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You Can Still Reach Us!

The DBC Office is still open! Even if we do close the physical office, you can contact our state staff through email or phone.

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Responding to Crisis

The past several weeks has been challenging. For the first time in the lives of most we have been faced with a genuine pandemic that has affected more than the 5:00 news. Every person in the U.S. has been personally impacted in some way by COVID-19, aka, the coronavirus. Children are home from school, events have been cancelled, businesses are closing. If you have a 401k (or 403b for us preacher types!) or any other kind of investment in the stock market you have probably taken a hit of 30-50% in the value of your portfolio. Churches have been impacted with some pastors preaching to empty auditoriums and livestreaming the message to congregations. And, we have all been introduced to a new term in our lexicon . . . social distancing. And then there are those who have actually contracted

the virus!

There have been many different responses to the crisis. Some better than others. As I have noticed responses on social media there is a word that I have not seen used enough . . . wisdom.

Throughout Scripture, in times of pain, challenge, or turmoil, wise people asked God for wisdom.

God told a new king that he could ask for any coronation gift he wanted and the Creator would provide it. Solomon could have asked for wealth, power, or fame. Instead he said, *"O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people which You have chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. So, **give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil.** For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"* (1 Kings 3:7-9). God was so pleased by Solomon's wise plea that He gave the young king, not only the wisdom he asked for, but also everything he did not ask for.

Moses faced many tough moments in his 120 years of life. **Numbers 20** had to have been one of the most painful. The chapter opens with the death of his sister Miriam, quickly moves to a conflict that results in Israel's leader exchanging his privilege to enter the Promised Land for a moment of unbridled anger, and closes with the death of their first high priest, Aaron. Wow! And you think you've had a tough week!

In response to this stretch of turmoil Moses cried out to God, *"Teach us to number our days that we may present to You a heart of wisdom"* (Ps. 90:12). From the depths of his pain Moses recognized wisdom as a gift God gives to us to present back to Him. He recognized that the most important thing he could ask of the Father was for wisdom that would heal his grieving heart, meet the people's needs, and overcome the flaws in his own personality.

As we confront the uncertainty of the weeks to come, the two most important prayer requests we can make are for God to receive glory and for us to receive wisdom.

There are two great enemies that wage war against wisdom. The first is fear. Paralyzing fear is not of nor from God. This kind of fear produces a sense of hopelessness, powerlessness, and aimlessness, leaving us with an inability to know what to do and an inability to do what we do know to do.

There is a difference between fear and wise caution or concern. Paul wrote, *"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and sound judgment"* (2 Tim. 1:7). God's spirit of love overcomes hopelessness; His spirit of resurrection power overwhelms our weakness; and, His spirit of sound judgment replaces aimlessness with wisdom.

The second enemy of wisdom is stubbornness. Stubbornness often rears its head in times of crisis. It is a refusal to acknowledge that a problem exists or that there is a need for help. It can take the form of refusing to listen to appropriate authority or counsel. I read a Facebook post where someone actually suggested that the coronavirus was not real, but rather a political ploy to influence upcoming elections. That's a stubborn spirit!

David warned, from his own experience, against being stubborn. After finally repenting of his sin with Bathsheba he counseled, *"Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near you"* (Ps. 32:9). Though his crisis was one of his own making, David discovered great wisdom when he acknowledged his stubborn spirit and yielded to God's grace.

As I read **Psalms 90**, I see three things that those who are wise acknowledge. First, the wise acknowledge who God is. *"LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God"* (vv. 1-2). In times of crisis, the faithful of every generation have run to God as their refuge. He is the Creator of everything and the controller of eternity (vv. 3-4). It is no accident that David highlighted the affirmation that God is as the dividing point between the wise and the unwise when he wrote, *"The fool has said in his heart, there is no God"* (Ps. 14:1).

Some deny God's existence outright, others deny it with their actions (or inactions). Vice President

Mike Pence was mocked after being named head of the president's coronavirus task force because, according to one political analyst, "He doesn't believe in science. He believes you should pray and that's outdated thinking." If that's true, I'm engaging in some of that "outdated thinking" that there will be more "outdated thinking" in the halls of power in our country and around the world.

