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University Mission in Changing Scenario

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A poem on Psalm 37

Don't be jealous of those that are evil
Even if they seem to always get their fill;
Like the grass they will soon shrivel up and die.
So you, child, must learn to trust and obey The Most High.

Trust in the Lord and willfully do His tasks
If there be a need, He will give you what you ask;
Soon enough, you will find Godly Living fun, And He will make your
face shine like the noonday sun.

Have patience, blessed child
Don't you get all wild!
Though cruel ones seem to flourish like a tree
They're slaves to sin and they aren't free.

Let the Lord be your support
Your confidant, your cohort-
You can tell him whatever
He will never disappoint you, dear.

Your life won't be cut short
If you let your God be your fort.
Put your hope in Him ever,
His promise is to let you live with Him forever.



Angelin Devaraj is doing her Masters in Chemistry in Amravati, Maharashtra. Writing poems and songs are her favourite hobbies.

No lockdown for brains!

A nang Tadar, a Class XI student from Arunachal Pradesh, has developed a pair of glasses to help the visually-impaired navigate “hands-free”.

<https://www.thequint.com/lifestyle/life/indian-inventions-by-youngsters-in-2017#read-more>

“I calculated the enormous quantity of charcoal being used, the pollution from it that worsens climate change, damages . . . human health. I wanted to create a renewable resource to replace charcoal,” said Vinisha Umashankar from her hometown of Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu.” <https://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2020/1120/Teen-power-An-Indian-girl-invents-a-solar-iron-to-reduce-smog>

Lock down due to Corona Virus had closed down the educational institutions in our country and elsewhere. But can lock down damper our young brains? The increase of knowledge in the minds of young Indians has been unstoppable. The paradoxical situation yet prevails, because of the online education. For example, while the affordability of digital education for poor students is remote, the rich students enjoy the luxury of multiple gadgets. The disciplined students put their time to proper use and others waste their time and energy and indulge in unproductive activities. Sincere students could exercise their spiritual disciplines like quiet time, prayer and Bible studies and meeting as cell groups and some others not.

How are our young people going to cope up with the new wave of online education shifting from the traditional class room education? Is God taking us to a new direction in the field of education? Will off the campus education drastically affect our campus based cell groups? How are going to swim against this tide and still be effective in reaching the post matric students? There are umpteenth ways of educating the young minds. **But how are we going to educate the young minds with the knowledge of the Holy One?**

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UNIVERSITY MISSION IN CHANGING SCENARIO

Nothing unites humankind so well as a pandemic. Consider this fact – the queen of England and the poorest of the land have the same risk of infection. The solidarity that arises from such a situation might be short-lived indeed. But, as Paul says in Ephesians 5:16, let us “make the most of our time because the days are evil”. There is no longer the frown when we bring up the subject of religion, but people are willing to lend their ears. The frailty of mankind and the sovereignty of God may be cause for rejoicing to the redeemed but a cause for worry to the unregenerate. Fresh avenues have been made open to us to witness for Christ, particularly among students. In this article let us consider some online avenues,

which if rightly used could greatly benefit university mission.

1) Social media

Each one of us has an online presence with a certain amount of ‘influence’. Be it WhatsApp, Twitter, or Instagram, we could interact with students over a variety of theological topics. It could be a Gospel video, a visual tract or something that causes one to stop and think. Thinking has become a lost art. Hopefully, the lockdown induced ‘alone time’ will create opportunities for it. Let our social media posts cause one to put down their phone and meditate on the things of God.

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways (Psalms 119:15)



2) Check the pulse

To be an effective witness for Christ on campus, we need to be aware of the 'pulse' of the students. We could identify common problems faced by the students. Collecting their doubts and opinions about theology may be a real eye-opener that could spot to areas where we ought to spend more efforts and expose loopholes. We have to create questionnaires keeping in mind that we need to be short, precise and to the point at the same time.

3) Discussion forums

For the debate lovers out there, we could create discussion threads on Reddit, Quora and other platforms. Whilst defending our faith it is important to be aware of the worldviews of others and to keep our conduct worthy of Christ, who did not retaliate and threaten when He suffered unjustly but entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23). We ought to face others with calmness, love and strength supplied from above.

4) Art

God has blessed each of us with unique creative capacities. Digital paintings with intriguing captions, thought provoking poems, blog posts digital animations and many others could be used as evangelistic

tools for students who spend a considerable time online. No talent is wasted when it is used for the glory of God and for the edification of the children of God.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms (1 Peter 4:10)

5) Quiz it out

A quiz on a particular book of the Bible could be a great way to spark interest among students and for them to gain a deeper knowledge of God. We need to think of effective and creative ways to help them in their study and to interpret the text rightly. Commentaries and online research tools can be used to serve the purpose.

6) Virtual connect

Though we can't meet physically, there are plenty of ways to fellowship online (Google Meet, Zoom, etc.) Even with all its challenges, it could still make us feel less alone in this changing world. Caring and looking out for each other's concerns is important and God-glorifying.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)

Above all, our digital endeavors ought to pass the litmus test of "Does this glorify God?". It is not

meant for us to shrink down into doing nothing but to keep our motives pure and worthy of Him. As a wise man once said, pride comes before fall (Proverbs 16:18) and we need to guard against it by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). God has kept us alive at such a time as this when morale is low and the fields of evangelism are vast. Let us strike the iron while it is hot, shine as God's ambassadors

wherever we are planted and fight the good fight of faith.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12)



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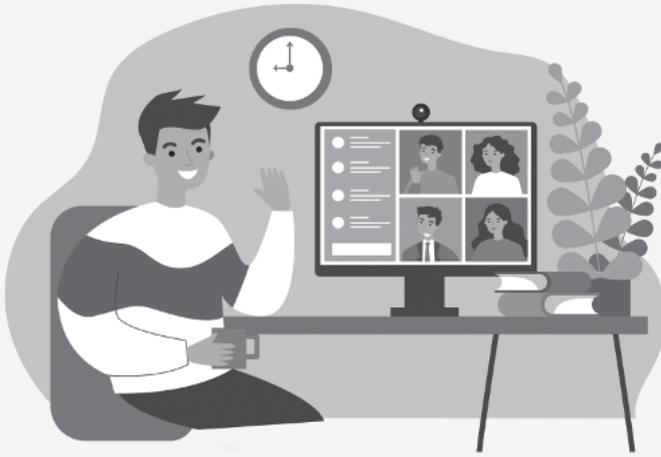
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FUTURE of UNIVERSITY- FUTURE MISSION

The world is changing at a fast pace. We live in a transformative age. There are fundamental shifts in how we live, work, play and of course, how we learn. The nature, role and status of universities and the contours of education system are in various phases of metamorphosis right now. An educational consultant has projected four scenarios for the future of university in the next decade:

- **Champion University**, streamlining operations by transforming service delivery and administration in traditional degree programs
- **Commercial University**, repositioning by drawing closer to industry to collaborate in teaching and research as students favour degree programs that offer work-integrated learning.

