

COVID 19

**APBAid
RESOURCE TOOLKIT
&
RESPONSE
FRAMEWORK
2020**



APRIL 14 VERSION 1

Prepared by; Roshan Mendis



CONTENTS PAGE

CONTENTS PAGE.....	2
Introduction	3
A Pastoral Letter from APBF President.....	5
WHY SHOULD WE RESPOND?	7
OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT	9
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING - HOW ARE WE, IN COVID?	11
CHURCH RESOURCES	13
Reading Recommendations.....	14
Going Virtual	15
Communications & Technology Resources	16
FAMILY RESOURCES.....	17
Reading Recommendations.....	18
COMMUNITY RESOURCES	19
Reading Recommendations.....	20
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS	21
Reading Recommendations.....	25
Global Resources	26
Examples:	26
Training and Learning.....	26
Health Institutions	26
For women in abusive domestic situations	27
Community Support Preparation	27

Introduction

With global resources stretched this is the time to draw on our Baptist values of locally led, activist communities. APBAid have developed this resource to support Conventions, Unions and Churches who are seeking to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This toolkit aligns with global Baptist response plan to Strengthen, Lead, Respond, Defend, and Advance.



STANDING TOGETHER GLOBAL RESPONSE PLAN

FIND OUT MORE: BWANet.org/covid19response

OUR MISSION <i>Networking the Baptist Family to Impact the World for Christ</i>	OUR RESPONSE <i>Mobilizing Global Resources in Response to the Needs</i>	YOUR PARTNERSHIP <i>47 Million Baptists Standing Together for Maximum Impact</i>
<p>STRENGTHEN Worship, Fellowship & Unity</p>	<p>PRAYER INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24-Hour Prayer Marathon • Standing Together Prayer Video Series • Weekly "Baptists One in Prayer" Email Update • Global Prayer Request Network 	<p>PRAY <i>Commit to stand together in prayer.</i></p>
<p>LEAD Mission & Evangelism</p>	<p>MISSION INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Resource Sharing • BFWED* Grants 	<p>GIVE <i>Offer financial support to combat the global pandemic and respond to needs worldwide.</i></p>
<p>RESPOND Aid, Relief & Community Development</p>	<p>AID INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BWAid Grants • Networking Global Agencies through BFAD** • Pastoral Encouragement and Support • Information Sharing (Website, Webinars, etc.) 	<p>LEARN <i>Share resources to better equip the global Baptist family.</i></p>
<p>DEFEND Religious Freedom, Human Rights & Justice</p>	<p>HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Religious Freedom Monitoring • Healthcare Services Protection Monitoring 	<p>SERVE <i>Engage your gifts to further our worldwide mission.</i></p>
<p>ADVANCE Theological Reflection & Transformational Leadership</p>	<p>LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizons Online Training in Multiple Languages • Crisis Care Chaplaincy Training (research phase) 	

* Baptist Fund for World Evangelization and Discipleship ** Baptist World Alliance Forum for Aid & Development

These clearly merges with the three United Nations strategies and activity outputs of Containment, Reducing Deterioration and Protecting, Assisting and Advocating for the most vulnerable. It is designed recognizing that

Churches, Communities and Families are key in this response. In aligning ourselves with these global priorities we also meet global standards and present ourselves as a good model of best practice in such a time as this.

UN HRP GLOBAL PRIORITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality 2. Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods 3. Protect, assist and advocate for refugees, IDPs, migrants and host communities particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. 		
Activities Outputs	Prevention / Awareness	Emergency Response	Recovery
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PPE distribution - Awareness material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food distribution to vulnerable - Medical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoration of livelihoods - Psychosocial work

The above framework is an example of how/what as a church or convention you may align your activities with the global priorities. The activities are broadly categorized as prevention, Emergency and Recovery. An example is given under each section to give an idea of what they might be.

The toolkit is collated under three main sections of Church, Family & Community responses and programme ideas for each UN priority. In addition is a section of resources for theological reflection and a guide for online worship.

To make the most of this toolkit, we recommend that you look through it all and then return for specific resources as you develop your overall response. It brings together resources from around the world to provide ideas, guidelines and reflections on the new reality we find ourselves in.

All of the resources are available online in a separate drive in the link provided. In addition a two page overview of what is available in the drive is also attached as a separate document or downloadable here.

Pg 1 - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FQxV5kHFhUTc-ntyn-raWlcgP0yHh6h>

Pg 2 - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=12Z01EALyH5LzIEdkAWx90xvz5xvulrpL>

Please feel free to reach out to, in case you need any clarification to roshan@apbf.org

A Pastoral Letter from APBF President



Psalm 91

"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.

Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge;

his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

"Because he loves me, says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."

Dearly beloved family members of Asia Pacific Baptist Federation,

I trust this letter finds you in good health and enjoying the abundant, amazing grace of our good and faithful God. In these difficult, uncertain days, we rejoice in the fact that we are treasured children of God. That our Father's eyes are upon us! May He bless our bodies even as He blesses our souls. Let us remember: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). Rather, He desires that we humble ourselves, seek His face and allow Him to do His work in and through us and heal our lands! Let us submit to His Sovereign Reign and Lordship!

