

**Economic Prospect**  
**Update on My March 23 Covid Response**  
**John Addison Teevan (39:3) August 10, 2020**

**Almost five months ago I wrote with specific ideas about the Covid crisis.** It is time for an update. My original idea was to lift restrictions in April (I should have said June). I also wanted those under 60 to be able to return to work (and travel and restaurants) as they were less vulnerable while continuing strong restrictions for those people over 65. I also recommended that schools reopen in May so that education could be sustained and so that the start of school in the fall would be normal.

**I stick by my analysis and recommendations,** but I have realized several things and of course many other things have unfolded on their own since March (eg masks). My biggest miss was that people (including me) would be so hesitant to return to work or to eat in restaurants or to return to large gatherings including churches. (I also did not foresee the strong tech/media response of churches that made home participation a genuine option. I feel like a participant rather than like a rain-soaked drifter shivering in the balcony.)

**Social disintegration has been accelerated** by the riotous part of the response to the May 25 murder of George Floyd, an injustice which I protest. There has also been an unfortunate shift from 'bending the curve' to 'stopping the spread' which has kept schools and colleges from opening for the fall of 2020. A high portion of urban African American children will be denied education by health safety concerns leaving them more vulnerable in less resilient homes and communities. This is unacceptable.

**While the economic decimation has been dramatic,** the response of the Fed has meant that larger corporations and the stock market (Wall Street) have fared very well. Meanwhile, small businesses and entrepreneurs (Main Street) have been failing as if by deliberate attack. This disproportionately affects African American, Latino, and immigrant entrepreneurs. This is unacceptable.

**Federal Reserve policy** is highly inflationary and creates a federal debt time bomb as well as the moral hazard of backing all loans as if all were worthy. This is currently invisible as if 'printing' and spending trillions is no big deal. The federal government will have a high incentive to inflate its way out of these costs. Doubling of prices will halve our debts, will double the value of our homes, and further decimate the poor.

**Poor people had been moving** up the economic ladder in recent years, but since March five million people have not only lost their jobs, they have even left the job market. They receive short term generous (just renewed) benefits from Uncle Sam, but that builds dependence rather than opening up opportunities.

Typically, the American people have responded to the Covid pandemic with cooperation and good will. However, an uncalled for overreach added to the ordinary incompetence of political leaders especially around NYC (plus hotspots like Michigan and Illinois) that have compromised that good will. Overreach, incompetence, incoherence, and politicization (joining corruption as the dark underbelly of governments) have harmed our response.

**Some say that tough times bring out a hunger for God** and a strong impact of churches and believers. I have seen depression, anxiety, and have heard of increased substance and spousal abuse; but apart from my own response, I have not seen that hunger yet, and the environment is becoming ever more dismissive of Christian voices. Do we really expect to get a confident hope from Uncle Sam?

**MLB and COVID-19** The Miami Marlins and St Louis Cards experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 disrupting the 60-game MLB schedule. What could have prevented this? What if all 780 players been exposed earlier?

Sounds dangerous? Yes. Consider this from the U.S. Navy, "As of July 29, a total of 9,078 Navy sailors, civilians, contractors, and dependents had tested positive (not just exposed) for the coronavirus. Of those cases, 18 people have died: one sailor, four contractors, and 13 civilians." (*Task and Purpose* July 30, 2020: a veteran focused website). Assuming that MLB players are as healthy as the men and women of the Navy and allowing for dependents and managers testing positive that would come to zero deaths among MLB players and 1-3 or maybe four other deaths. That is still 1-4 too many, right? Would they have caught the virus eventually? Yes.