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APBF is a regional organization of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). We represents over 33,000 local churches and 65 conventions in 22 countries across Asia Pacific.

APBF...
...promotes fellowship, cooperation and service amongst Baptists.
...stimulate and coordinate evangelism.
...assist in consultation and planning for various ministry programs.
...to function as a regional organisation of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).
As the world was treading on the path of recovery from the devastating impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, Russia launched a full-scale invasion in Ukraine on the morning of February 24, 2022. This is being termed as the biggest invasion of one country by another in Europe since World War II. Key cities, public spaces, government establishments and residential buildings have been bombarded by the Russians as the Ukrainian forces fight back valiantly. Several hundreds of individuals have lost their lives while thousands have been divided from their families. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has reported that 1.3 million people have fled from Ukraine to neighbouring countries in search of shelter – the biggest refugee crisis that the world is witnessing in a century! It is also reported that the conflict will significantly exacerbate food insecurity and poverty in the world, with the scale and urgency of basic needs in the region increasing on a daily basis.

As the situation and facts change by the minute, it is easy to despair on hearing such tragic news. Social media is flooded with images and videos of the mass destruction in Ukraine and this can sometimes feel overwhelming.

However, as believers in Christ, we can trust in the sovereignty and goodness of our God. Psalm 31 reminds us of the time King David faced a difficult time in his life. From a situation of grave danger, David prayed for deliverance, trusted God for protection, and found courage through faith. Just like David, we too live in a world full of afflictions, adversities, suffering and conditions that cause alarm. David paints a beautiful picture of God’s dependability in this particular psalm. We are reminded of God’s protection, steadiness and reliability (v. 2 & 3), God’s faithfulness (v.5), God’s steadfast love (v. 7, 16, 21), God’s abundant goodness (v. 19), and God’s sheltering presence (v. 20) in the midst of conflict. David was relying on God to see him through whatever danger or difficulty was driving him to his knees and pushing him to prayer. Just like David, we too can depend completely on God to see us through any situation – including the situation of war and political crisis!

Dear APBF family, it is crucial that as a family of Baptists, we stand with those who are suffering and fervently pray for peace. Therefore, let us not despair but lift up the Ukraine-Russian conflict to the Lord. He is sovereign over all, and in His hands are the hearts of kings and rulers. Let us continue to trust in the Lord’s sovereignty and goodness in bringing a swift conclusion to the crises and for order to be restored. He is supreme indeed, and He will reign over all pain, suffering, adversities, and transgressions!

Let us continue to fervently pray for His peace to prevail in the region; for wisdom over the leaders; for protection and provision over the lives of those affected; for the churches who are working towards providing spiritual support as well as physical aid; and for His people to extend compassion in both word and deed.

May we all take comfort in the words of King David: “Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, ‘There is no salvation for him in God.’ Selah. But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the Lord, and He answered me from His holy hill. Selah. I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the Lord sustained me.” (Psalm 3:2-5)

Bygg A. Sangme
Vice President, APBF &
Chief Editor, APBF Digest
Greetings to you in the matchless name of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. God in His love and faithfulness has seen us through another year. Thinking back, the Covid-19 pandemic caused massive global social and economic disruptions in 2020 and 2021. Many countries in the world are struggling to cope with the pandemic. However, there are also countries in which we begin to see a glimmer of hope for a gradual recovery from the impact of Covid-19, all-be-it in a new-norm, the world is faced with yet another crisis, the tension of war between Russia and Ukraine, with impending repercussive impact on many countries and the world economy at large. Almost exactly a year after the world was shocked by the brutality and atrocities committed by the junta of Myanmar, it is again shaken by the aggression of the invading Russian army ordered by Vladymir Putin against Ukraine. This war was everything Evil could be described—injustice, aggression, brutality, violence, bloody, senseless loss of lives, destruction, and devastation! Putin has all kinds of excuses for invading its smaller and weaker neighbor, but almost the whole world, knows what the truth is. On the other hand, look at the Ukrainian men and their resilience, they are so full of chivalry and valor, ever willing to sacrifice their lives for country and family.