Current situation looks bleak. In the face of such a dangerous and scary disease, let us look up to God and not fear this "invisible enemy"! His grace is more than sufficient, and we can be more than conquerors in Him! Where there's confusion, may He grant clarity; where there's fear, faith; and where there are contingencies, courage and wisdom to make them and carry them through. Let us as God's beloved, chosen people:

Be THANKFUL for God's hedge of fire and shield of protection over us and our loved ones!

Be FOCUSED that in times like these when programs, travel plans and activities are cancelled, we can spend extended time with God to seek His face, the One seated on His throne, who desires that the earth be silent before Him. "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You!"(2 Chronicles 20:12).

Be WISE in keeping ourselves fit and healthy with good hygiene habits, not going to crowded places but washing our hands often (at least 20 seconds!)

Be RESPONSIBLE & CONSIDERATE in not coughing or sneezing into the air when sick, but into a tissue or handkerchief, to wear a mask, see a doctor and be treated and to stay at home to rest and recuperate and practice social distancing so as to combat the spread.

Be FAITHFUL & PRAYERFUL as we trust God to protect us, contain the spread and to eradicate this virus because He alone has the Power and Wisdom. Let us grow in trusting God as we plead His mercy to give wisdom to the scientists and medical professionals to come out with the vaccine and cure quickly! Let us also pray for those afflicted to be treated and delivered from this plight and many others who have lost loved ones and livelihood around the world!

Be ENVISIONED to see open doors of opportunities to share the sacrificial love of our true and living God who has given us the greatest gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and along with Him, eternal life and everything that we need, especially as we observe Good Friday and celebrate Resurrection Sunday.

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:13 & 14)

"Every crisis is also an opportunity to pray and seek God with a quiet spirit and to share His great love and power!"

A fellow pilgrim in this sacred journey,

Rev. Edwin Lam

President

APBF

WHY SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Learning from past experiences of a similar nature is always good practice and saves time and energy from having to reinvent the wheel in most circumstances. It also is an example of appreciative learning to gather insights of others from lessons they have learnt at such times. Below are several comments of lessons learnt in the response of faith based agencies and churches during the recent Ebola crisis in East Africa.

Dr Janice Proud, Anglican Alliance Relief and Programme Manager commenting on the Ebola outbreak report and the response of the churches which documented **the trajectory of the virus, which showed a sharp decline in its spread coincided with the point in time when faith leaders became centrally engaged in the response.**

She said: **“Once faith leaders were involved, the report found that they were transformational due to their trusted, respected long-term presence in communities and their ability to contextualise the response to take into account local beliefs and traditions¹.”**

In another comment out of the Ebola crisis, **The WCC consultation, held 29 September in Geneva, Switzerland, affirmed a greater role for the churches and faith-based organizations in helping to stop the epidemic.**

Dr David Nabarro, the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Ebola, added that the “struggle is not just to prevent the virus, but to take into consideration the long-term effects risking stability of the economy and communities.” In many areas farming and agricultural activities have come to a halt due to the fear of Ebola. **Nabarro argued that to formulate an effective response it is important to empower women, traditional healers and health workers without putting them at a risk. He said churches and faith-based organizations have a massive role to play in dealing with emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of people’s lives, engaging them on questions of life and death².**

With regards to Community response, presence and messaging, the report of the Pontifical council for Justice and peace³ said it was important to;

- train parishioners and residents of local communities on the behavioural changes necessary to stop the spread of Ebola;
- provide food and hygiene kits at household level support families who are under observation for possible infection with Ebola to access adequate nutrition and other essential needs
- support orphans and other children and families with special needs
- support the re-opening of Catholic schools

¹ <https://www.anglicannews.org/news/2019/07/churches-key-responders-in-battle-against-latest-ebola-outbreak.aspx>

² <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/churches-and-agencies-formulate-responses-to-ebola-outbreak>

³ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20141127_emergenza-ebola_en.html

Global Fund said the “WCC, churches and ecumenical organizations need to take full responsibility in not only helping to curb the disease but in communicating the right message, in raising awareness and challenging the stigma attached to Ebola⁴.”

In addition to the above comments post the Ebola outbreak in many countries there are questions that many churches are asking around the current coronavirus pandemic. Some of these are;

- Is our Christian testimony damaged when we cancel our worship services and gatherings?
- Is the integrity of our gatherings compromised when we cancel them?
- Is it a reflection of our lack of faith when we cancel?
- Is it a lack of our commitment when we fail to gather and avoid gatherings?