- **Disruptor University**, expanding into markets and services and competing against a range of new local and global educational service providers, as continuous learners and their preferences for on-demand micro-certificates dominate and technology disrupts the workplace.

- **Virtual University**, restructuring into networks that share digital platforms and integration of university with vocational institutes primarily

oritizing training and employability outcomes as humans beginto be replaced by machines

National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 envisages a new and forward looking vision for India's higher education system, turning colleges into autonomous degree awarding and board governed higher education institutes instead of being affiliated to a university as followed now.Flexibility in combination of subjects for students, transforming the regulatory system of higher education, emphasis on integration with vocational education, use of technology and integration of on-line and digital education, setting up campus by foreign university and affordable quality education for all amongst others.

Higher institutions of learning are in throes of a new education order. Due to systemic changes, students can be enrolled irrespective of their location - in campus or off-campus. Offer of online degree will create a new generation of students without any physical contact or interaction among themselves or with their faculty. Even pedagogy in the institutions will be of diverse permutation. The Pandemic has necessitated online and digital classes even for those who had enrolledto attend classes in the campus. Academic life in the campus has gone for a toss.

Students may return to the campus after a long spell, but students will never be the same as they were before. There will be less or no exposure to the real world outside. Everything is viewed through the prism of digital world. There is absence of learning on the ground. Impact on the mind of students learning virtually is quite stressful. Perspective of life based on the new method of learning will add different dimensions to it. Value system and ethics to be learnt from the institutions and fellow students or groups are going to be things of the past. Spirit of camaraderie and fellow-feeling infused in the campus life are on the wane. Though virtual education creates opportunities for students to have greater global engagement and increased participation in the class, it is devoid of human contact. It might behoove us to consider how virtual capabilities might give greater ability to shape students' learning experiences wherever they find themselves in the world.

Challenges of virtual education in a digitally divided country could be many, including lack of facilities hindering the reliability of e-learning; lack of policies, strategies, plans, and monitoring; control to ensure cross-departmental and multi-stakeholder participation; lack of knowledge of the use of



e-learning materials and services provided; relevancy and participatory content development and providing services across all geographical regions. Whatever may be the problem, change is inevitable irrespective of circumstances and lack of preparedness on our part to accept the same. The wise King Solomon stated, "There is a time for everything for every activity under the heavens..." (Eccl. 3:1). Daniel praised the God of heaven and said, "He changes times and seasons..." (Daniel 2:21). The new order brings forth problems for the students and teaching community. While coping with new situation in the face of multiple obstacles in learning, succeeding in academia, fierce competitiveness and insecurity of future due to economic recession drive students to the brink. Stress is built up in them and they lose sight of the bigger picture of life.

In the present eventualities, believing students and graduates have a greater role to play. Their commitment to the Lord and mission of reaching out college and university students throws greater challenges as students at large are left in the great dilemma. The question is not where students are now but to focus on where they would be in the future. It is our responsibility to

lead them to the great Creator who promises "a future and a hope" for everyone.

University mission in the present scenario of reaching out to students via a virtual world should take into its ambit multidimensional factors prevailing at present and evolving in the future. It may not be necessary to fully dispense with personal evangelism, face-to-face meeting for prayer and Bible study. Age old methods may continue as much as possible. After all, physical interaction facilitates personal touch and has a great impact in spiritual realms. But a different strategy for bringing good news to the burgeoning population of virtual students is warranted. Obviously virtual technique is necessary to touch millions of virtual world wandering students. It is important to create digital platforms at central, regional and local levels or centrally integrated platform with access for all. Platform may be used to conduct evangelistic Bible study, prayers for the needs of all, interaction in the form of meetings, seminars and workshops. Short discussion and presentation on topics with relevance to students' world may be arranged from time to time. This will give wider reach and coverage to the student community across the nation.

Follow-up will be easy as contact numbers as ported to the meeting are recorded. Local leaders may be entrusted with the job of conduct of interactive sessions and follow-up. It provides greater opportunities for reaching out many at one go. Digital platforms like Google Meet, Zoom meeting and WhatsApp video and audio meeting as available may be utilized or repurposed for fulfilling our goals. A dedicated website exclusively for online students or students studying for online degree may be created. Contents with good presentation of the gospel, Bible stories, and Bible study lessons, testimony of students and graduates and contextual topics may be developed and be incorporated in the website with facility for asking questions and feedback. A helpline with national and regional toll free numbers for students may be thought of for extending counseling which is the need of the hour. Social media may be employed to a large extent by the evangelical unions and graduates fellowship for helping out students and graduates in need. The same is also very helpful in local areas to execute all activities of evangelism, fellowship and missions apart from mobilizing resources.