The war may seem senseless and unnecessary, but God knows what it is about. He is in control directing the world’s events through men, machines and movements towards His divine plan and purpose. Almost immediately after the war started, the General Secretary and I called for a prayer meeting. Though not well attended, we sincerely wanted to stand together in prayer with and for the Ukrainians. For one, Ukraine has the second largest Baptist population in Europe. A second prayer rally was called on 11th March and this time, we saw leaders from all over coming with one heart and one voice to seek God’s mercy and grace upon Ukraine. We even had our European Baptist Federation General Secretary, Alan Donaldson to address us and to give us first-hand information on the rescue and relief efforts for the 2 million refugees, mostly woman and children who have left Ukraine. We want to extend our prayer network that every Baptist in our region join hands and hearts to pray for God’s divine intervention.

Let us pray that evil be exposed and truth and righteousness will surface and prevail.
Let us pray for the refugees that they will not be exploited that people who volunteer to help are sincere and genuine and not pour salt into wounds.
Let us pray for wisdom and fairness in distributing the aid resources and supplies.
Let us pray for God’s protection on innocent lives of the men, women and children.
Let us pray for peace to be restored to the land of Ukraine and the surrounding countries.
Let us pray for hearts to turn back to God, call on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

In times like these, let us do more than pray. Let us also give of our substance. I have asked the Singapore Baptists to pray and to give. I trust that conventions will arise and challenge our members to give towards our European brethren in need. Let us give as a Federation. Please send the donations to our APBF account—earmarked for Ukraine. APBF had already sent our first tranche of money through BWA to be channeled to the European Baptist Federation who is coordinating the rescue and relief efforts. I am sure it will be an offering that will be pleasing and acceptable to God! Thank you and God bless.

For donation banking details, go to apbf.org/page/donate/ and indicate “For Ukraine” in the payment details.
Pray for Ukraine & Myanmar
In 2022 started off with hope the new year will usher the world to newer possibilities as the world battled the Covid Pandemic. Who would have imagined, thousands of lives would be dramatically changed over night, especially Eastern Europe with the invasion of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin.

You will recall, beginning of February 2020, the WHO announced the Pandemic due to Covid-19. The battle against the virus brought the whole world in a stand still. A year later, in the morning of February 1st, 2021 as the world was battling to contain the virus, the Myanmar Military staged a coup in Myanmar bringing the nation that has seen democracy into another uncertainty. It’s population of 54 million people was ushered to military aggression. Come 2022, on Feb. 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine and began the invasion of Ukraine.

As the fear of invasion and the threat of Putin loomed in Ukraine, Yuriy Kulakevych, foreign affairs director of the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church, told his congregation on Sunday, February 20, at God’s Peace Pentecostal Church in the capital, Kyiv, “Go closer to meet those who are against you or fighting you,” “We are not only to enjoy peace ourselves, but to share it.”

Christianity Today records a prayer request from Donetsk that reads: “First, to stop the aggressor. But then for peace of mind, to respond with Christian character and not from human hate.” Such is the challenge that in these uncertain times, only God and the prayer of believers can keep us calm, hopeful and loving.

The All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches, the largest Protestant community in Ukraine, with 2,272 churches began to pray. Jayson Casper in Christianity Today on February 24, 2022 wrote, “As Russia Invades Ukraine Pastors Stay to Serve, Pray and Resist.”

Pastor Vasyl Furtu in Vyshneve, near Kyiv preached, “Christians should not be intimidated.” He reminded believers of God’s presence, his strength, and support reminding the promise of God in Isaiah 41:13, where God says he takes hold of our right hand.

