

February 2020

Dear Prayers Partners,

I believe no one would have expected that during this New Year Festival, the entire Chinese society will fall into panic and lose peace. The outbreak of the new coronavirus infection in Wuhan not only claimed the lives of over a hundred people in just a few weeks, but also necessitated the lockdown of the city, the cancellation of trips around the country and the suspension of all religious activities (including church meetings), and also led to price surging of masks to more than tens of dollars each. All these things that were hard to imagine in the past are happening in an instant, which really prompt us to the need of earnest prayer.

Although the epidemic situation in Hong Kong has not been as severe as in China, the entire city is enveloped with worries and distress, far exceeding the joyous atmosphere of the Chinese New Year. School suspension, stock market crash, Government's encouragement to work from home, shortage of masks and disinfectants, fatigue and fear of frontline medical staff, coupled with the severe rift in society caused by the anti-extradition law in the past six months, all making the situation in Hong Kong worse than ever, and are really reminding us that we have to pray earnestly.

However, we thank the Lord because we believe with no doubt that the Lord sits enthroned and everything is still under His sovereign control. We also thank the Lord for allowing us to live and bear witness to Him and to experience His wonderful works in this age. I sincerely hope that all our co-workers can rely on the strength of the Lord to face the challenges from all sides. Our seminary, like other colleges and universities in Hong Kong, has temporarily suspended classes, encouraging students to study at home and to take classes online.

The scourge of plague is mentioned many times in the Bible. King David, when facing the plague from the Lord due to the census he had taken, made the following two responses. First, David confessed before God, he said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house." (2 Samuel 24:17, ESV) Also, David worshiped and made offerings to the Lord, as stipulated in 2 Samuel 24:25, "David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel." (ESV) In the same way, our best response today as we face the menacing epidemic is to humble ourselves before God to confess our sins, pray and worship Him. Here are some specific prayer requests, and as we pray together in one heart, may we experience the power and mercy of the Lord.

- (1) **Please pray that the outbreak can be put under control**, especially for cities such as Wuhan, which has been imposed a lockdown. There are a seminary (Central South Theological Seminary) and many churches in Wuhan. Please pray for the seminary and the pastors and believers in the city to bear good witness to the Lord during this trying period.



- (2) **Pray for frontline medical staff.** The pressure and danger they are facing are beyond description. In 2003, during the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, the willingness of the medical staff to give up their lives have saved many lives. We need to pray especially for Christian medical staff, asking the Lord not only to grant them strength to work, but also to live a good testimony for the Lord in these hard days.
- (3) **Pray for the leaders of our country and Hong Kong** so that they can be wise and caring in leading Government officials to resolve this epidemic. Pray that the Lord will humble them before the disaster of nature and guide them to know the one true God who creates everything in heaven and earth.
- (4) **Pray for ourselves.** Our God is omniscient and omnipotent. There is no accident in Him. He allows disasters and difficulties to come to remind us to humble ourselves and hold fast to His promises. Listen to the following King Solomon's prayers after the temple was built,

"If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemies besiege them in the land at their gates, whatever plague, whatever sickness there is, whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house, then hear from heaven your dwelling place and forgive and render to each whose heart you know, according to all his ways, for you, you only, know the hearts of the children of mankind, that they may fear you and walk in your ways all the days that they live in the land that you gave to our fathers."
(2 Chronicles 6:28-31, ESV)

Finally, please continue to pray for Evangel Seminary. Our properties in Kowloon Tong have not yet been sold. We still have to pay hundreds of thousands bank interest every month. Pray that the Lord will move more brothers and sisters who are willing to give or to offer interest-free loans for us to reduce our interest payments. In addition, now is the time to recruit new students for the next school year. Pray that in this difficult time, the Lord will call many believers to devote themselves in His kingdom as preachers of His Word.

In this new year, may the Lord grant all of you health, peace and strength.

Together we serve in Christ,

KWOK Man-chee

February 18, 2020, Hong Kong