A few Guidelines were suggested by the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka about this;

1. God is concerned with humanity’s holistic wellbeing (Leviticus 17-26). These laws reveal that the physical, social, economic and religious are closely intertwined. As well as that hygienic laws have spiritual bearings and social laws have spiritual impact.
2. Christians need to consider the wider community in decision making. What one might consider as harmless to oneself might be detrimental to others (1 Corinthians 6:12). Acting upon our individual preferences may cause us to fail to act in love (Romans 14:15).
3. Zeal and knowledge must go hand in hand (Proverbs 19:2). One cannot make decisions using ‘faith’ as the sole criteria in the face of overwhelming other information. Facts are God’s signposts in making faith based decisions. The two, Faith and facts are not contradictory but complimentary.
4. We must maintain the balance between divine order and human responsibility.

As we enter an extremely challenging period for our world and our country due to the coronavirus pandemic, we extend our prayers over our community and hope this resource will be a source of encouragement for you. As Christian leaders in uncertain times, our first response must be to love our neighbors. In this moment, this includes taking early, active measures to protect against the transmission of the coronavirus while being a source of peace, clarity, and hope in a time of confusion.

This is an initiative to help you think it through and link together to help one another through this time. We need each other more than ever. Let us stay connected, stay sharing, networking, learning together and let us pray for one another as we together seek to be light and hope in this hurting and fearful world.

⁴ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/churches-and-agencies-formulate-responses-to-ebola-outbreak>

OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT

This resource toolkit is intended to provide churches and conventions a pool of resources and ideas of responses and best practices drawn from around the region that may be replicated and utilized. The responses are presented as a 'menu' that each implementing body can choose according to context, need and capacity as a guide to formulate their individual responses in their nations.

In order to conform to Global humanitarian standards, the overarching framework of response is based upon the UN's Global Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) 1, and articulates three strategic priorities:

1. Contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and decrease morbidity and mortality
2. Decrease the deterioration of human assets and rights, social cohesion and livelihoods
3. Protect, assist and advocate for refugees, IDPs, migrants and host communities particularly vulnerable to the pandemic.

It then provides a segmentation of activity outputs phases for each priority according to Prevention, Emergency and Recovery. The possible interventions and tools are then categorized into sectoral groupings of church, Family and community.

The matrix below captures how the above framework has been arranged.

UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan Priorities		
Prevention / Awareness	Emergency / Immediate	Recovery
CHURCH RESOURCES / TOOLS		
FAMILY RESOURCES / TOOLS		
COMMUNITY RESOURCES / TOOLS		

The above matrix is presented also as a framework to design a plan of action that would include either one or more of the UN Global Humanitarian priorities, be focused on particular activity outputs or multiple outputs, and address needs and target either church action, families or community. We suggest that as you look at your programme of activities it is carried out by

1. **reviewing needs,**
2. **review resources,**
3. **design response**

All the above resources are uploaded on an accessible drive (see link below) in 3 folders namely;

- a) Church
- b) Family
- c) Community

Find a repository of tools that has been collated in the google drive at:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1nyKMye7ZhIJ0w530yYGXuQ_kwZkx9kas

NOTE: The resources may be adapted to each local context as appropriate. **Please give due credit and acknowledgment to sources when translating.**

An Excel spreadsheet is also available on the drive as quick access tool at:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1eHMLu6ZRwntW9mDA8aJ-ywFGxGNfy4g1>

Approach

Our global interconnected world means that it is likely that every country will be exposed to this virus. Therefore, the best possible response we can have together is to reduce transmission so as to limit exposure, infection and impact.

Though for a majority of people who will get infected, the disease will have signs and symptoms of a cold / flu and you will recover within 7-10 days, for others it is life threatening. In order to give everyone, the best chance possible to get through this pandemic, we need to:

1. Reduce the rate of infection to ensure our health care systems can cope with those who need hospital care. This means care on how we socially interact, handwashing, consideration of those who are vulnerable, social distancing where possible.
2. Care for one another through supporting those who may be vulnerable and need in our communities, responsible stocking of essential supplies (It has been shameful to see how people empty shelves and hoard – revealing a truly dark self-centeredness). We need to show the opposite spirit.
3. Remember too that for vulnerable people in high density neighbourhoods, the virus could spread fast and the health care systems will not cope. So, the best way to help people is to try and reduce their need to travel
4. Adjust to the next 2-3 months of change and disruption seeing the opportunities to be a blessing and as support to all.
5. Reflect online together how to proactively address the short, medium and long-term impact of all aspects of life and work.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING - HOW ARE WE, IN COVID?

The depiction below is a useful means of assessing ourselves as individuals and even congregations our state of mind and ability to respond as we face this global crisis. The infographic is also useful to educate congregations from moving beyond thinking about themselves to a place of serving and giving to others that may be more vulnerable themselves during the crisis.

A separate set of resources for emotional wellbeing is also available at:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1B0WA_1-xiaVAybrMtYSsjHgO5IWFD1Ys



One other aspect that we have to be aware of and ensure that we act responsibly is in the area of information sharing and information gathering. It is quite possible that we are bombarded with various resources and bits of news that can be very stressful at times and also be a cause of fear and anxiety to many people. In this context it is important that as responsible leadership we are informed about how we verify and pass on news and information.