Pastor Pavlo Marchenko in Shostka, 200 miles northeast of Kyiv near the border of Russia and Belarus asked, “Why does God allow war?” Preaching on Psalm 135:6, the pastor reassured listeners that, “God is not indifferent to Ukrainians. But at times he will “disturb” us, said the pastor, that people might turn to him in repentance, both for themselves and their people.”
“The church is alive. God is alive and therefore we have hope. God is indeed supreme, and He will reign over all pain, suffering and wrong doings.”

True! God is not indifferent. God is ever present. He loves His people and He will rescue those in trouble. He will reign supreme. May we pray with our brothers and sister of Ukraine that neither Putin or anyone can separate them from the love of God.

In the meantime, it is critical that we are Baptist family stand together with the people of Ukraine.

BWA General Secretary, Dr. Elijah Brown challenges the world Baptist family by saying, “As brothers and sisters within a global Baptist family, we are all called to be both peacemakers and people of prayer.” He adds, “As one Baptist family rooted in Jesus Christ as Lord, we bear witness to the biblical truth that ‘if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.’ It is vital for Baptists around the world to stand with those who are suffering and to fervently pray for peace. We remain grateful for both Russian and Ukrainian Baptists who are part of the Baptist World Alliance and are demonstrating faithful Gospel witness in their communities.”

From a recent visit of Polish Baptists, Rev. Alan Donaldson, General Secretary of European Baptist Federation reports:

In Poland, you feel the breath of this war. The voices of the Polish people cry out for freedom for Ukraine. The repeated conversation is that freedom for Ukraine is freedom for all. The border transactions are of women and children arriving from Ukraine whilst Ukrainian men gather at the Polish border ready to cross in buses to join the army. The tension of the unfolding neighbouring war fills the borderlands. Meanwhile, the local Baptist church in Chelm is filled with life. It is not tension that you feel as you enter the building but life, peace and joy. Children laugh and play while mothers prepare for onward journeys. The church piano plays a variety of tunes, none of them hymns, as the children practise their piano lessons.

APBF Family, the church is alive. God is alive and therefore we have hope. God is indeed supreme, and He will reign over all pain, suffering and wrong doings.

Listen to what one of the Ukrainian Baptist leader leading the effort in humanitarian response has to say, “The senseless violence and conquest are difficult for many to process as they flee for their lives. Many do not know how to communicate what is going on to their children who are scared by the events and by seeing their adult loved ones in states of panic. The days and weeks ahead will be extremely challenging.” Yet, he prayed, “May the Lord keep us all! Especially those who are now on the front lines, people on the battlefield and those who are stuck on the way! Have mercy Lord! We don’t stop praying!”

Let us continue to pray for Ukraine Baptists while also remembering that Russian Baptists are also undergoing the pain.

Evangelical Focus of Europe on March 2 reported, and I quote:

The Euro-Asian Federation of Evangelical Christian-Baptist Unions, which includes the Baptist Union of Russia and the Baptist Union of Ukraine, wrote a letter to Vladimir Putin on 24 February.

“Mr. President! Our letter is motivated by deep concern and anxiety for the fates of the peoples of many countries who may be affected by the devastating consequences of the military conflict between Ukraine and Russia”, it says.

“We propose to stop and sit down at the negotiating table in order to find a peaceful solution to the global confrontation, which has become particularly acute in recent days”.

The letter also asks for God’s “wisdom” to reach peace, bringing “happiness, prosperity and real protection to many people in Russia, Ukraine and other countries”.

As family of God, would you pray for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Russia? Would you stand in the gap and pray to our God for His mercies and an immediate peace to come over Eastern Europe.

Meanwhile, do follow the Baptist World Alliance homepage, the European Baptist Federation Facebook Page and the Facebook Page of APBF to get updates on the work of relief and support our Baptist Churches in Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Moldova, Hungary and others.

