

Lurgan Free Presbyterian Church



"For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" Rev. 1:9



How Do We Make Sense of the Coronavirus?

In the book of Job we are reminded, "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward". The sense is that as certainly man is born so he will have trouble. It is certain and it is relentless.

Crack open a history book and you'll soon discover that as dire and as difficult as things may seem today, the world has faced much worse in the past. One of the deadliest pandemics occurred between A.D. 249 and 262, when up to 5,000 people in Rome died – per day. A billion people have died in war. Fifty million people died in the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918. But the greatest of all holocausts was the Black Death in the 1300s when seventy-five million people died.

On Sunday, 26th December, 2004, over 200,000 people were killed by a tsunami in the Indian Ocean, including whole churches gathered for worship on the Lord's Day, swept away in death

We are now faced with the rapid spread of the Corona virus. The number of deaths increases worldwide everyday.

How do we respond to this epidemic? We need to remember that while God is sovereign He is not the author of evil. James reminds us "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13). Again Paul reminds us "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" " (1 Corinthians 14:33). The word "confusion" refers to a state of instability or disorder".

While God permits evil and sickness he is not the author of them but is overruling them for his own wise and holy ends (Romans 8:28).



R.C. Sproul wrote "Nothing escapes God's notice; nothing oversteps the boundaries of His power. God is authoritative in all things. If I thought

even for one moment that a single molecule were running loose in the universe outside the control and domain of almighty God, I wouldn't sleep tonight. My confidence in the future rests in my confidence in the God who controls history".

God is currently in every hospital, strengthening doctors, nurses and medical personnel as they treat the sick and comfort the dying. He is working through the government's response to this crisis.

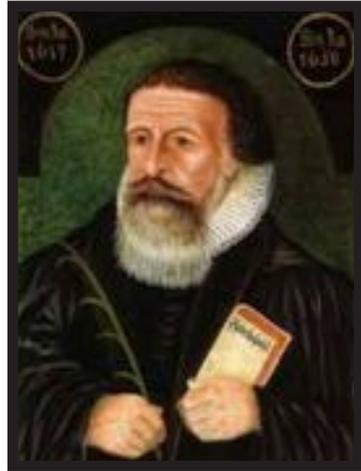
Recognising this the Psalmist said "some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7). Trusting in the Lord his God he was confident that he would hear his cry and would come to his aid.



Martin Rinkart was a Lutheran pastor who ministered in Eilenburg, Saxony during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). This devastating conflict ravaged entire regions, caused unrelenting famine and bankrupted most of the combatant powers. Malnutrition and pandemic threatened almost all of Europe.

Eilenburg saw a steady stream of refugees pour into the city for three decades, overwhelming the city's

meagre resources. Eight hundred homes in Eilenburg were destroyed in the fighting. The pastors of the city were under enormous strain, conducting multiple funerals daily while trying to minister to survivors



Martin Rinkart (1586 -1649)

The Year of the Great Pestilence (1637) saw every pastor in the city except Rinkart succumb to the horrific conditions. As the sole surviving clergyman in Eilenburg, it fell upon Rinkart to conduct funeral services for up to 50 people per day. In May of that terrible year, Rinkart's own wife died. How did Pastor Rinkart keep his faith and his sanity? He refused to be defined by his circumstances. He determined to focus, not on his circumstances, but on the unchanging character of a merciful God.

Set against the bleak backdrop of a protracted war, economic collapse, and his own city's devastation, Martin Rinkart penned these words for his children as a prayer of thanksgiving:

(P.T.O)

Now thank we all our God,
With heart, and hands, and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In Whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still are ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

The Mission Board of The Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster



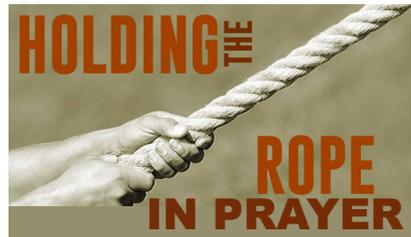
One of the founders of the Baptist Missionary Society in the eighteenth century was Pastor Andrew Fuller. The first Missionary sent out by that Society was 'the father of modern Missionary work', William Carey.



On one occasion the two men were discussing the vast number of souls to be reached in the nation of India alone and Fuller stated, 'there is a gold mine in India, but it seems almost as deep as the centre of the earth. Who will venture to explore it?' William Carey not only had an answer to that question, but he was willing to be the answer himself because he clearly replied, 'I will venture to go down but remember that you must hold the ropes.' Carey was referring to the great need of those who would hold him up in the place of prayer. The idea came from Paul's escape from Damascus by being let down from the wall of the city in a basket by Christians holding

the ropes (Acts 9:25). Afterwards Mr Fuller stated, 'this we solemnly engaged to do, pledging ourselves never to desert him as long as we should live'.

William Carey spent forty-one years in India and translated the Scriptures into forty languages. One of the great secrets of his success was those Christians who were 'rope holders' and held him up constantly at the throne of grace in prayer.



We want to thank you sincerely for being 'a rope holder in prayer' for the whole Free Presbyterian Missionary cause. Be assured that as a Mission Board we put great value upon your prayers. We can do without many things in our Missionary work, but we cannot do without the prayers of God's people. Those prayers are a vital support to our Missionaries and Mission Stations on a daily basis, but they are especially vital at a time of crisis such as we are facing all around the world at this time.

We appeal to you to pray earnestly for all

our Missionaries and their work at this very challenging time. To aid you in your prayers we have provided below brief reports on all our Mission Fields and listed some important prayer requests.

Meetings and events

- Missionary Council meetings have been postponed until further notice
- All planned deputation meetings have now been postponed or cancelled. This includes – Rev Patterson (Kenya), Rev Hall (Tasmania), Alejandro Bernabeu (Spain), Uganda School and Precious Orphanage.

Home Workers

- Our children's and Youth workers have now stopped their work in the schools, and we have plans in place to allow them to continue their service to the children and young people by video. More details will be announced next week.
- Our Home Evangelists have postponed any planned missions and other activity, and are helping out where they can in our local church work.

LURGAN FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We regret that due to the Coronavirus all public services have been suspended with immediate effect. We encourage you to worship the Lord in the privacy of your home.

A service will be streamed online on Sundays at 11am.

www.facebook.com/LurganFreePresbyterianChurch
or
www.sermonaudio.com/lurgan

- In case of illness feel free to phone me (07702837861).

KIDDIES' CORNER



MOUNTAINS

		1					
			2				
	3						
4							

Letters in centre column are the same

Clues

1. Where did Noah's Ark come to rest? (Genesis 8)
2. Where did Elijah make his great sacrifice? (1Kings 18)
3. Where did Moses receive the law from God? (Exodus 19)
4. Where did Abraham prepare Isaac for sacrifice? (Genesis 22)

(Answers in next week's issue)