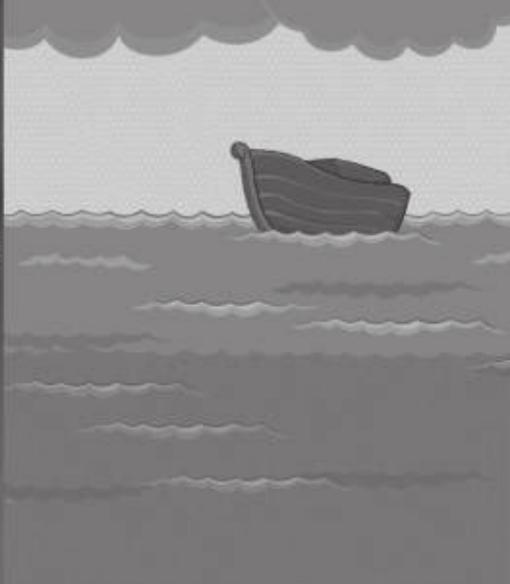
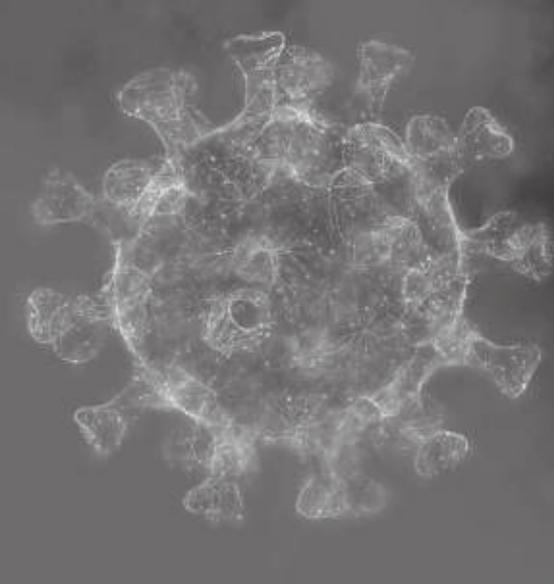
It is time to make difference. Current approach calls for innovation though our call for mission remains unchanged. St. Paul begs us to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called (Eph 4:1). In the first century, apostles seized the opportunity as and when new door of evangelism opened to them. Some of us as digital missionaries have already started adapting to new ways of reaching students through virtual world. It is an opportunity for all to rise to the occasion and stay relevant to the university mission at 'such time as this'. It is time to harvest not only in real world but also in virtual world. It may be difficult to tread on uncharted path. But we should be ready in season and out of season to proclaim the message (2 Tim. 4:2), "And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9)

Ref: 1. "Can universities of today lead learning for tomorrow" EY pages 2-3; 2. NEP2020, MHRD pages 33, 56-58



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Impact of the Flood on Studies, Career and World- Economy

We all know about the Flood that came upon the earth during the days of Noah. Genesis chapter 6:1 describes how people on the earth and their sins, both increased rapidly. The sons of God compromised with godly standards and they got married to daughters of men. God saw the evil walk of people on earth and decided to send a flood to eradicate evil, teach human-kind a lesson and to give a fresh start to human life.

Matthew 24:37-39 says, 'As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying

and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.'

Questions arise—What kind of days were they? What were the things in the days of Noah that had become common? Why were people so engaged in their earthly lives and not heeding the warnings given by Noah? What was the impact of the world-wide flood on the lives of people, on the world-economy, careers, studies and industries? To know more about life on earth in

Noah's time, let's see what is written in Genesis 4: 16-22: "So Cain *went out from the LORD'S PRESENCE . . . ; CAIN WAS THEN building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch . . . ; Lamech married two women . . . ; Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who designed various bronze and iron tools.* We can assume that industries like construction/real estate, dairy, animal husbandry, music and musical instruments, arms and equipment, iron, bronze, and other metal industries, etc. which started hundreds of years before Noah, would have now developed progressively during Noah's days. Even trade would have flourished to its peak. Schools, colleges and training centres for imparting knowledge of these faculties would also have developed considerably. But the attitude of people was to go away from God; polygamy and other such sins (Gen. 4:16, 17, 23-24) which started would have become common in the days of Noah.

People had options to choose from various faculties, build careers, earn their livelihoods, marry and live happy lives and so they engaged themselves in that setup. There

was no pause, and the result was, "people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage... ..!" It looked like a nice routine was developed on the earthly life. One bitter truth was that there was no development in spiritual matters until the birth of Seth (vs. 25-26), the son of Adam.

After the flood, Noah offered a burnt offering to God, an act that pleased God very much. As a result, He made a new covenant with Noah and his family. He blessed them and thus mankind had a fresh start to life on earth. In Genesis 10 we read about the descendants of Noah who built cities (v. 12), in Chapter 11, they started to build the 1st Wonder of the World - the Tower of Babel. They gained knowledge/expertise, which was lost in the flood, though there were no coaches, no teachers, no clues, no experience, no guidance, etc. In chapter 12 God made covenant with our forefather Abraham.

Here is the lesson for all of us. Our present world is suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic adversely, but it is very less compared to what Noah and his generations suffered. But like Noah's descendants, we too need to make a fresh start. Let's not be discouraged. Let's evaluate our past lifestyle as individuals, families, churches, and ministry. Our God is



the same today. No situation is so unfavorable that it can withhold His blessings. Looking at the above-mentioned incidents, let's make a new start in our studies, careers, ministries, responsibilities, church, families, etc.

God's allowance of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought many well-developed crucial industries to their lowest level, economy at its worst performance; career prospects are in danger, family incomes shrinking, etc. I am not saying that sins on the earth are increased and so God has punished all of us with Covid-19. My intention is to learn from the past dealings of God. This time of present pandemic is for evaluating our past life. God is gracious to us that the present ruin is very negligible in comparison with the ruin of Noah's flood. Our lives, works, livelihood, ministries, sources of income, careers, studies, etc. though affected, are still existing! God compensated for the loss mankind suffered in abundance. The same God blessed Job abundantly after the destruction came upon him and his family. The same God, His reliability, and promises are with us.

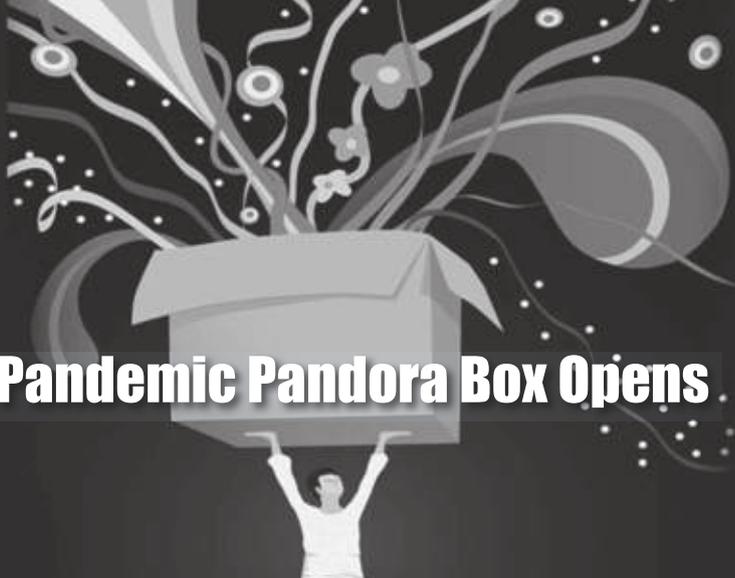
Ups and downs which come in our lives are gladly accepted as a part of life. The same is with this Covid-19 pandemic situation. Maybe God is preparing a way for us for our better future. God may be testing our faith, our dependence on him, our reactions, our attitudes, etc. He may be preparing us for new techniques and methods, helping us to cope up with future situations, etc. Let's therefore as children of God, show our full trust in Him and offer our full submission to Him.

