



## Forum 1.5

### “Our Journey to the Future”

Dear Forum community,

I hope this message finds you well and healthy. As we transition from 2022 to 2023, may we embrace the spirit and deepest values of Sankofa. Look back in gratitude for the work you have done in your various communities to advance the goals and values of health equity and justice. And look forward with equal amounts of gratitude and excitement for the opportunities to build healthier and more peaceful communities, grounded in the best ideals of your faith traditions. Nothing less is needed for us all. We have learned, again, over the course of 2022 just how critically important faith traditions and communities are to our health decisions and quality of life, at the macro, the meso, and macro levels.

As we approach 2023, I am reminded of book by the futurist and an environmentalist, Guy Dauncey. The book is titled, *Journey to the Future: A Better World is Possible*. Although published in 2015, the book is set in Vancouver, Canada, in the year 2032. The opening chapter is titled, “Hungry for Hope.” This hunger for hope is described through the experiences and the words of an 18 years-old. This is how the book begins: “My name is Patrick Wu, and I have just spent four days in the future.” The idea of seeing oneself in the future is intriguing. What will it take to be a part of the future, to not be erased, abandoned, left alone in the past or the now? And what will it take to make that future a healthy future? As the main protagonist and narrator, Patrick provides useful information about his background: “Although I was born here in Vancouver, in Western Canada, I spent most of my childhood out of the country. My family left Vancouver when I was eight and for twelve years, we lived in East Africa and the Middle East, from Lebanon to South Sudan.... East Africa was not all brown and dusty, the way the camps are. Ethiopia has rugged mountains and lush farmlands. South Sudan has tranquil villages in a sea of Savannah filled with trees. And then there were those nights camped out under a thousand myriad stars of the vast deep African sky, each so mysterious, each saying, “*Look at me—see how little you know.*” (*Journey*, 1, emphasis original)

In our ongoing parabolic work – the parable of religion and health – at the *Forum*, we invite and challenge one another to take a look at ourselves and our human and non-human neighbors, to assess what we know and do not know, and then build new and/or renewed lasting healthy relationships and practices. These relationships expand our knowledge base of what is lacking in health equity, of what is working for communal health, and of what needs improving. In the parable of religion and health, there is so

much to learn about how our faith traditions impact the decisions we and our fellow sisters and brothers make on a daily basis to seek or provide health to ourselves and others. There is so much to learn about health literacy and infrastructures we and others need to build. There is so much to learn and know about the medical sciences and their contributions to a healthier world. There is so much to learn about indigenous healthy knowledge systems, the relation of immunotherapy and ecology, the epigenetics of trauma, the spirituality of palliative care and survival, etc. A wholistic approach is our best option.

In *Journey to the Future*, Patrick talks about his family's faith and struggles away from home, and their eventual return to Vancouver, where he spent time interviewing people about their thoughts on what life is all about. He was curious about major issues facing the world – from poverty to climate change to economic inequalities to healthcare needs, etc. But why did Patrick travel to the future? Patrick gives three reasons:

- (1) Because he was hungry for hope
- (2) Because he found this world confusing
- (3) And because he could.

The Forum turns 3 in 2023! I hope that you can join us as we continue to work at local and global levels to build hope, to help bring clarity of mind, spirit and purpose to those in distress, and to build communities wherein the vulnerable among us *can* also have a future.

We are Many. We are Different. We Create Life.

Sincerely,

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Founder, Never Stop Breathing ([www.neverstopbreathing.org](http://www.neverstopbreathing.org))