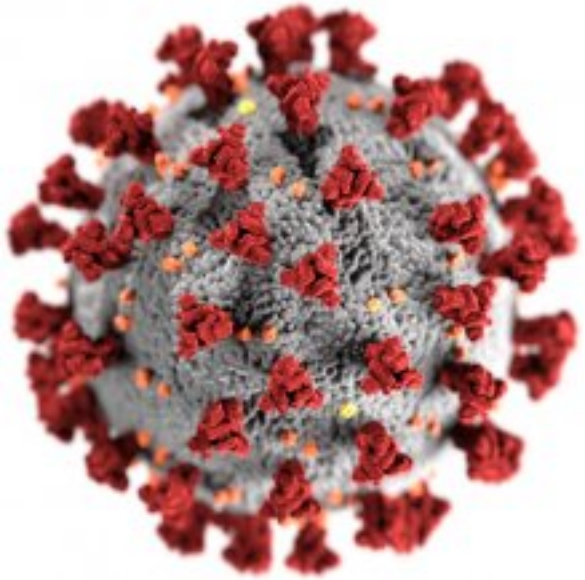
A Temporary Suspension **[1]**

Submitted by Wessel on Sunday, 22 March 2020 - 22:18



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An unbelievable amount has been written and said about the situation which SARS-CoV-2 (the 2019 “Coronavirus”, a.k.a. COVID-19) has caused globally. Even within Christian circles there has (even if mostly only initially) been a wide variety of opinions and responses (many of them being “biblical [2]”)1. The reason is, simply, that everyone has been confronted by the pandemic, and therefore everyone has a opinion on it. What is more, many people have been asking questions and looking for answers, so many pastors have stepped in to try and answer as best as they can.

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As much as has already been written, and much left unread, yet people want more. As fear and uncertainty grows and remains on much of the world, little else seems of real importance.

I do not feel that I have any particular insight to contribute. I have much else that I would rather say. So I am going to be working on other articles, but won't be publishing them until the current mania has died down somewhat.

That said, while I have the spot on the soapbox, I can share a few disjoint thoughts on the situation:

- Protect the weak and vulnerable by not endangering them through unintentional exposure. The virus is highly contagious, and by the very nature of being unintentional, we do not know when we might expose someone who is vulnerable, either because we ourselves are already infected, or merely carriers.
- Be kind and sensitive to others. Be willing to help others [3], especially those who are sick, even if you own health may be compromised (and you subsequently have to isolate yourself). Christians have cared for the sick through many plagues in history [4], and many of them died in the process [5], valuing it as much as martyrdom.
- Speak as people who have an eternal hope and joy *despite immeasurable suffering around us*, instead of like people who are without hope and joy. Witness the gospel to others through this.
- Do not practise “social distancing”. Instead practise “physical distancing [6]”, but make use of the many technological blessings which we have to stay in touch with friends, family and church communities.
- The genie is out the bottle. The virus will not disappear overnight. Indeed, the purpose of self-

isolation is to “flatten the curve [7]” in order not to overwhelm hospitals and healthcare workers, while being realistic that people will continue to contract the virus. SARS-CoV-2 is unlikely to disappear through the power of quarantine. It will take months or years to disappear, even with isolation and quarantining. The current strategy is not sustainable, and will need to develop into something else. Many of us will get it, most will survive and develop a degree of immunity [8] to it (for however long it will be effective). Once that has happened, herd immunity [9] can kick in to protect the most vulnerable as the world slowly returns to normality.

- Some young and healthy people will suffer badly and die because of the virus, *despite* the vast majority not needing hospitalisation [10]. Such is the reality of the fallen world. I do not believe that fearing for one's own life (without a good reason, such as being immunocompromised, being diabetic, asthmatic, or having cardiovascular disease, TB or AIDS) is wise, especially if it comes at the cost of developing herd immunity.
- If natural immunity is only temporary, then so will a vaccine. You will statistically be likely to contract the virus at some point, even after the pandemic has ended and a vaccine has been developed.
- I cannot say if and how the world will change because of the pandemic. Hopefully there will be positive and constructive changes in terms of healthcare and safeguards for small businesses, but we are going to have to wait and see.
- Spread awareness, not panic.
- Do not buy into conspiracy theories.
- I do not think that this pandemic is necessarily an explicit act of judgement from God. Looking at the terrible and awful origins of SARS-CoV-2 [11], which is the result of greed and disdain for God's creation, I would not be surprised if mankind created the circumstances for the pandemic, and God merely allowed it to take off, removing His hand of protection (which undoubtedly have saved many of us in unimaginable ways) instead of explicitly sending it. We do not get to blame God for the pandemic: we only have ourselves to blame. Even if most of us did not actively participate in the wet markets of China, we have all indulged in the consumerism and globalisation which has turned China into a mighty and God-disdaining empire.

Stay safe. Grace and peace to you.

P.S. The annual Equip Easter convention has been cancelled this year. Therefore I won't be providing an overview of it as usual.

- 1. Although even Bethel church was quick to close its healing rooms [12] due to the pandemic.

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