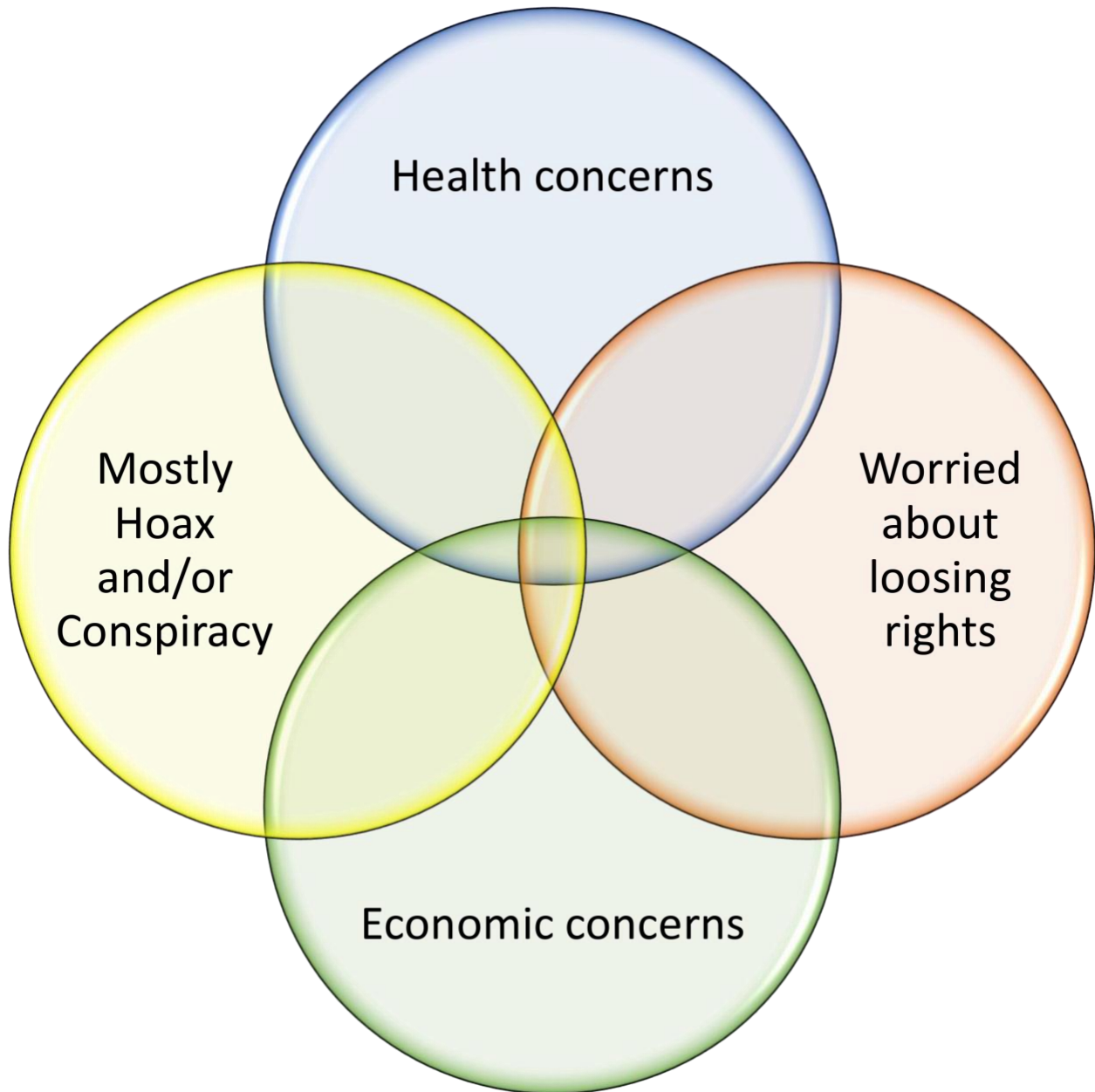
Health Concerns

Economic Concerns

Worried about losing rights

Mostly a hoax and/or conspiracy

I put together this graphic to illustrate some of the complexity of this and what I perceive to be the reality for most of us AND MOST DEFINITELY the reality for us as a local church.



This graphic describes the reality of our Island and our local church – few of us are in just one little circle exclusively and as a church family we are that little section right in the center.

According to 1 Corinthians 12 we are one Body with many parts – a unique diversity of function, role, perception, etc. and unity of ultimate purpose.

It is a beautiful analogy on paper AND pretty challenging to live out in real life, especially when situations arise that are naturally polarizing.

My encouragement to us, as the Church on Kauai, is the same as Paul encouraged the Church at Philippi:

Philippians 1:27 No matter what happens, live in a way that brings honor to the good news about Christ. Then I will know that you remain strong together in the one Spirit. I will know this if I come and see you or only hear about you. I will know that you work together as one person. I will know that you work to spread the teachings about the good news.

As a family, let's look at a few issues, from a Jesus centered view, that we are facing.

There are a lot of things we don't know, and there are some things that we do know:

Without getting into the whole world of conspiracies and the inevitable pros and cons of everyone's opinion, we can definitively say, we do know there is a conspiracy – it's been going on since Genesis 3 - it is documented in the most reliable source available, the Bible.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

We also know that, as Jesus Followers, we are still in process on our journey home and we are full of emotions, ideas, causes, etc. Also, as Jesus Followers, we have a mandate from our Father to respond to the culture and situations around us through His filters. We are to have a perspective that transcends this planet and focuses on eternal Kingdom purposes before any other purposes, even when and especially when things get hard and we get fatigued. As the end times progress, things will get more challenging and tough AND it is all part of God's eternal plan – He even wrote it down for us so we could be prepared and ready.

Colossians 3:1-4 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

² Peter 3:10-12 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Another thing we know is true is that God is always in control.

Too often we say with our mouths that, “God is in control” and with our actions we contradict that. God wants us to back up what we say we believe by how we act and react. It’s easy to say we have faith in God for the challenges and hard times in life – but what story will our actions and responses tell?

James 2:14-26 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may *well* say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

By His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit we can rise up and stand firm in Him and His principles.

1 Corinthians 16:13 Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

In closing, another thing we know is that He is always present.

Matthew 19:18-20 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

I want to encourage you not to get distracted by things we don't know, let's live faithfully and courageously in cadence with those things we do know.