Many intellectuals say that due to the Covid 19 pandemic, our nation has gone back some years. Our hard work is in vain; we will need to work harder to reach the latest progress achieved. But look at the flood incident. The period between Adam and Noah was approximately 1000 years. The flood brought back the family of Noah to the Adamic stage. But there was a fresh new start. When God intervenes in the lives of people, it provides a new start. Are you ready??



Martin Christian (UESI Gujarat Office Staff)
Wife : Rita, Daughters : Shrusty and Dhrusty

Wishing you a Christ-Centered Christmas and A Happy Newyear 2021



Pandemic Pandora Box Opens

Started in Wuhan, but startled the whole World. The exodus of migrant workers. Thousands die. Students commit suicide due to the pressure of online classes. If we are sensitive, we can see the needs all around us. We need the compassionate heart of the Lord Jesus to see the people as sheep without a shepherd. Mark 6:34.

Migrant Workers: From March 2020, the migrant workers began to lose their jobs due to the unexpected and sudden lock down. They spent all their little savings. No money, no transport. Media's horror stories of Covid deaths. So, more than one crore of them began to walk to their native places just with whatever belongings they can carry. From South to North, from the West to East – it was a big Exodus of thousands of kilometers.

Many died due to hunger, exhaustion, and suicide. 81,385 road accidents occurred and 29,415 were killed in this exodus. But there is no mechanism to record their details. So in September 2020, when compensation is sought for the migrant workers who died, officially it was told that because there is no data about the deaths, there is no question of compensation. The lives of poor people have no value. It is terrible. Again, migrant workers were not able to find jobs in their places. Many changed their jobs and did anything they can for survival. A man who had a little piece of land had no money to till the land. He used his daughter and wife instead of bulls to plow his land.

Essential Services: These people risk their lives even at the peak of



the Pandemic. Many sanitation workers have died due to Covid. Other such people are the delivery boys, grocers, vegetable vendors, chemists, milkmen,,etc. Then,there are suppliers of gas cylinders, the staff of the electricity board, banks, post offices, police, and other offices. We are called to recognize their sacrifice, appreciate them, and pray for their protection. The housemaids are another group. Most of the women come for household work as their husbands are drunkards or the family needs are too much. They were stopped as people wanted to stay safe. Those who work from home and get their full salary are hesitant to pay these maids and so their families struggle for survival.

Daily Laborers: If we go to the Chennai Camp Road Junction in the morning, we can see hundreds of laborers waiting with their skill tools, for people to hire them for the day. It is a common scene in most of the cities Matt. 20:1-7. In India, only about 10 % of the employees are with monthly pay, pension, and other benefits (most of the readers of this article come into this category, I believe). 90% of the workers depend on some jobs every day. I have witnessed in my father's small grocery shop in a Chennai slum, how most of the people buy

everything in small measures for each day's needs. During the lock down, most of the salaried people work online from their homes. They save the traveling time and expenses, also they can have more family time. Agencies like Amazon supply everything at their doorstep. But the remaining lot do not have jobs and that means no money to meet the ends for their families. A parent can go hungry, but it is not possible to see your little one go without food. That leads them to desperation, family fights, stealing, and suicides.

Work from Home:- At first, work from home sounded great. One can work and at the same time have a lot of time with the family. Travel can be avoided. But if there is no proper family relationship, living together with your spouse and children all 24 hours creates tension. If both spouses work, comparison and competition affect family relationships. Children's demands and tantrums bring explosion at homes. Due to the loss of projects, some lost their jobs. This added to the burden of the work of those who remain. When I enquired about his online job, one replied, "The online job is hard and demanding. But I have a job, that is great!"

On-Line Classes: No Smart Phones: Most of the students have

smart phone or access to it from the parents. But 27% of the students do not have smart phones. So they have to forego the classes. So there is a huge inequality among students. This leads to dejection among the students.

On-Line Classes: Pressure on Students: Attending the classes at the supervision of the parents bring a strange unease to the students. When the serial or movie is going on in the hall, they have to sit in a room and try to concentrate on the online class. Also, they have the ridicule and disturbance by the siblings. Then there is the demand for assignments and tests. All these you have to do on a small screen. So physically also you have tension. You get irritation in the eyes. All these pressures have led a few to commit suicide, including a class topper doing her 10th class.

On-Line Classes: Teachers' Struggle: Careless behavior of many students during the class irritates the teachers but they cannot do anything. Many schools divided the class into smaller units. So the work load of the teacher increased.

Online Classes: Phone Temptations: After the online classes, the phone is a very big lure for the students. Valueless addictive

effect games, serials, movies, and porn sites are easily accessible to the students.. Illicit sex and forced sex becomes common among students.

On-Line Classes: Corona Batch: Across the world, there is confusion over the exams, promotion, and grades for the students in the school final and the colleges. Because of the varied announcements, the students are perplexed. The below average and average students may like to take advantage of the Corona situation for promotion. But the hard-working students will get dejected as they are not able to show their capabilities.

New Normal:“ The country must accept the coronavirus as the new normal, and facilitate the return-to-work of the able-bodied while protecting the most vulnerable. India could see more deaths due to hunger than from the pandemic if it continues to remain in lockdown to halt the spread of Covid -19. “ NR Narayana Murthy, founder of Infosys.

Relaxation: Slowly the lock down is being lifted and people are getting back to their normal life. But there is the fear of getting infected with Corona. Still, there are restrictions for educational institutions and worship places. The world is limping



towards normalcy, even though no medicine nor vaccine is found for Covid.