The resources below are excellent guidelines on that;

- **How to fight lies, tricks, and chaos online**

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/12/3/20980741/fake-news-facebook-twitter-misinformation-lies-fact-check-how-to-internet-guide>

- **Rethinking Our Relationship with the News**

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/october-web-only/fake-news-christian-media-rethink.html>

CHURCH RESOURCES

These resources contain theological reflections, Prayer guides and sermon ideas, church actions carried out by countries in Asia Pacific, lessons learnt and awareness campaigns that can be carried out by churches.

The resource folder can be found at

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=18ZPVnCZeG83Pc5gABCC3QIIe6V2rN0Z1>

PRIORITIES	CONTAINMENT			DECREASE DETERIORATION			PROTECT, ASSIST, ADVOCATE		
PHASES	Awareness / Prevention	Emergency / Relief	Recovery	Awareness / Prevention	Emergency / Relief	Recovery	Awareness / prevention	Emergency / Relief	Recovery
CHURCH	HAND CLERANING POSTER	GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS		coronavirus guide for churches christianity	FACING COVID YOUTUBE CLIP				NT WRIGHT ARTICLE
	7 lessons from Singapore	Video Church			Virtual Worship				
	Prayers	Making face masks							
	SL EA Response	Role of Churches							

A Coronavirus Prayer guide compiled by Texan Baptists:

<https://texasbaptists.org/article/coronavirus-prayer-guide>

20 Prayers to Pray During This Pandemic:

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/march-web-only/covid-19-coronavirus-20-prayers-to-pray-during-pandemic.html>

Reading Recommendations

- [Leadership in Pandemics, by Santosh Mathew, illustration by Elaine Vitikainen](#)
- [Global Family: Displaced Migrants, Isolated People, and Local Congregations, MICN, by By Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira](#)
- [Five Ways to Respond to the Coronavirus, by Arukah Network](#)
- [A Christian Perspective on COVID-19, by Ruth Valerio and Gideon Heugh](#)

In Addition:

At this time one of the key impacts of the COVID19 is the impact on giving to local churches where a weekly offering is the means by which people give to the ministry.

There are a few resources out there for churches with access to technology that can avail themselves of these. Some are limited time offers while others can be longer term. For churches that have no online facility the most practical methods could be via bank transfer and

- <https://texasbaptists.org/article/online-giving-options-for-your-church>

Going Virtual

One of the biggest challenges of many churches and congregations both big and small currently is the inability to gather together as a congregation. The deadly Easter bombings in Sri Lanka that caused churches island wide to be shut down and congregations barred from meeting was almost a precursor to prepare the Sri Lankan church to this present reality. There were also many that felt their faith falling into a vacuum with the absence of this gathering. It therefore became also a good opportunity to highlight and educate congregations the error of the understanding they had grown up with, that the gathering at the building on a Sunday constituted church. One of the quotes that as a local church in Sri Lanka we used to refocus the mind of the congregation was to circulate an image on social media of our empty church with the words “THE CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING!” This was a good preparation for many, for what became the scenario as the nation went into lockdown for COVID19.

In addition to the church membership realizing that their actual role and presence as the body of Christ, was not simply in the Sunday gathering but from Monday through to Saturday, there was also the need to feed the membership and provide avenues of worship. This is where technology comes into play and has been an area that for many pastors and congregations a new experience.

The TWO KEY PRINCIPLE to bear in mind is that

1. It is wisest to keep your virtual services and worship as low tech as possible to cater to many that may not be able to access or have the devices or knowledge to be able to be part of it. So in order to cater to both types of capacities it is advisable to have both simple audio clips and transcripts for those without access as well as the video stream for those who can avail of it.
2. Follow some basic principles of online learning / teaching methodology and keep things short and interactive and varied in style as possible so that the audience remains engaged. In most online classes the maximum time limit is 20 – 30 minutes.

While Live streaming maybe the most preferred mode of virtual worship, it is useful to remind ourselves that work from home and changed schedules may not allow the members of the congregations to all log in at the same time. Investment in a YouTube channel is an option to make it available for extended time.

In this context, when lockdowns may not allow coming together to record and compile a segment of worship pre-recording these and compiling it is an option. Bearing in mind that simply recording what happens on a Sunday may not be the most suited. Including variety is important.

This is also an ideal opportunity for some inter-generational interaction and to assign younger members to mentor older congregational members to upskill their technological skills and also develop some unique relationships and exposure and experience in inter-generational dynamics.

Some ideas to work on include;

- Phone call outreach and pastoral care
- Virtual youth meetings via zoom
- Virtual Bible study and prayer meetings
- Youth / small group quiz nights via zoom / WhatsApp etc

Communications & Technology Resources

[FREE Graphics to Help you Engage Your Church During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), from LightStock.com, the provider of faith based, family-friendly, online stock photos. A great resource for beefing up your COVID-19 messaging on your church website and social media platforms.