You can do your bit by praying and give. Do visit the homepage of the Baptist World Alliance or go directly to this link:

https://www.baptistworld.org/prayforpeace/

We are a family as Baptist believers and we remain the family of God as One Lord, One Faith and One Baptism.
Exodus 33:12-31, God shows Himself as a comet of glory blazing all his goodness, mercy and compassion in front of Moses. God is the alpha Trail Blazer who blazes trail for us to follow though. He kicked started the whole process and progress of redemption for the fallen humanity. Exodus 33: 19-21 directs our attention to something significant about God, “And the LORD said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, ...There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

God showed Moses His back when He went ahead toward the future where His fulness awaits. The trail blazer, the alpha and the omega God has called us to live with a view beyond today and to project our sight beyond the penetration of our empirical observations. God has gone ahead of us to a point in the future where He will meet us face to face someday.

Jesus, “the author and finisher of our faith” Hebrews 12:2, will lead the whole process towards that glorious future where all hopes fulfilled.

Jurgen Moltmann, a theologian of future as hope says, “The Christian hope is directed towards a nouvum ultimum, towards a new creation of all things by the God of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In Christian hope, it is about the expectation of some event completely new, “category Novum”, a future is not issued from “history of the old”, and different from what has been and it is hope for a time where Christ will make all things new. For this reason, Moltmann prefers to speak of God as future possibility rather than present entity. Moltmann says, “Caught between the experiences of His presence and of His absence, we are seeking His future, which will solve this ambiguity that the present cannot solve.”

For Moltmann concurs simultaneously that, Christ is the “coming One” and not the Christ who will come again just as he came 2000 plus years ago - He was, he is and he “is to come” as in Revelation 1.4. The God of hope is not the God ‘who was,’ ‘who is’ and who ‘will be’ as he was as the Greek’s sense of "Zeus was, Zeus is, and Zeus will be". 4 In the eyes of hope the best is yet to be delivered. Yes, in the depth of hope the maximum degree of excellence is yet to be called out from the extract of humanity. For this reason, one anticipates being on the edge of one’s seat for God “to do a brand-new thing” for the world. Isaiah 43.19. NLT. This anticipation in hope is not just passive waiting but it involves creative imagination and action to transform the gridlock present.
As of now, Jeremiah 12 is right. Endless troubles follow us running as fast as horses it is impossible to keep up on our won strength. Jeremiah comes up with a flurry of south paw jabs against the justice of God and charges him with negligence: Jeremiah 12:1-2 read as thus,

“Righteous are You, O Lord, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit; You are near in their mouth But far from their mind."

Jeremiah points his fingers at God and accused Him, “what kind of justice is this when the wicked prosper and evil doers thrive and they get away with a lot of everything?” God tells him to be tough, more troubles are coming in verse 5,

“If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, Then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, In which you trusted, they wearied you, Then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?”

Wicked people prosper and they get away with some of everything. We have suffered so much in the unprecedented years of global pandemic. We are in some sustained season of adversity. The proverbial saying, “behind every dark cloud there is a silver lining.” Not always. Sometimes behind that very dark cloud there some more lightning and thunder coming our ways. Help may not be around the corner. But we can project our curve vision beyond all the armageddonistic troubles and see the God “who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:6 NIV),

Because, a Christian does not take orders from what has been but instead will take orders from the promised future directly because of the belief in a God who is to come and not a repetition of his last epiphany. Believers emigrate out of the power of the past by orienting into a brand-new future, i.e. to the fullness of the “…One who is to come” (Revelation 1:4). Thus, in the end, God’s justice will triumph.

Hope is where action for change and transformation can be ignited. Through hope, we spring into action and act upon that hope. In some humble ways, I have always wanted to mediate a handshake between the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Church and larger body of Christ like, the Baptist World Alliance and Asia Pacific Baptist Federation. Our hope in action is rewarded when we are accepted as a full member of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation APBF leader summit, Extraordinary General Meeting, August 20, 2021 along with Zomi Baptist Convention, Myanmar and Convention of Chinese-Pilipino Southern Baptist Convention; when the Baptist World Alliance welcomed the KKBC into membership along with Baptist Alliance of Barbados and Guadeloupe Baptist Federation on October 21, 2021 during BWA’s General Council Closing session.