Our Response: Prayer –

1. People to be cautious to build up immunity against the virus attack.
2. Covid patients to get the right kind of treatment at the right hospitals instead of becoming prey to some private hospitals. For the healing of the Lord on all Covid patients.
3. Families of the people who died due to Covid, Migration problems, or suicides.
4. Teachers to have the needed wisdom and grace to handle the online classes or regular classes after such a long break.
5. Students to cope up with the pressure of classes and anxieties about their future.

Our Response – Helping Hand

1. We have to identify the people who lost their jobs to find alternative jobs.
2. Giving moral support to the teachers and others who are pressurized by online jobs.
3. Getting in touch with the students living in our locality to share their pressures and guiding them. If competent, we can help

them in their studies by free tuition.

4. Introducing Jesus Christ as the best friend to others so that they can get peace and grace to face all the situations.
5. Helping financially to those who got affected due to the lock down.

Communist leader Lenin said, “**The scenes which we see must motivate us into action.**” Yes, “**Prayer is no substitute for action.**” James 2:14-16.

I close with the Words of Wisdom from Solomon from Ecclesiastics 11:1,2 –

“Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. Give a serving to seven and also to eight, for you do not know what evil will be on the earth.”

But the verse takes a different impact through Eugene Peterson’s ‘The Message Bible’:

“Be generous: Invest in acts of charity. Charity yields high returns. Don’t hoard your goods; spread them around. Be a blessing to others. This could be your last night.”



P. Jebaraj, UESI Field Partner lives in Chennai

THE PANDEMIC: COVID 19 (The Biblical Perspective)



“The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider (Is 1:3).” Even the stork in heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtle dove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgement of the Lord” (Jer 8:7. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6). Don’t you think, in what way the title has a relation to the verses quoted? I know, you did think. Will you please continue reading till the end?

Holy God is not only Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, but also Loving and Righteous. Disobedience to the word of God being a very great sin, brought

condemnation and curse to mankind through Adam and Eve. As such, when God saw the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, He saved Noah, the just and perfect in his generation. „And his family alone escaped the great disaster of the flood, paving way for a new generation. But in the days of Abraham, when the outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah was very great and because their sin was very grievous, the Lord complied with the intercessory prayer of Abraham, saved Lot, the righteous man and his family resulting in the destruction of Admah and Zeboim and the surrounding cities by fire (Deut. 29:23; Jude 7).



To everything there is a season. (Ecc 3:1a) In God's plan, the seasons follow one after another. In fulfilment of prophecies, God the Father sent His only begotten son Jesus to the world to redeem us from the power and penalty of sin showing His divine love.(Jn 3:16) Now we are in the period of Grace. But most of the people in the world now dare to worship the creation rejecting the Creator and disobeying the call to respond to Him. God being righteous has to come again as a judge. But He is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9). On the contrary, because the

sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil (Ecc 8:11).The righteous God because of His loving kindness, has foretold the signs for His second coming so that all may repent.

As we find, most of the prophecies are being fulfilled and the signs foretold by Jesus himself are quite prevalent unlike in the past. Some that were mentioned are frequent wars, severe earthquakes, severe drought and famine, , all kinds of immoralities-homosexual marriages and adultery legalized in some countries - false teaching and teachers, false prophets, false worship, prevention to preach the

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gospel, famine to hear the Word of God, knowledge explosion, the love of many grows cold, signs in the heavens, pestilence /pandemic diseases etc. Are we not aware of all these things in our days?

Let us bear in our mind one thing. The Lord reigns and is in control. Nothing in this world happens automatically or accidentally. "...If there is a calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it? Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets"(Amos 3:6, 7). "Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?" (Lam 3: 37) says Jeremiah. So undoubtedly, the Pandemic Covid19 is a God-permitted one although it is not His wholehearted will. Also please read Lam 3:31-41. We should know that our Lord does nothing without a cause (Ezek 14:23; 1 Kin. 12:24; 2 Kin. 19:25; Is. 37:26).

Unlike the common sickness and diseases, this pandemic spread among crores of people and cause the death of lakhs all over the world. When a land sins against God by persistent unfaithfulness, He will stretch out His hand against it and His anger will bring forth severe judgements- the sword and famine, and wild beasts and pestilence (Ez. 14 :12-23). When David the king sinned against the Lord, the people

of the land suffered due to pestilence, and when he repented the land was saved (2 Sam 24:1-25; 1 Chr. 21:1-19). The above are written as examples for us.

Thus the solution for all the calamities is mostly laid upon us, the believers - Christians, His disciples (2 Chr 7: 13,14).People of other faith will hardly understand, whose minds are blinded lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God should shine on them.(2 Chr. 4 :4). Also please read Act 17:27-31. Now we see as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. (Mt 24:37-39; Lk 17: 26-30). History repeats itself.

Therefore, instead of probing into the reason as to how and where the coronavirus was created, and how the pandemic Covid19 has come, (Ref: Deut 29:29) let us prepare ourselves for the return of the Lord, preach His righteousness like Noah and warn the people like Jonah. Let us bear 1 Pet 2:9 in our mind and once again recommit ourselves to the Great Commission of our resurrected Saviour Jesus who is coming very soon. Are we ready to meet Him?



Mohanadoss R L, retired teacher lives with his wife in Pudukottai. As family they are very active in EU and EGF ministries.





Covid-19 : Transforming the Inside out

No schools, no colleges, no assignments, no projects, no outing, everything is blocked. Covid positive cases *are increasing* day by day enormously, everywhere, especially in red zones. Local authorities locked main roads, closed shops, and shopping malls. Even while maintaining social distance, wearing masks, and using sanitizers, there is some sort of fear, frustration, anxiety, and depression. Do we believe God has made everything beautiful in its time (Ecc 3:11)? Life may be unpredictable and sometimes filled with painful separations, but we have to take to heart that everything takes place under God's gaze. We can enjoy life and treasure the moments – the

good and the bad – for our loving God is with us.