[When God Closes a Church Door, He Opens a Browser Window](#), *Christianity Today* examines how Platforms, apps, and networks once built as a supplement to in-person gatherings have become the primary point of connection for millions. (3/19/20)

The Texan Baptists compilation of Resources for a successful church live-stream;

<https://texasbaptists.org/article/resources-for-a-successful-church-live-stream>

[We Compared Google Hangouts and Zoom to See Which is Better for Working From Home — and Zoom is the More Comprehensive Video Conferencing Tool](#). Forget the headline... This is a pretty good head-to-head comparison of the two videoconferencing options from Business Insider. Take the assessment into account when deciding what can work for creating online connection with your leadership and congregation.

[Taking Your Worship Online: A Guide for Beginners and Everyone Else](#) from Resource UMC

[Use Technology to Extend Worship Beyond the Sanctuary: Part 1](#) from Resource UMC

[How to Stream Worship Beyond the Sanctuary: Part 2](#) from Resource UMC (A deeper dive than Part 1, includes equipment recommendations, costs, etc.)

[Web Ministry: Privacy and Permissions](#) from Resource UMC

[A Beginners Guide to Live Streaming for Churches \(Video\)](#) and **[Live Streaming Setup for Small Churches](#)** are helpful primers from Jake Gosselin, creator of churchfront.com, a comprehensive online resource for worship leaders globally. The video offering is apt to be most useful for churches with a bit of a budget, but overall, Gosselin is a great resource for essential information on tech for churches.

[Live Stream on YouTube--Learn How to Get Started](#)

[How to Use Facebook Live to Stream Your Church Services](#). Written in 2016, but this is still solid advice on how to get started. The author has added additional information at the end of the piece in response to inquiries from Churches new to streaming because of COVID-19.

[Tips for conducting virtual worship](#) from NYAC Communications

[Simsbury UMC](#) will live stream worship in lieu of in-person services

[How a Seattle UMC Live Streamed During Covid-19 Lockdown](#): Rev. Jeremy Smith, Hacking Christianity blogger, offers tips on setting up a church live stream

[Weathering winter \(or coronavirus\) with virtual worship](#): Tips from UM Communications on live streaming worship

[Creating an Online Faith Community](#)

[Grow Your Church Online](#) with a web ministry

Amplify Media offers free video resources for **[Deep Blue Kids](#)**, **[Abingdon Lenten studies](#)**, and **[Spring Bible studies](#)**

FAMILY RESOURCES

These resources contain guidelines for parents, activities for children and child friendly explanations about the coronavirus as well as material that helps families to overcome the stress of lockdowns and safeguard emotional wellbeing.

The full Resource folder can be found at: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1KH2H-MwVG56XGDOQbqFWRGxGY3UpUFYt>

	HAND CLEANING POSTER - https://www.paho.org/en	Dr Dumo PDF	INFO POSTER - https://www.who.int/em	HEALTHY PARENTING - https://www.who.int/em	FACING ANXIETY YOUTUBE CLIP -		PARENTING - https://www.who.int/e	Domestic Violence - http://www.power	My Hero (PDF book)
FAMILY	Childrens guide to Corona	COVID Parenting		Sesame Street PDF	Parenting images		My Hero - PDF storybook		
	Household protocols	Bible Quiz			elderly images				
	How to tell Children about	Dave the Dog Story			Lockdown things to	My Hero PDF			

Reading Recommendations

- [Thrive Worldwide – How to talk to children about COVID-19](#)
- [Women's Safety in a time of Quarantine - Power to Persuade](#)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

These resources are around examples of activities that churches have carried out in the community and those that can be used for interventions at community level.

The full resource folder is available at; <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WJyI0MfGbPH-3FzhgCy7imROVXGwhuIo>

COMMUNITY	HAND CLEANING POSTER - https://www.paho.org/en/	WHO GUIDANCE FOR INSTITUTIONS, ETC -		Healthworkers wellbeing WHO folder	Addressing stigma PDF		WHO POSTER - https://www.who.int/e		Stigma image
	COVER YOUR COUGH POSTER -	WHO BASIC PROTECTIVE	AWARENESS POSTER -	Community support posters	Emotional Wellbeing Folder		ACCESSING WHO DATABASE -		Getting workplace ready PDF
	How to hand rub and how to handwash posters	Food Packs for those in quarantine	Livelihood support	Emotional Wellbeing folder	Relief Packages for daily wage earners	support Vaccines	PROTECTING VULNERABLE POSTER -		GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY
	Prevention Methods Posters - India, Indonesal	Health care worker supplies	Working in Quarantine centres		Resourcing Essential Health Equipment	livelihood support			GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY
	Wearing a mask - WHO	Hospital Equipment	COVID RECOVERY POSTER -		cash transfers to daily wage and				GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY
	Social Distancing checklist	COVID TRANSMISSION POSTER -							GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY POSTER SERIES -
	Special COVID info doc	cash transfers							GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY
	Power of social distancing poster	COVID TRANSMISSION							GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY
	Community containment								GETTING YOUR
		PROTECTION POSTER - https://www.who.int							GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY POSTER SERIES -
		WHO - WHEN & HOW TO USE MASKS https://www.who.int							GETTING YOUR WORKPLACE READY POSTER SERIES -
									Pandemic info COVID HIV

