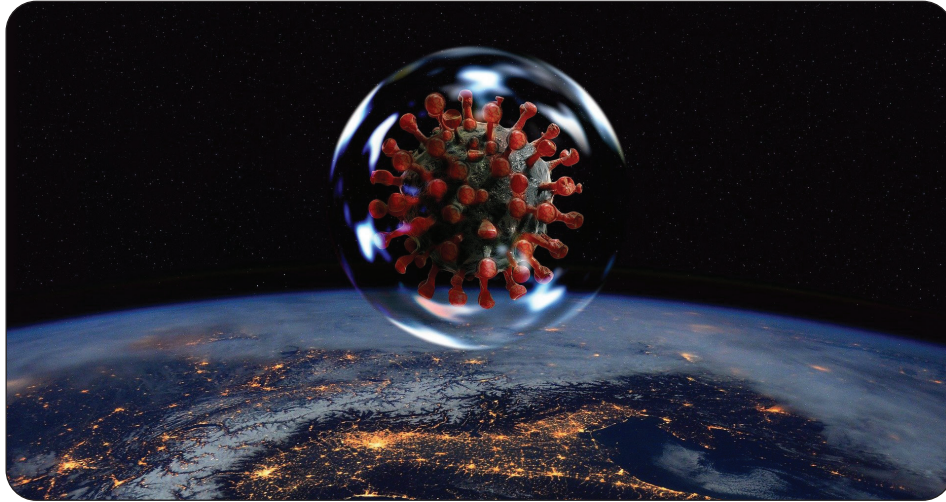


PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 53, DECEMBER 28 – JANUARY 3

Church and mission in a pandemic



By the end of 2020, the coronavirus (COVID-19) had infected around 70 million people and killed more than 1.5 million of them. It has devastated economies and undermined confidence in government, media, democracy and even in truth itself.

We know that such suffering and sickness is not a part of God's intended design. For now, He works to redeem it – He is the Great Physician, 'who heals all our diseases' (Psalm 103:3). One of the marks of Jesus' own ministry was miraculous healing. God will one day bring about a new heaven and new earth, where 'there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain' (Rev 21:4).

In this crisis, Christians are called to a double obedience: we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20); and we are required to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12:34).

This global pandemic is a disaster and a tragedy. But it is also an opportunity for Chris-

tians to speak, act, and live in a way that points people to Jesus. The early Church won many by its fearless self-sacrifice, serving the poor and sick during times of pandemic. How can we not do the same?

🙏 Pray for the global Church to rise to the occasion, loving one another and loving our neighbours in ways that glorify Christ and lead people to him.

🙏 Pray for those on the front-line in the fight: health care workers, scientists, politicians, and policy makers. Pray for wise Christians to be at the heart of these efforts.

🙏 Pray for God to intervene in the ways that only God can - ways that declare his glory and draw people to worship him.



BEYOND SICKNESS

Unemployment stalks many lives. This is serious in the Global North, where many people live month-to-month. It is critical in Global South, where many survive day-to-day. Starvation is a bigger threat than the disease itself in places like India, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe.

Global mental health issues have worsened and spread due to the uncertainty of when this will all end, the loss of so many loved ones, the public health impact, and the effects of continued isolation and surveillance.

🙏 Pray for those in extreme poverty because of the coronavirus. God, save them and sustain their lives! Pray they will receive food assistance and regain the opportunity to earn a living.

🙏 Pray for the broken-hearted, the anxious, the depressed, the suicidal. May the God of all comfort bring hope and light. Pray that Christians would reach out with compassion, kindness, and skill.

While the world's attention, including that of Christians, is on the immediate and the local, the unreached are forgotten. International travel (to the mission field) has collapsed. Giving to missions has drastically declined. At the same time, authoritarian governments exploit their people and persecute Christian (and other) minorities unchallenged.

God's Church has survived far worse than this! In many unreached areas, the small local Body of Christ is filling the ministry gap in the absence of foreign missionaries. This is an overdue change in thinking and practice. And the power of integral mission – addressing the whole person, body and soul – is being lived out and worked out.

🙏 Pray that the last, the least, and the lost would not be forgotten in this time of crisis! The unevangelized are still in need of the gospel. A virus does not change the truth that Jesus is the only way to the Father (John 14:6).

🙏 Pray for innovation and renewed passion for mission in the global body of Christ. May we see new mission movements emerge, creative approaches to the use of technology for church and mission, and unprecedented partnership between local church and global mission.

Praying for the World is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit www.lausanne.org/pray to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.