We can choose to follow God or the world in this pandemic situation. Where there is faith in God, there is no fear. Faith and fear *never go* together. Fear keeps us away from the presence of God. Courage will follow when faith takes *the lead*. Even when things seem *confusing*, God's divine plans are unfolding for our good and for our God's honor and glory. In His big picture, everything is in perfect alignment. His ways are beyond our limited ability. We should remember that the troubles all around us, that is, what we can see right now is temporary, but the joys which are stored in heaven, which we have

not seen yet are permanent (2 Cor. 4:18). We all know that on 14 June 2020, the film star Mr. Susanth Singh Rajput, who studied at the Delhi Technological University, who also received his first nomination for the film fare award for best actor, for his titular role on the sports biopic of M.S. Dhoni (The Untold Story) died mysteriously.

NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) stated that almost 19.73 crores people are facing psychological problems, out of whom 4.57 crores are due to depression and 4.49 crores are due to anxiety. Similarly, a survey by Axis Media International reveals that due to the recent pandemic or lockdown 50 percent of families lost their jobs. Can't we react as children of God?

Security and significance are two essential elements of emotional health. If we feel we are safe from harm, rejection and loneliness, then we are blessed with those two essentials. Additionally, if we know that we are viewed with affection and appreciation by at least some of the people who matter to us, that gives us a sense of value. Consider what *God's* word says in Romans 8 about our security and significance. "If God *is* for us, who can be against us" ? (v31) Later we are told that nothing can separate

the believer "from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv35-39). These verses show how much God truly values us. No doubt, our greatest security is found in the love of the eternal God.

The Major Facts and Figures across the nations.

The COVID-19 crisis *wiped* out 6.7 percent of working hours globally in the second quarter of 2020 – which is equivalent to 195 million full-time workers. *Larger* reductions are foreseen in the Arab States (8.1 per cent, equivalent to 5 million full-time workers), Europe (7.8 per cent, or 12 million full-time workers) and Asia-Pacific (7.2 per cent, 125 million full-time workers). These results surpassed the effects of the 2008-2009 financial crisis. The sectors which are at high risk include – accommodation and food services, manufacturing, retail, business and administrative activities. The eventual increase in global unemployment during 2020 will affect future developments and policy measures. There is a high risk that the end-of-year figure will significantly be higher than the initial ILO *projected*, of 25 million. We must move fast, be *decisive*, and work together. The right and urgent measures could make the difference between survival and collapse."



More than four out of five people (81 percent) in the global workforce of 3.3 billion are currently affected by full or partial workplace closures. Workers and businesses are facing catastrophe, in both developed and developing economies," said ILO Director General Guy Ryder. According to a study, 1.25 billion workers are employed in the sectors identified as being at high risk of "drastic and devastating" increases in layoffs and reductions in wages and working hours. Many are in low-paid, low-skilled jobs, where a sudden loss of income is devastating. Regionally, the proportion of workers in these "at risk" sectors vary from 43 percent in the USA to 26 percent in Africa. The report cautions that some regions, particularly Africa, have higher levels of informality, which combined with a lack of social protection, high population density and weak capacity, pose severe health and economic challenges for governments. According to the study, large-scale, integrated, policy measures are needed, focusing on four pillars: *Supporting* enterprises, employment and incomes; stimulating the economy and jobs; protecting workers in the workplace; *and*, using social dialogue between government, workers and employers *find* solutions. "The choices we make

today will directly affect the way this crisis unfolds and so the lives of billions of people," he added. "With the right measures we can limit its impact and the scars it leaves. We must aim to build back better so that our new systems are safer, fairer and more sustainable than those that allowed this crisis to happen."

When his wife was dying of cancer, a faithful husband could not understand why a loving God would let his wife suffer, even when she had served Him faithfully, as a bible teacher and mentor to many. "Why did you let this happen?," he cried. Yet he continued to be faithful in his walk with God. He mentioned, "while I could not see God then, I recalled the times when God had helped and protected me." There might be instances when we cannot feel God's presence as His people, and we might wonder if God is with us in our troubles. That is when we must depend on what we can see – of His works in our lives, in the past and at present. They are the visible reminder of an invisible God – a God who is always with us and will answer in His own time and way.

The Mindset and Motto of students

As COVID-19 cases were *rising* alarmingly, many countries across the world decided to make telecommuting mandatory. The

working environment also had to abruptly change. People associate meaning to spaces. The lighting of a room, the layout of furniture, the type of furniture, and even the smell often sets our mood and triggers our “mode”. Some students also consider their homes as a non-learning environment.

Access to proper equipment, technology and other tools is a significant advantage when it comes to learning. Way before the COVID-19 pandemic, students who lack access to good internet and computers already lag academically. Internet and technical support, interest and initiation of the students, inputs insisted by the institutions, the creativity and content delivered by the faculty are some of the factors which enhance the effectiveness of online lectures.

Human beings are social creatures and we will always have this desire and need to belong. The remote working and isolation have already affected the productivity of the students. One student feels that physical interaction is necessary for learning. The lockdown has reduced crucial interactions with colleagues and teachers thus limiting any potential inputs in the research. The poor internet connection is affecting his thesis proposal writing. He finds it difficult to

consult his adviser regularly. Others simply miss the University and their friends. As mobility is restricted, although not completely halted, the sudden empty streets and public transportation magnified feelings of exclusion in a student. They see crowded trains and streets to “de-isolate [themselves] from cultural barriers” making it seem that they belong to the society.

Although most of the student population receives scholarships, a handful of students *are* dependent on part-time and even full-time *jobs to help them with* the daily expenses and “fill in gaps from [the] scholarships” as they live in most expensive cities. Few students save some savings and send back home to help their families. These sources are now practically non-existent and there is uncertainty on when such job options will resume. One student is worried that they might eventually burn through their savings.

Research shows that the COVID-19 lockdown had numerous impacts on the mental health, from feelings of loneliness, anxiety, negative emotional spirals, panic, and fear, to name a few. As the quarantine continues, the isolation intensifies feelings of loneliness, which is linked to 29-32 % increased *chance* of mortality. The moment they look



at their social media feed, they are inundated by deaths, loss, and suffering. The lack of focus led one student to try *medication, although* they feel that it is ineffective. Students are also fearful for their own safety and for their family's sustenance. A graduate mentioned his worry that his daughter is becoming impatient and aggressive due to the lockdown. These worries and concerns should never be dismissed as family stress has a negative impact on the academic performance of a student.