Furthermore, Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary was granted life time membership by International Association for Theological Accreditation (An International Agency for Theological Accreditation), in the M.Div and M.A level with effect from September 8, 2021; IATA has also granted Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School & Collage the much-needed accreditation; and the Karen Refugee Committee is now a member of Asia Pacific Network of Refugees. Many consider Covid 19 Global Pandemic as a ‘Mark Time, March’ but for us it is a ‘Giant Leap’. We have also witnessed the births of: SPHERE Institute, MA in Soci-Cultural Program, June 7, 2021; Online Master of Arts in Ministry (M.Min.) 21 September, 2021. In all these I am glad to be an imperfect copy/image of the Trail Blazer God.

Finally, we cannot go forward by looking backward. When we go forward while looking backward, we will stumble and fall. History is not a monument but a signpost toward the future. A signpost, no matter how significant it is, it is not meant for stopping. Some people stopped at signpost like Terah stopped at Harran compromises sign for destination. Hope on, hop on, hoist on.

“Hope is where action for change and transformation can be ignited.”
EVALUATING THE PAST TO GUIDE THE FUTURE

by Rev. Chin Lee Yean, General Secretary of Malaysia Baptist Convention

Before we can say much about the future, we need to evaluate the past and get a grip on where it is now. Evaluations are involve in our everyday lives. When we go shopping, we evaluate the fruit or meat before we buy it; when we are driving, we select the shortest or cheapest route; we also evaluate and compare the offers broadcasted by the advertisements as well as the content of the product before clicking the yes button. Living in the ocean of information, evaluation is an essential part of all our daily life. People spend much of their lives doing evaluation and making future decisions. Evaluation represents a huge information we received, analysed, discussed and finalized as projection of the future. Yet, it is significantly different if we look at evaluation that is done now and those in the past, which may be, a century or even millennium ago. Therefore, we will look into the most common problems the churches faced today or in this one two decades, and develop strategies that will help churches to face the new challenges in the future.

Churches today are facing all sorts of problems. In fact, many challenges and issues churches faced are similar to each other. We will evaluate and identify the core issues that are hindering the continuous growth of churches today and the solution for resolving them. History reviewed that the most common problems as many scholars discovered over the centuries were disciplership, leadership, church vision and mission. Today, we are evaluating the most recent incident and the impact it brought to the Christian community throughout the world. Then, we will create a reasonable perspective on how little has changed and how much remains to be changed, and how much more will be changing in the near future, for the better or worse. The most recent issue that affected people of all levels around the world is COVID-19. It was first discovered in Wuhan, Hubei Province, the People’s Republic of China in late 2019, and then rapidly spread to many countries around the world in early 2020, gradually becoming a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everything globally. The consequences were sudden and severe. Many people lost their jobs, and others needed to adjust to the new norm, “working from home” as offices closed. Only those declared to be essential were allowed to continue to work in hospitals and grocery stores. All this new protocols are to reduce the spread of the virus.
COVID-19 has highlighted the interdependence of all people and the natural world. The pandemic’s disruption presents an opportunity to rebuild the whole of society globally. At the same time, it also plays a new role as a sharp wake-up call to everyone. This is especially true for the least-developed countries who only have one or two doctors for every 10,000 people. Who will be their saviour in this severe situation? How will the churches respond? And, what will drive future church growth in the post-pandemic era?

It’s an important question to ask, because for most church leaders the pandemic has been a question of adaptation and survival, both personal and organizational. The pandemic has been both discouraging and frustration for many church leaders. We noticed that the numbers of those willing to return to church post pandemic are very low. There may be a drop of 20-30% in church attendance in 2020 (a verbal survey among pastors at Malaysia Baptist churches). There’s no question that many habits and patterns are being reset right now, but with every obstacle comes opportunity. We can’t simply return to the previous situation.

