

POSITION on RESPONDING to COVID-19

“For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.” (Proverbs 24:6 NRSV)

Pentecostal churches across North America overwhelmingly agree that these are days for wisdom, discernment and cooperation. Steadiness with confidence and hope are to pervade every decision. We know that the Lord is not oblivious to what is going on with Covid-19. We can be sure that through this adversity, He will empower His church by His Spirit to be more effective than it was previous to the pandemic. We pray that He will ignite us with new passion for the days ahead.

Paul gave clear direction to the Church at Rome on harmony and peaceful submission to government leadership. “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. (Romans 13:1 NRSV) Resistance to political leadership in that ancient world was only considered appropriate when personal loyalty to Jesus as Lord was at stake. Neither Jesus nor Paul would have ever advocated that Christians resist government leadership for the sake of preserving personal rights; to be a Christian is always to place the greater good at the centre of everything. We have been blessed with generous exemptions for church gatherings provided by the government of Ontario that have not been afforded other gatherings.

None of us should be afraid but all of us should be concerned for the safety and well-being of ourselves and others. The current virus is not a hoax for obvious reasons. The record of the horrible deaths of those who have contracted the disease and the multiple testimonies and warnings of those who have managed to survive it is before us. In centuries past similar pandemics have plagued humanity and believers have considered it Christ-like to follow instructions for everyone’s safety. The Spanish flu of a century ago (1918-1920) is the most recent example.

It is prudent for us to follow the lead of medical science as we would for all health issues. We must have faith without fear that God is the author of science and medicine as He is the author of every other good thing. We must have faith without fear that God often uses natural means to accomplish His purposes. In the place of fear, concern and caution must be paramount. We are convinced that the recommended safety protocols be carefully followed in the interest of loving everyone as Jesus would do. Our prime mandate in this crisis is to love and respect everyone as we would want to be loved and respected since we are all made in the image of God. Our congregation can be assured that we will be following all provincially mandated and recommended guidelines as we re-open.

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