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“ANEW CREATION”

A Revived Church and a Renewed Nation

CCM ADVISORY

HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD RESPOND TO THE CORONAVIRUS:

A THREAT THAT KNOWS NO BORDERS

The new coronavirus illness known as Covid-19 has spread to at least 76 countries, infected nearly 100,000 people and killed over 3,000 worldwide and increasing. Even as the spread of the virus started in China, cases are cropping up in many countries. Some cases have no connection to foreign travel, suggesting the virus has been spreading undetected for longer than first estimated. Any pretense that this outbreak could be contained through purely defensive measures, that is, travel restriction on affected countries and quarantines for returning citizens is no longer the only restrictive remedy.

The coronavirus poses a public risk; no individual or country is immune from infection. As such, it requires a proactive, public response centered on the common good.

On the individual level, each person must decide how they can best protect their own health without jeopardizing the well-being of their neighbours. Hoarding goods, like face masks and hand sanitizers may potentially put health care workers and other caregivers at greater risk if they are unable to access these which are now in short supply.

Each one should also take appropriate precautions to stop the spread of the virus. Maintaining personal hygiene practices are an absolute priority. Individuals who are tempted to ignore guidelines for social distancing or voluntary quarantine must realize that what might feel like the common cold to them could pose a serious threat to their neighbours. They should act responsibly.

There are people in our society however, for whom missing work or keeping a sick child home from school to minimize the risk of spreading the virus is an extra burden and great inconvenience. There are also people who are at a higher physical risk from the virus, many of whom work in the medical and service sectors, hospitals, restaurants, hotels, airports, carehomes etc.

The government should step in and among other things, must ensure “nonpunitive leave policies”, in response to the coronavirus outbreak. A quarantined paid sick leave, policy during quarantine will lift a great financial burden on those affected.

For the churches, the current pandemic will entail some disruptions to religious practices. They may involve the following:

1. Refrain from physical contact when greeting one another
2. Regular sanitizing of church sanctuary, meeting hall, washrooms, kindergarten classes, etc.
3. Sanitize hands and trays of communion during Holy Communion services
4. Members with flu-like symptoms should refrain from attending church worship services or activities.
5. Stricter visit procedure at senior homes and activities
6. Postpone or cancel pilgrimages

Just as our Lenten observance is meant to deepen our relationship with God and our solidarity with all who suffer as our Lord did, we can allow these sacrifices and inconveniences in our daily lives in order to direct our prayers;

- toward those who have died from Covid-19 and their families
- toward those who are tested positive and needing treatment and care
- toward those who serve as doctors, nurses and care-givers; and
- toward policy makers that they will ensure a health care system that incentivizes proactive detection and treatment for diseases that threaten the nation’s health

The coronavirus poses a threat that knows no borders. As Christians, neither does nor our love and concern for our neighbours.

Let us pray and work together to overcome fear with compassion

Isaiah 58: 11

*“ And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desires
in scorched places and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water whose waters do not fail”*

REV. DR. HERMEN SHASTRI

Date: 6th February 2020

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