Reading Recommendations

- [Global Family: Displaced Migrants, Isolated People, and Local Congregations, MICN, by By Dr. Sadiri Joy Tira](#)
- [Five Ways to Respond to the Coronavirus, by Arukah Network](#)
- [Women's Safety in a time of Quarantine - Power to Persuade](#)

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Corona Virus and Psalm 91

Dr. Ajith Fernando

Many people are asking today about whether we can quote Psalm 91 to assure ourselves that we will be freed from the Corona Virus. Let's look at this issue scripturally.

In the Bible there are promises, principles and commands that are generally true, but which have exceptions. The general commands to obey parents "in everything" (Col. 3:20) and to be subject to government officials (Rom. 13:1-2) have exceptions in the Bible (Luke 14:26; Acts 4:19-20). We sometimes need to disobey their commands if they clearly go against God's will. Similarly, the Bible is clear that God looks after us, as Psalm 91 says. He can miraculously intervene and does intervene to deliver us. Indeed, he commands his angels to guard us (Psa. 91:11). That is always true. He can prevent us from dashing our foot against a stone (91:12). That is not always true, as the noble army of martyrs testify. One-third of the same book of Psalms are laments where righteous people suffer what the world considers as misfortunes and God doesn't seem to be helping them. Psalm 91 teaches that God looks after us. That is an absolute principle. Other passages in the Bible show us that the way God looks after us is not always as is specifically stated in Psalm 91. There may be exceptions to this general rule. But through all of it God is continuing to bless us.

Presently I'm reading Job for my devotions. God's plan was to glorify his name through Job going through experiences very distant to what Psalm 91 says. Job's friends who quoted biblical principles regarding how God looks after the righteous are finally proven to be wrong and even unkind. Their speeches were very inspiring in the Psalm 91 tradition. But they were wrong in applying those principles to the suffering that Job was experiencing.

Romans 8 looks at this issue theologically. The whole creation is subjected to frustration (8:20). There is sickness, disappointment, pain, and death. That frustration includes us "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit" (8:23). That is, we have a taste of what heaven is like here and now. But we groan (8:23) with the rest of creation (8:22). Through that groaning with the rest of creation, like Jesus, we develop deep ties with the world and have a deep impact on it. Our lifestyle is one of incarnation. When we talk of incarnation, we mean that Jesus took on human flesh with all the frustration that entails. We can have a deep impact on the world by identifying with its pain, just like Jesus did. In a mysterious way suffering helps the church to grow like the death of Stephen showed.

When the tsunami hit Sri Lanka, some Christians were miraculously saved and testified about it to the glory of God. Others suffered, like the church in Mullaitivu where the faithful who came to church the morning after Christmas died and those who stayed at home were saved. The pastor of that church lost his wife and, I think, his son. But he stayed on and served his people and now his two daughters have entered the university—a great achievement in Sri Lanka. He brought glory to God through his suffering.

There are some deeper more important realities that govern us amidst our frustration and pain.

- The Holy Spirit groans with us as we groan (8:26). Not only is it acceptable for Christians to groan; when they do, God groans with them. And that verse says that he helps us amid our weakness. We experience the nearness of God in a deep way.
- God turns everything we experience into good (8:28), making us more than conquerors in all things (8:37). While we mourn and identify with Christians who suffer we don't need to have pity then because we know that out of that suffering God is working out something beautiful.
- Yes, we're not immune to problems, but God's love is deeper than all of that and nothing can separate us from his love 8:35, 38, 39.
- People relishing the experience of loving and being loved are happy people. So like Paul wrote, while he was in Prison, we rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4), and we have learned to be content whatever happens. (Phil. 4:11)

The happiest people in the world are not those who don't have problems; it is those who are not afraid of problems. As Paul said, again from Prison, the greatest wealth we can have is contentment (1 Tim. 6:6). A dreary prison is not a place which implies God's blessing. But Paul was blessed, he was rich!

Amid all the confusion of this time, let's relish the wealth of contentment!

Dr. Ajith Fernando

Ajith Fernando (ThM, Fuller Theological Seminary) is the teaching director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka after serving as the ministry's national director for thirty-five years. He and his wife, Nelun, are active in a church ministering primarily to the urban poor, and his ministry includes counseling and mentoring younger staff and pastors. He is the author of seventeen books published in twenty languages. Ajith lives in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with his wife, and they have two adult children and four grandchildren.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF THE CORONA VIRUS

Andy Crouch has written a remarkable document I encourage all Christian leaders to read. Extracted from <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/a-guide-for-local-christian-leaders-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>

Crouch argues that with the arrival of COVID-19 in the United States, we need to *rapidly* “change the horizons of possibility” in two fundamental ways:

(1) *We need to change norms of social interaction literally overnight* to minimize the transmission of the virus. I will outline below what I believe are the most important steps, based on the best public information about SARS-CoV-2 (the virus) and COVID-19 (the disease). These steps feel drastic. Crucially, implementing them early enough will require tremendous leadership because they will *not* initially seem necessary to most of the people we lead. When dealing with pandemics, *the measures that will actually make a difference always need to be taken sooner than we think.*

(2) *We need to redirect social energy from anxiety and panic to love and preparation.* This crisis presents an extraordinary opportunity to fortify small communities of love and care for our neighbors. That will only happen if we lead in a way that reduces fear, increases faith, and reorients all of us from self-protection to serving others

For the past month Crouch has been intensively studying the medical and public-health information about COVID-19 that has been available to the public. His essay has four parts:

An outline of his key takeaways are below.

1. What Is Happening?

Everyone, anywhere in the continental United States, should assume that the virus is present in their community even if there have not yet been any reports of disease. COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, is considerably more deadly than ordinary flu, especially for vulnerable populations: the elderly and those with existing medical conditions.

The disease can be mild in many people, even unnoticed. But this actually increases the risk to others, as “asymptomatic” carriers can transmit the virus to the highly vulnerable without realizing they are infectious. Therefore there is a serious risk beyond the virus’s simple fatality rate: *its potential to overwhelm our health-care system*, leading to many more otherwise preventable deaths from COVID-19 and other causes. Without question we are in for extended financial turmoil and real-world economic pain.

2. What Should We Communicate?

“Just as important for moving the horizons of possibility are what we say, how we say it, and even how we appear to others as we say these things. The way we communicate *will shape the choices others make*, and how they approach their own decision-making.”

“This means that all of us have a primary responsibility as leaders, as far as it depends on us, to be well-rested, soaked in prayer and contemplation, and free of personal fear and anxiety. We need to start and end each day as children of our heavenly Father, friends of Jesus, and grateful recipients of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray

for genuine spiritual authority, rooted in the love that casts out fear, to guard and govern our lives as we lead, and trust that God will make up what is lacking in our own frail hearts, minds, and bodies.”

Out of this basic posture, he says, we can communicate specific messages.

The 2 most harmful messages from Christian leaders right now

We should not say, “Everything’s going to be fine,” or even, “You’re going to be okay.”

We should not say to fearful people, “You’re overreacting.”

The 3 most helpful messages from Christian leaders right now

We should say, “Love is the reason we are changing our behavior.”

We should say, “Prepare for trouble.”

Above all we should say, “Do not be afraid.”

3. What Decisions Do We Need to Make?

[Note this update from Crouch: *As of the President and federal health officials’ afternoon press conference on 16 March 2020, this advice, which was intended for leaders making decisions on or immediately after 12 March 2020, is obsolete, though still helpful both for modeling how Christians might make such decisions and in helping us comply with existing restrictions (e.g., in places where gatherings of up to ten are allowed). I will not be updating it further. All leaders should obey both the requirements and the requests of public officials at every level.*]

Groups of less than ten people *can* meet together with minimal risk, provided that no one present is sick or has any reason to think they have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2, shared surfaces are disinfected before and after the meeting everyone washes their hands thoroughly (more than 20 seconds) upon arrival and upon returning to their home food and drink are served individually as much distance as possible is maintained between members of different households and their belongings.

4. What Can We Hope For?

We have every reason to trust that this epidemic will pass.

We can reasonably hope that the economic costs of this epidemic, though severe in the short run, will be limited in the way that past epidemics have been.

“Real Christian hope is our ultimate confidence, rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that the Creator of the world is also the Redeemer and Sustainer of the world, and will one day return to renew the entire creation. This hope is not just cosmic but personal. We have an unprecedented chance to act redemptively in the midst of crisis and fear. We can reclaim the household as the fundamental unit of personhood, the place where we all are best known and cared for. We may see the revival of genuine Christian faith and discipleship, and the renewal of the church of Jesus Christ in the United States.

Read Full Article here:

Love in the time of the coronavirus - <https://journal.praxislabs.org/love-in-the-time-of-coronavirus-26aaeb0396e3>

Reading Recommendations

In addition to the resources below more resources are available at;

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1yiHJ4NaobHp7Zrx10zyNv0moB8mCuOeF>

- [What God is birthing in the time of Corona Chaos, by Miles Giljam, Tearfund](#)
- [What Martin Luther Teaches us about the Coronavirus by Christianity Today](#)
- [The God I Don't Understand, by Christopher Wright](#)
- [THE VIRUS OF FEAR - https://vinothramachandra.wordpress.com/2020/03/17/the-virus-of-fear/](#)
- [COVID 19 San opportunity to lament : https://www.christianpost.com/news/covid-19-pandemic-an-opportunity-for-christians-to-lament-not-have-all-answers-nt-wright-says.html](#)
- [Living in Plague Times, by Philip Yancey](#)
- [A Christian Perspective on COVID-19, by Ruth Valerio and Gideon Heugh](#)
- <https://micahglobalblog.com/2020/03/24/our-anchor-our-hope/> - Sheryl Haw