After acknowledging that God is and that He is our hiding place in times of crisis, the second thing the wise do is acknowledge what they cannot do. **Psalm 90** is filled with many things that Moses, as great as he was, knew he could not do. You can summarize them with two statements: we cannot dictate our will to a sovereign God and we cannot change a sovereign God's purposes and plans.

Planning and strategizing is important, but we tend to make plans as though we are the sovereign one. This is why we get frustrated when things change. Recognizing God as our sovereign and ourselves as His servants won't necessarily eliminate the pain of rough days, but yielding our plans to His will does give us confidence that even when we are uncertain or caught by surprise, He is not.

Finally, the wise acknowledge what they can do . . . respond to God. *'Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; and do confirm for us the work of our hands; yes, confirm the work of our hands'* (v. 17). With genuine humility and surrender to God's grace we can discover how to serve wisely.

Sometimes this wise work is simple common sense. Mom was right . . . "wash your hands!" and, "if you're sick, don't hang around those who aren't!" Our association recently had to make the painful decision to cancel our mission trip to South Africa and a beloved event for our senior adults. Why? Because it was the wise work of common sense. Don't be paralyzed with fear, but don't be stubborn, either. Listen to the counsel of doctors and leaders and make the changes that will help slow down the spread of the virus.

But, also recognize that at times the wise work of the Father will defy worldly wisdom. In his book, "The Insanity of Obedience," Nik Ripken noted that God's greatest priority is not our safety. It is His Kingdom. We all like reassurances that everything is going to turn out alright and that nothing real bad is ever going to happen to us or the people we love. But, that's not how things work in a world where God, *"sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous"* (Matt. 5:45).

At times the wisest statement we can make is the testimony Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego made to a cocky King Nebuchadnezzar: *"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up"* (Daniel 3:17-18).

Confidence that, no matter what happens to me, God will be glorified and His kingdom advanced is the greatest declaration of the wise. In the midst of crisis, don't miss the opportunity to declare to others the greatness of your Savior and the love and grace He has for them through the cross and empty tomb.

-- Fred MacDonald
Executive Director Elect

March 2020 Executive Board Meeting

The Executive Board met in Aberdeen March 13-14. Here are some of the highlights from the meeting:

- Novel coronavirus and its effect on churches was discussed
- Baker State Mission Offering goal and allocations were approved
 - Goal for 2020: \$40,000

- Allocations:
 - Summer Missions - 15%
 - Church & Pastoral Emergencies - 25%
 - Camps/Retreats & Youth Ministries - 15%
 - Native American Ministries - 20%
 - Evangelism - 25%
 - 2021 Budget was looked at
 - Committee approved to look at anticipated decreased funding from NAMB
-

Upcoming Events Affected by the Novel Coronavirus

The Dakotas have not been exempt from the effects of the novel coronavirus. The Dakota Baptist Convention is following the guidelines presented by the Center for Disease Control, the South Dakota Governor's Office, and the White House. As you are aware, the outlook changes daily - sometimes hourly.

In response to current information, the following events have been postponed:

- "Partners in Ministry" meals in Fargo, Sioux Falls (Tea), Bismarck, and Minot - new dates TBD.
- VBS Preview/Training in the Black Hills - date moved from Saturday, April 4 to Saturday, May 2 (same time and place). This may be cancelled if the quarantine initiatives are still in place.
- Blackaby Spiritual Leadership Coaching Workshop - postponed from April 6-8 to September 14-16 (working with Cambria Suites to determine if they can host the event)

Also note that the PPBA's Men's Retreat has been postponed from March 20-21 until April 17-18.

We currently still have the DBC Youth Camp scheduled. We continue to monitor the situation and work with Crystal Springs Baptist Camp as we move forward. Any monies collected for camp will be refunded should the camp be cancelled.

Funding Requests for Events & Activities During April

Due to the recommendations of government organizations, the Dakota Baptist Convention has opted not to fund any requests for events or activities occurring in April. We encourage churches to reschedule any events or activities planned for April.

If your church has submitted a request for an event or activity in April and decides to reschedule it for a later date, please resend the funding request with the new date(s) for reconsideration.



COVID-19

An Update from the Southern Baptist Convention

From the [sbc.net](https://www.sbc.net) website...