Today, in this digital world, many churches had neglected the impact of digital technology in our daily spiritual development. Technology is always moving forwards and increasingly, ministries are going online. We can buy, sell, learn, transact, official matters and communicate online. It showed that now primarily we have access to online information. But many churches are slow and not updated as regard to their online ministry. Presently, people like to use social media. Technology and digital ministry are the future church trends. So, whether we like it or not, we need to recognize that social media, the internet, and digital ministry, are moving forward much faster than we can imagine. We need to get our digital ministry ready, and this will help us reach more people, and connect with different people as well. We’ll reach them in new ways that we have never been able to do so before.

So what’s going to accelerate the growth of the future church? Before the global crisis hit in 2020, most churches were struggling in their growth. Even the cutting-edge churches, which made up the majority of growing churches in the last two decades, were finding growth much harder than it used to be. The best that church can offer to the world is the purpose driven life. The focus is to introduce people to a relationship with Christ, and the life-changing discipleship. Churches that focus on this program will grow. Churches that lost their identity, vision and mission won’t grow. For years, churches have grown through preaching great message. Of course, excellent preaching still matters.

The problem is that great message is no longer sufficient. What used to drive church attendance will no longer do so, because everyone now knows whatever message you’re preaching will be live-streamed or available later online. Moreover, they can choose from a million others just a click away.

Our culture is drowning in the ocean of information, and it is found everywhere. When people come to church, they’re not just looking for information. Definitely, people need information, but fewer are looking for information about God; they’re looking for an experience of God. Churches that focus on something more than head knowledge in their services will likely be more interesting. Churches that emphasize on discipleship will see greater success than churches that just invite you to merely attend their service.

In this high-end technology and information explosion society, what can influence people deeply are community and connection. A year into the pandemic, people are more isolated than ever. There is a dramatic increase in mental health problem, and many are suffering from the after effect of it. Every church should be running to fill that hole. Community means connecting people to each other in groups, serving together, friendship and relationships. Nobody should be disconnected as this is human nature. Connection means that even for those joining online or attending in person for the first time, the primary job becomes connecting with them and then helping them find connection with each other. In the same way the purpose of a dating app isn’t to get people to connect with the app, but with each other. The goal of the church should be to get people to connect with one another, not just the senior leader. Therefore, the competitive advantage of the local church isn’t just good preaching, but also the community and connections of people in the church.

When faced with challenges and changes, we have to make decisions that often force us to admit our mistakes and learn to innovate. Here is a word of caution to all spiritual leaders, we need to constantly recognize the past mistake and as we ponder about the future, we must not repeat the same in the future. Positively, the journey over the last two years can be a joyous and marvellous challenge as it drives us to improve and learn from our experiences of successes and mistakes. This will upgrade the quality of our decisions in the future and spur us into a pathway of spiritual growth.

Finally, I like to close by affirming that Lesson learned from previous mistake and past experience, is a guide to our future.

“We need to constantly recognize the past mistake and as we ponder about the future, we must not repeat the same in the future.”
FAITH & WITNESS IN A CHALLENGING TIME

by Rev. Dr. Zelhou Kehno, General Secretary of Nagaland Baptist Church Council Missions

The last two years has been very challenging time for all of us. Covid-19 is undeniably one of the most deadliest diseases humanity has ever seen. It continues to affect the lives and livelihood of people appallingly across the world. Maximum discussions focus towards the apprehension of catching the infection, hygiene, overpopulated hospitals and shut down of all kinds.

We all have heard that this pandemic is a divine punishment which has been unleashed on humanity. This notion have spread rampanty and have become the cause of negativity, distress and despair in the minds of people. We have also heard that it is ploy used by people who have the capacity to control the system for their benefits. These have cause people to go against the system and create suspicious mind.

Yet, we must not forget that we have been there before. Think of the Spanish plague of the last century which ravaged the global community. Pandemics, epidemic, disasters and natural calamity has been part of our life then and now. A story narrated during the Spanish plague stood among others in a Naga village. “When the whole villagers escaped to the jungle for fear of their lives, it was the Christians who remained in the village to take care of the sick, the affected and bury the dead.” Such a powerful witness and service is talked about when coronavirus hit the region. What remained as the talk of the difficult time is not so much of the plague but Christian witness and service. This is the power of faith and witness.