In addition:

There are links to some reflections that have been published online that may be helpful to church leaders at this time. This is also available on the cloud drive for download if required at;

1. An extensive editorial on the theology of the Coronavirus:

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/march-web-only/coronavirus-evil-covid-19-disease-theology.html>

2. A piece written by Martin Luther during the plague of that time:

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/january-web-only/martin-luther-coronavirus-wuhan-chinese-new-year-christians.html>

3. A reflection on LAMENT IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC written by Dr. Rico Villanueva of Langham Trust

https://omflit.com/blog/2020/4/2/lament-in-a-time-of-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR3SETuOWxiO4OshzshPDCU4JCJZuQwcPdznq_iRMpfsHn2rww03NfxACMY

4. This general study from the BaptistWayPress will lead Christ-followers to cast off the shackles of fear, to take hold of their faith, and to confidently step into God's calling for each part of their lives. 13 Lessons.

<http://baptistwaypress.org/adults/bible-theme-studies/faith-fear/>

Global Resources

The resources highlighted here have been collated by Micah Global and is drawn from all over. The resources in the rest of the toolkit database are collated more specifically to the APAC context ⁵

Examples:

- [Accessible Hope International: Preventing Respiratory Disease](#)
- [CHE Network: Resources](#)
- [WVI: Resources \(special focus on children\)](#)
- [Churches in England](#)
- [Wheaton HDI: Preparing Your Church Resource](#)
- [Wheaton HDI General Information](#)
- [Centras ESDRAS: Resources \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Methodist Church: Resources](#)
- [World Evangelical Alliance \(WEA\): Resources](#)
- [World Council of Churches \(WCC\): Resources](#)
- [CDC Recommendations: Framework](#)
- [CDC Checklist for Communities and Faith Groups](#)
- [Micah Singapore: Information Sheets and Resources](#)
- [The Warehouse, South Africa - Adapted HDI Resource](#)
- [The Warehouse, South Africa - Resources for Churches during Lockdown](#)
- [Thrive Worldwide - Psychosocial Briefing for Healthcare Workers](#)
- WEA: has a [COVID-19 Information page](#) that is capturing resources and best practices.
- [Pentecostal World Fellowship: Click here for resources](#)
- [Tearfund: Click here for Resources](#)

Training and Learning

Texas Baptist - <https://texasbaptists.org/article/updated-coronavirus-online-training>

RedR is offering free online Training that speaks to the Coronavirus Crisis in multiple languages. [Click here for more.](#)

Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) has a [track that you can sign up](#) to, to keep in the loop of best policies and practices.

Join in on the WEA/Micah Global Justice and Resilience Webinars with David Boan. [Click here for more.](#)
Crisis Response International Training Course. [Click here for more.](#)

Health Institutions

[Responding to COVID19 in resource limited settings like India by Santosh Mathew](#)

⁵ <https://www.micahnetwork.org/news/covid-19coronavirus-information-and-resources>

For women in abusive domestic situations

For many, being isolated at home during this crisis increases risk of abuse.

[Working from Home and Domestic Abuse - Restored](#)
[Women's Safety in a time of Quarantine - Power to Persuade](#)

Community Support Preparation

The following steps have been found helpful in a certain community in the UK:

1. Set up a community support group.
2. Set up a community information sharing process (door-to-door flyers, notice board email, WhatsApp, etc). with details of those who can help.
3. Map who is in your community: who is in the vulnerable groups, and who can offer support and help.
4. Map what the needs are: people who may need prescriptions, basic supplies, health information, who may be lonely and afraid. Match with those offering help. Map those who need help and linking each other's gifts and availabilities.
5. Consider looking at community initiatives to help one another. For example, are their small business that are collapsing, are their parents who need to work and have nowhere to leave their kids (as schools are closing)? Brainstorm how to help each case as it arises.
6. If anyone has the virus and is under quarantine – find ways to let them know they are being thought of, prayed for and cared for. Mitigate against fear and stigma.
7. Look at how to reduce unnecessary shopping trips for everyone – explore doing a wholesale purchase of key items that the neighbourhood may need.
8. Think about how you can bless another community.
9. Think about those who are working in essential services (health workers, utility providers, cleaners etc) – think about into how to lessen their burden (maybe help with their shopping, care for their kids).
10. Be aware of those who are already on the margins and may need extra support: homeless, refugees, those who are losing their jobs...
11. Work out how to keep people connected virtually.
12. Help your pastor to have teaching and inspirational messages recorded and shared, video links etc.

Integral Alliance Members:

In a recent meeting of the Integral Alliance Members sharing focused on:

1. Enabling work continuity
2. Working from home of a majority of staff
3. Keeping constituents well informed
4. Supporting partners in their best practice approach
5. Sharing and learning from one another so as to proactively address issues as they arise
6. Events: recommending to all that events planned between now and the next 3 months should be postponed.