

Sharing Christ's Compassion for Ukraine and beyond
God has not given us a spirit of fear,
but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7

March 15, 2020

Dear Prayer Partners,

Today has been declared a **National Day of Prayer**—the right response to a National Emergency! The World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Our US government is responding aggressively to contain this new coronavirus as it spreads across the US. We have seen that **the virus can be contained**. China shut down the city of Wuhan then the entire province of Hubei and the number of cases decreased dramatically. Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore—countries so close to China, all responded aggressively and to date they have had cases of COVID-19, but no deaths. We live in a country with the best healthcare system in the world; please pray for all healthcare providers as they respond to this threat. **We need to respond logically with “a sound mind”**, looking at credible rational data, not media frenzy. **As believers, we must respond in God’s power, not fear, showing the world the “peace that passes all understanding”** (Philippians 4:6-7). Our Sovereign omnipotent God is not surprised by a virus, that is part of the curse on this sin-ridden world. **Our God can help us overcome fear**. As Christians, even death is nothing to fear! Last year, when I experienced clinical death in Ukraine because of the large blood clot in my lungs, God bathed me in peace and anticipation of the glories of Heaven! God **can** take away fear, if we trust Him to complete **HIS** will for our lives. Let’s follow the wise guidelines that have been given by the CDC and trust the Lord to fulfill His purpose in us, in our neighbors, and in our country. **More people have died from influenza** in the last few months just in the US, than have died globally from COVID-19. Influenza is much more contagious than COVID-19; therefore, there are millions more cases, and the percentage of people from flu who die is much smaller. But the scope of flu is much broader. Keep that in mind as the media tries to foment panic about this new coronavirus. Our US CDC has great info on their website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Since this coronavirus is new, there is still so much scientists don’t know about it. The CDC is updating their site as new information is discovered.

As Medical Director of ABWE, responsible for 1000 missionaries’ health in 60 countries worldwide, I have been following this since mid-January. I have been desperately praying to God for wisdom in how to advise our missionaries. I am very concerned about developing countries that do not have good healthcare. A few days ago, the senior leaders of **ABWE appointed a Crisis Management Team** to determine how to respond to this crisis. We are meeting daily to determine how to advise our missionaries and our IHQ staff. **PLEASE pray for me and the 4 other members of this CMT as we seek God’s will and wisdom to respond appropriately and rationally with concern but without panic.** We have already canceled several events at IHQ in March and April. We have given our missionaries guidelines for how to determine whether they should leave their field of service and return to the US. **Please pray for them as they seek to use this crisis to glorify God and share the Good News of salvation, hope and peace to a world lost in despair and panic.** In Italy and Japan, they are holding online services and prayer groups. All across Europe, governments are locking down venues. In Paris, the Eiffel Tower is closed. In many countries people can leave their homes **ONLY** to go to grocery stores, pharmacies and gas stations. In Ukraine, Holly continues to go to the villages who so badly need medical care and salvation. Ukraine has canceled schools and other events and limited travel. Some countries are only allowing their own citizens and permanent residents to cross their borders. It is hard to keep up with everything globally.

Pray for all mission agencies’ leadership, as they care for and advise their missionaries worldwide. Pray for missionaries serving in the hot zones to be cautious but also productive in ministry through creative means. Continue to support your missionaries financially and prayerfully. If your vacation or other travel is canceled but all your financial input into that trip is returned, consider using that money to help the spread of the Gospel globally. **OUR GOD REIGNS!**

Clinging to The Rock,
Miriam Wheeler, MD

Psalm 18:1-6 & 30-32
ABWE Medical Director and ABWE-Ukraine Medical Ministry Founder