The Modes and Means to Overcome

In times of a crisis, positive emotions can induce novel and creative thoughts which will then lead to exploration and experimentation. Eventually, they develop effective coping strategies and increase their resilience against negative life experiences. To cope with the crisis and the emotional baggage, most of the students try to look at the bright side. Some students think the lack of commuting gives them "more time to explore writing a higher quality thesis". They are looking at the isolation as an opportunity to read more and write the thesis.

Taking small steps, setting flexible goals, and a personal reward system can be helpful to students. Even the "first week of transition was the most

difficult to design new routines and adapt to them quickly". In fact, there is a need to re-orient them during isolation. Some students had to create a new schedule while setting daily or weekly targets. At first, it was difficult, as one found out that "sticking to a very rigid schedule brought more stress" especially when the targets are unmet. Thus, they decided to develop a more flexible scheme.

The students encounter *work* productivity issues since they associate their bedrooms with rest and relaxation. Since the layout and room design can affect the person's mood, some students have resorted to re-orienting their small personal spaces. One student sets up a nook and designated it as his "specific workspace" while another arranged an area in their room so that it will "look more serious." Arranging the room depending on use – that corner for relaxation and this one for working – is the strategy of another student.

The work-from-home lifestyle can eventually bring monotony for some students. A distraction or a break is beneficial as motivation suffers without it. One student complains that the monotony has already affected his writing. With a lot of time in their hands, some students have started finding new

hobbies and developing new skills. One student started improving his cooking skills. Others started reading interesting literature, are watching documentaries and movies during breaks, or playing video games to relieve stress, and are even starting their own little urban garden. To help in easing their anxiety, a couple of students started meditating. Since isolation can lead to a very dormant lifestyle, one student makes sure he exercises regularly. A grocery trip *turns* into a relaxing walk in the park – of course with the face masks and social distancing.

Regular communication with advisers, colleagues, friends, and family has a positive impact on the academic performance of a student. The students agree. *The family* is seen as the best support and since video calls are more accessible nowadays, it has strengthened some bonds. In fact, one student wrote that the pandemic brought them closer to their family as they now set more time for video calls and online chat.

The pandemic has hindered various aspects in the life of a graduate student, but it has also opened new opportunities. A student believes it is a good time to reflect – “Where will I go? What should I do next? How can I be a positive influence

in the future?” The limitations brought by the pandemic allowed one student “to step out of his comfort zone and try new things.” In fact, a couple of students have been scanning the internet and signing up for online courses to strengthen their academic skills. The online classes allowed one student to have more access to more institutions than ever before. Although the pandemic impacted a student’s thesis proposal, this pushed him to constantly consult his supervisor and craft strategies and method to conduct his field work. The pandemic can be used as an opportunity for learning and growth. The fire is rekindled in one student to finish the degree as it can be his gift to the family back home.

Conclusion

Even when things seem confusing, *God’s* divine plans are unfolding for our good and for God’s honor and glory. How Impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods? (Rom. 11:33) Sometimes some issues are not finalized, relationships are not restored, and marriages/jobs are not settled, dear ones are not survived, disturbances arise in regular workplace, compensations are reduced or denied, regular fellowship gatherings are not conducted. Remember, in His big



picture everything is in perfect alignment. His ways are beyond our limited ability to understand and to trace.

There are two ways of life; a life spent pursuing riches versus a life grounded in loving God and giving generously. A life devoted to things is a dead life, a stump; a God shaped life is a flourishing tree. (Prov. 11: 28) What a picture of two ways of life, one flourishing and fruitful, one hollow and barren. The world may insist that material abundance equals good life. In contrast, God invites us to be rooted in Him, to experience His goodness and to flourish fruitfully.

As we have shaped our relationship with Him, God reshapes our hearts and desires, transforming us from the inside out. May the Lord help us to trust him and transform us for His glory.



- Dr Israel Raju Vuram,
Guntur (*Working as Professor of Mgt Studies, former Editor of AP Magazine, VidyarthiJwala, presently Literature Department Secretary, UESI-AP, Serving the lord with his wife Beulah and two children Hadassah and Enoch, and has been actively involving in students and church ministry for the last three decades, residing in Guntur, AP*)

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Handling Online Studies



An essay with points on how to properly prioritize during this painful unprecedented pandemic.

“As far as students are concerned, the most important thing you need to understand in this chaotic time is data management.”

Introduction

I’m sure that by this time you must have heard and read a lot about the influence of this pandemic; especially that it’s a lock down on your studies and career. However, it is worth hearing a few important points because this unprecedented time will linger for a while.

As far as students are concerned, the most important thing you need to understand in this chaotic time is data management.

The Knowledge Explosion

This pandemic has made a lot of influence on studies. Let’s look into it.

We are living in an era of a knowledge explosion. Where a knowledge explosion and data management become a number one issue that you need to tackle, education also coming online is unthinkable and adding to your screen time- resulting in self-saturation.

What all this suggests is that today’s learners, irrespective of age,

are actively finding fresh knowledge and are subjected to more material in a day than past generations. They are more susceptible to multitasking. In this context, our education is also coming in the online platform.



Advantages and disadvantages of Online Learning

The most common complaints that we hear from students and faculty at this time are it reduces classroom learning to mere substitution, and don't have luxury of physically coming and seeing and interacting with teachers and friends, which is a huge disadvantage, It's hard to engage, focus is divided , it easily gets boring, one's own motivation decreases and causes procrastination .

If we talk about the advantages of online schooling it reduces the overall time and cost of a lesson, students can access class anywhere any time, and students feel more one to one with professor not get lost in a big group.

In spite of all these advantages, studies have shown that it does not guarantee success compared to the traditional class room, and many drop out.

The reason behind the drop-out

Have you ever thought of what could be the reason for this?

For any student, whomever he /she may be, the path way to success looks like this:

MISSION: To get a PhD and start a new job.



GOAL: To Graduate



MILESTONE: Passing the Final Exam



TASK



STEP

Have a purpose and stick to it- Jesus did!

“As students when you set your own goal, you launch yourself into the future with an optimistic mindset.”

Those who are familiar with the Bible know that Jesus came to this world with a purpose. He had only one mission in his mind - to do the will of God the father. It was a much-focused effort. With that focus he planned 30 years for the 3-years ministry he did. There were many distractions for Jesus. There are times when the distractions were so much that he withdrew from the

distractions and went to a solitary place to focus on his mission.

So, the most important lesson you can learn is that Jesus had a mission, a purpose.

