



"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

- Desmond Tutu, Archbishop, Nobel Peace laureate 1931-

June 20th will mark the summer solstice and start the summer season for the northern hemisphere, while those living in the southern hemisphere will begin its winter. It is now almost six months that the world has faced its most challenging pandemic outbreak. Now, many countries are beginning to ease their lockdown measures, albeit rather cautiously. Everyone is apprehensive of what next; we know that life will not return to what it was before. Many also question what impacts COVID-19 has on our economy. Recession is on air, and the tracking of



the jobless rate is closely watched.

Besides the concerning numbers, the world has seen an increase of xenophobia. Ignited by some politicians and their irresponsible rhetorics, harmful stereotypes, and racism begin to further divide our society, and it may get worst with the impending economic tension. Has globalisation come to its end, will there be societal riots? Those are all very important questions that will decide the direction of the world for the next decades. Hopefully, the wise words from the former Archbishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu, a Fellow of King's College London, will help prevent the shattering of our world and put the fractured pieces back together again.

May June and the easing of lockdowns begin to bring the sunshine back to all and a world together. Wherever you are, we wish you well!



A Journey A Month...

Your Story. Our Story. The Human Story.

Bankruptcy filings are not the fates of only small businesses, retail shops, or restaurants in our neighbourhoods. Big and prestigious brands like Hertz, Neiman Marcus, etc. have also fallen victims of the pandemic outbreak. Even wonder-boy Richard Branson is not immune; he now has to try to save his global empire, Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Australia.

Last month, the Economist published the headline-grabbing article, ***“Has COVID-19 killed globalisation?”*** Its editor noted that globalisation was already in trouble even before the pandemic, Covid-19 is just the last straw that will break the camel’s back. Recession will happen, resulting in more politicians adopting inward-looking policies, leading to more trade wars, and increasing geopolitical instability. The article ended with a pessimistic conclusion: ***“Wave goodbye to the greatest era of globalisation – and worry about what is going to take its place.”***

With all due respect to the Economist (which I enjoy reading,) I do not agree with that conclusion. Many of you are aware that the word “crisis,” written in Chinese wēi jī (危机), means that in a moment of danger and scourge, there also lies a moment of opportunity. From the eastern philosophical view, a crisis is just a turning point in the development of the situation. The key is to focus on how we handle the situation and less so on the outcome because the outcome will depend on how we handle the situation.



wēi 危
jī 机



I disagree we are at the end of globalisation because I believe globalisation, like many other things, will continue, but it will operate under a “new norm.” Yes, policy-makers will incentivise businesses to “repatriate” manufacturing back to home countries to save jobs and to ensure the self-reliance of some strategic industries such as biotech, etc. However, business leaders are also conscious of the high risk of single-sourcing and the need to explore and expand offshore markets to meet their growth KPIs.

Undoubtedly, there will be a new order for the “World Factories.” China will face an intensive challenge from India and the likes but will develop its strength in other sectors. Further decentralisation of manufacturing and support centers will occur, but that will only create other “World Factories” around the globe. Businesses will be remapping strategic centers, including that of R&Ds and technology hubs, but will spread their risks across regions.

The engine of globalisation in the industrial age began some time ago. There is already a world web connecting people and businesses for technology, research, communication, etc. and, ultimately, the market. Anyone who decides to break away from this world web will risk never to catch up again because the train moves on and other passengers will quickly take over the vacant seats. The pandemic is the crisis that might change the direction of the moving train, because of the change of passengers on board. What is happening is merely an evolution of the order of “globalisation,” it does not kill it.



Therefore, please do not be misled by the headline. Globalisation is alive, and the skill to manage diversity will still be a much sort-after skill for professionals and leaders. On a grand scale, managing diversity is even more paramount. Surely we will not witness the last of a pandemic, and many anticipate the frequency of recurrence may increase because of our modern lifestyle. The only way to combat pandemic outbreaks is through the collaboration of scientists around the world. The

open-sharing and trusts amongst the smartest brains and the commitment of leaders in unison are part of the equations in solving the world problem. Needless to mention, other inventions and technological advancement will only accelerate when we work with each other.

Perhaps, we can now see what is in the Chinese word for crisis. It indeed lies an opportunity for a higher evolution for all of us. Our responses to manage the pandemic and its after-math economic impact may very well determine the future of humanity. Alas, how many world leaders can see the cue, and how many shall have the courage to take on policies that might not be the most popular at home, but so essential to bring all humanity forward?



“He who is different from me does not impoverish me – he enriches me,” wrote Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his book Flight to Arras.

Appreciating the differences in others will make us a richer person. With that in mind, we need to ask ourselves if we want to live in a more prosperous and vibrant world or remain in a closed and limited one?

To ponder...

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We are passionate about building bridges and breaking down walls. Please join us in our journey,

Beyond Boundaries - Crossing Cultures



The world is fascinating, simply because differences exist...

Spread the words, share the vision, do our part!



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