"On March 11, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus, or COVID-19, outbreak to be a global pandemic. We are grieved at the number of lives this virus has claimed as well as the global disruption it has caused.

The SBC Executive Committee staff continues to monitor news regarding the spread of COVID-19 and to assess any potential impact on the Annual Meeting in Orlando this June.

As the Annual Meeting organizer, the EC is committed to ensuring a safe and responsible gathering. We are currently proceeding with our preparations to host the Annual Meeting as planned in Orlando this June. No plans are being made otherwise. That said, the health and safety of messengers and attendees are our highest priority, and we will continue to evaluate the status of the annual meeting in the coming days and weeks.

Also, we want to commend our entities across the SBC as they have taken precautions and executed strategies to prevent or slow the spread of this disease at their respective institutions."

Updates from your SBC seminaries

[Gateway Seminary](#)

[Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary](#)

[New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary](#)

[Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary](#)

[The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#)

[Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary](#)

Updates from other national entities

[GuideStone](#)

[LifeWay Christian Resources](#)

[International Mission Board](#)

See all related stories at [Baptist Press](#)

Sample Ministry Opportunities During the Pandemic

As churches, we have a unique opportunity to show our communities the love of Christ during this unusual time. Here are some ideas to help spark creativity and ministry within your setting:



- FaceBook Live - many churches are already using this resource to cast their worship service to those who opt not to come or in lieu of physical worship services. It can be done with just a cell phone or with a dedicated camera and sound feed.
- Run Errands for Seniors or High-Risk People - people who are at high risk for life threatening problems with the novel coronavirus may be unable to do basic tasks such as shopping or going to the post office. Your congregation can help these people by running these errands for them. For example, they can pick up groceries and leave them on the front porch or drop off letters and bills from a box set outside the door.
- Phone Calls - people who are isolated during this time, from seniors to single adults, could use a simple phone call to know that people care for them and help with the loneliness.
- Meals - some community organizations are offering free sack lunches to children and adults who depend on the school system or who have faced unexpected financial difficulties. If your community does not have this option, your church might be able to step in and help fill the gap.
- Tutoring Services - with schools using alternative ways to teach children (online or sending paperwork home), students may not have access to much needed help. People in your congregation (not just adults, but teenagers and even older elementary students) can offer to help with homework in subjects they know well. This can be done through web services such as Facebook Messenger Live, FaceTime, Skype, and more.
- Provide Activity Books/Packets for Children or Seniors - many churches already have packets for children to help keep them occupied during worship services. Why not give them to children who are 'stuck' at home? You can also create packets to give to senior adults - include a word search book, adult coloring book, pens, markers, a devotional, and more.

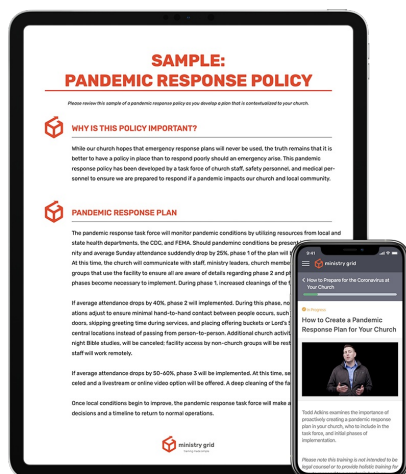
Is your church doing something else during this time? Please let us know and we'll be

glad to share!



ministry grid

training made simple



Free Training, Documents, and Checklists to Lead Your Church through the Coronavirus

With the spread of the coronavirus, we want to help churches take the appropriate measures to plan, prepare, and protect their people from the pandemic. In this free training, you will find practical videos, ministry-specific checklists, ready-to-use documents, and a sample pandemic policy all for you to contextualize for your church.

Visit Ministry Grid



Ministry Safe

Preventing Sexual Abuse - What I Need to Know

LAST CHANCE! The free year of access to Ministry Grid coupon expires at the end of this month. If your church would like access to all the resources available through MinistrySafe, sign-up for an account through ministrysafe.com/dbc and enter the coupon code **DBC2020** during the check out process to receive the first year free (a \$250 value). Please note that certification training costs \$5/person additional.

Visit Ministry Safe