Prioritize your plan in order to find your purpose in life.

Each and every one of us is created with a purpose. So, having found out the purpose in life will give a great deal of motivation to focus on your task. As students when you set your own goal, you launch yourself into the future with an optimistic mindset. You get to define for yourself a reason why you should be studying, instead of being told a million times by parents and teachers.

These personal, long-term goals can serve as the motivation anchor to help you grind through the tough subjects, tests, and essays, giving you a larger perspective focus on building yourselves, making use of your time instead of wasting all of it on fleeting entertainment and easily available distractions.

Now let's look into the psychology of these distractions, these distractions affects you at the very foundational step and act as a barrier to climb other rings of the ladder of success.

Some of you have heard of Dopamine. It is a neurotransmitter in the

brain which helps us to seek the pleasure seeking activity, for reward, for motivation fine motor function executive function perseverance, etc. But when you are at home you have many things to distract you. The little activities, so accessible of looking up at your face book ,what's app, insta, text message,a snack, a small article ,listening to music . . . gives your brain a little jolt of dopamine and that feels good,brain values immediate rewards than distant rewards in medical terms it is called TEMPORAL DISCOUNTING, then it seeks more and more of those rewards to feel good, so there is a chance you repeat these behaviors over and over again .

NOW, HOW DO YOU OVER COME THIS?

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management system that encourages people to work with the time they have-rather than against it. Using this method, you break your work day into 25-minute chunks separated by five-minute breaks. These intervals are referred to as pomodoros. After about four pomodoros, you take a longer break of about 15 to 20 minutes. Usually the classes are for 45-60 minutes, so we can modify this technique and take a short break after that chunk of time, in which we allow no distractions, mindfully focusing on the



task engaging your senses actively. Taking at least bullet point notes while engaging in the class helps the student to make the tracks in the brain for better remembering/ memory?.Remember 20-20 rule, after each class one can get up and walk 20 stepsook at an object 20 feet away, engage in a conversation with a family member, walk out and get some fresh air, etc.

So, students who can overcome this distraction and complete the ground steps in a given task successfully reach the milestones and climb the ladder of their academic goals, which eventually leads to them finding their way to the mission of life easily. In other words, the student who engages the most is the one who is benefited the most.

Some of the foundational strategies are having a goal –(SMART) Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. Planning your strategy, organizing your learning environment, Pre-reading the lesson at least once, step up with your assessments, communicating frequently with your teacher, being your own advocate and documenting your achievements are important .

Managing your own energy level is very important. As a student, this can only be achieved by following the order the Creator mandated for his children. If we look around we can see our God is a God of order. Having a specific routine for your day, meal timings and giving due importance to your sleep will maintain the circadian rhythm. Many bodily functions operate based on a circadian clock. Everyday functions – such as sleepiness, wakefulness and hunger – and many hormone functions are based on a circadian rhythm. Take time to listen to what your body and mind need. It is very important to fuel your body with healthy food, with adequate protein and water intake. Daily activity by moving your body will maintain the energy.

In conclusion , to be an effective online learner, you should have a purpose driven life, you should define your purpose, define your goals, plan to achieve your mile stones by not being distracted to complete the short term tasks. Maintaining a healthy body, healthy mind and healthy emotions are the prerequisites to it.

Sonimol Anil, MSN-PMHNP-BC is a Psychiatry Mental Health & Practitioner, (Wayne State University, MI)



CONTAGIOUS!

"God wants us to become contagious . . . who will first catch his love and then urgently and infectiously offer it to all who are willing to consider it." - Bill Hybels.

The contagious and infectious novel coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan, China in late 2019. This virus is so contagious that it has spread all over the world within a few months and has set off a global pandemic. Everyone fears being infected by the virus. The Government declared a lockdown and the Health Ministry announced social distancing rules; we should keep a distance of at least one meter between us. This made me ponder on the word 'contagious'. Is this virus alone contagious? No, there are so many things even more

contagious than the virus. Your smile is contagious. Enthusiasm is contagious. Fear is contagious. Faith is contagious. Even our attitude is contagious.

To be contagious we first need to be infected:

The only person who can infect coronavirus is the one who is already infected. You cannot give someone what you do not have. Likewise, you cannot love someone unless the love is in you. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.' Luke 12:31. Love is contagious yet not everybody can give it to others. Only someone who has love can show love. Do you have the love of Christ? Do you love like Him?



To infect we need to be contacted:

The word ‘contagious’ comes from the Latin word -contagio “touching or contact.” Only through contact we get infected. The idea behind social distancing is to avoid contact with others to avoid infection. “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10 ESV). The Bible tells us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves and to do good especially to the household of faith because they are in contact with us. It is very hard to do something good for people we do not know from unknown places. On one hand, this lockdown can be an opportunity for us to be with our family members and infect them with the good qualities in

us. On the other hand, despite the lockdown and social distancing, we can still keep in contact (through social media) and infect our love, faith, and hope to others who are not with us physically. We cannot be contagious without being in contact.

Be aware of what you have transmitted:

Words are contagious. Fear is contagious. Attitude is contagious. We do not even realize how children pick up slang words, bad attitudes, and fear. They learn from us! If you dislike the qualities of the people around you, there is a very high chance that they are imitating you. It is likely that you infected them. We should be aware of whether our contagiousness is impacting others in positive or negative aspects.

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What good qualities can we infect others with?

Without much effort, we can infect enthusiasm and optimism. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28 ESV). If you are a born-again Christian but always pessimistic, you have to check your relationship with God. A good Christian cannot afford to be always pessimistic, for God is Sovereign in everything. It is natural for human beings to be emotionally down when we are locked down and are less mobile. Yet, we can take this opportunity to pursue our passions, new skills, new hobbies, and infect our neighbors with our enthusiasm.

We are so blessed to be in this century that anyone can learn as much or even more than those who are in university, through online programs. There are millions of free books available online, millions of videos on YouTube that can help us improve our knowledge and skills. There will be no excuse for us to offer to the next generation if we do not use these opportunities. Likewise, if our Christian life doesn't infect others with the love of Jesus Christ there will be no excuse for us to tell Jesus when we meet Him.

You are contagious. What are you infecting others with?



Lamminlun Haokip, staff worker of UESI Manipur, based in Chandel District.

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