

## **Our Spiritual Health**

*Brian McLaren, a member of the CAC Living School faculty, reminds us why it matters that we pay attention to our health, not only physically but spiritually and ethically as well.*

In these challenging, difficult times, we are discovering a wisdom that we needed all along, and that wisdom is that we are all connected. We are not separate. We used to think that we caught diseases as individuals: "I'm sick; you're not." But now we realize, no, we catch diseases as individuals who are part of families, and families who are part of cities, and cities that are part of states and nations. We realize now that our whole species can become infected, and that our whole globe can be changed because of our interconnectedness. . .

Maybe this is also an opportunity for us to become enlightened about some other viruses that have been spreading and causing even greater damage, without being acknowledged: social and spiritual viruses that spread among us from individual to individual, from generation to generation, and are not named. We don't organize against them, and so they continue to spread and cause all kinds of sickness [and death]. Social and spiritual viruses like racism, white supremacy, human supremacy, Christian supremacy, any kind of hostility that is spread, based on prejudice and fear.

What would happen if we said, as passionate as we are about being tested for coronavirus, we all wanted to test ourselves for these social and spiritual viruses that could be lurking inside of us? And then, when I come into your presence, I, in some way, inflict this virus on you. What an awesome opportunity for us to say and begin to pray that we would be healed and cleansed of these invisible viruses that are such a huge and devastating part of human history. . . .

In this pandemic, many of us are nostalgic for the old normal. We want to get back to our favorite coffee shop, our favorite restaurant, etc. And of course, there's nothing wrong with so many of those desires for the old normal. But I'd like to make a proposal. If we are wise in this time, we will not go back unthinkingly to the old normal. There were problems with that old normal many of us weren't aware of.

The old normal, when you look at it from today's perspective, was not so great, not something to be nostalgic about, without also being deeply critical of it. As we experience discomfort in this time, let's begin to dream of a new normal, a new normal that addresses the weaknesses and problems that were going unaddressed in the old normal. If we're wise, we won't go back; we'll go forward.