In this fallen world, what is not the problem of sin? God certainly is not silent or unaware of what is happening to this fallen world, a world that has become an architect of her own destiny. In a time such as this, when life as we know has turned upside down, it is crucial that we have a good Bible-based theology. This will help us to chart our way to come out with the right response because theology deals with God and the condition of humanity and how we must respond to the world.
Yes, sin and disobedience, greed and selfishness are the major cause of all the problems we find ourselves in. But our personal faith should lead us to believe in a loving God rather than in a God who is always running after us to destroy them. We must choose to listen to the God Almighty who was there in our fear and in our suffering and believe that he is with us—listening to our prayers for help and healing. As we grieve and mourn for the many precious lives who were taken away from us by the pandemic, we also praise God for sustaining us in his grace and mercy.

If there is anything which we can learn, it is this, the pandemic is a time for us to pause and realize that we are not in charge and have no control over our destiny. Our might, our discoveries and our smartness cannot outsmart God, he is the creator. In humility and in repenting spirit we must learn what we must learn as a community of faith.

The crisis is changing Christianity. It has taught us new form of doing church and conduct our transactions creatively without losing the content of the message. However, the changing scene that is taking place is much concerning than simplistic answers we may like to offer. There are complexities involved, the least of which are an overwhelming pressure and thinking process involved.

Paul writes in Romans 13: 1-2, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” In verse 12, he points out: “The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” This calls for the church to reinforce her witnessing gear and become more aggressive. It is an opportunity for the gospel message to be presented in action. For a time will come for those coming after us who will be asking what has the church done?

It is interesting that the apostle relates obedience to authorities directly to the end times; he is addressing things that are very relevant to the present day. It’s precisely because of the issue of authority and the dictates that people are discussing, arguing and speculating today. Everyone seems to be an expert and with this attitude, we have become cynical to those who should be telling what to do. I do not want to get into the viewpoints here. But I do believe that we need to submit to authorities, although we can also exercise our legal rights as citizens of a democracy and speak up. Rumors will die but how the church-the believing community respond in a given crisis will be recounted.

The Coronavirus pandemic has and is changing people’s worldview. The prophet Isaiah once said: “And it will growl over it that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even light is darkened by its clouds” (5:30). The atmosphere has never seemed so depressing. The world is becoming darker. And in this situation, our faith and our witness should shine brighter.

We are heading to the end which is our ultimate goal. The media and the secular mind are also talking about an ultimate turning point. This coronavirus pandemic spans the whole world and it not only gives us new perspective but turning our world upside down.

We sure do not have all the answers to what the world is baffling with today. But we can provide hope and assurance that God is in control. Romans 8: 26-27 says, “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He interceded for the saints according to the will of God.”

Covid-19 has disconnected us in many ways. But it has brought us closer to God for those who acknowledge the Sovereignty and Lordship of Christ. In a situation such as this, the church cannot shudder. We must respond to the challenging times through our witness and caring ministry. The stronger ones turning to the weaker and developing section of the communities so that we reach out to the world around us. This is an opportunity for the world to see that the church of Jesus Christ is united, alive and well even in difficult time. This will be our biggest witness, so help us God.
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REGISTRATION OPENING SOON
10TH ASIA PACIFIC BAPTIST CONGRESS
(Hybrid- In-person & Online)

5-7 SEPT. 2022
SOUTH KOREA

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WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER!
· BLDG THE BODY IN LOVE.
· COLLABORATING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD.
· UNITED IN THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.
· BUILD CHRIST’S BODY - THE CHURCH.

THEME:
STRONGER TOGETHER
 Eph. 4:16

PRAY

PLAN

PARTICIPATE

* in-person limited to only 500 delegates.
* first come, first serve