



GET READY...Putting Feet to our Faith

TEN STEPS FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS FOR THE CHRISTAIN COMMUNITY

*We don't have to be gifted or brilliant to be a servant and good neighbour.
We just have to be willing... Chuck Swindoll*

While the major sources of pandemic influenza planning can provide volumes of background information on the nature of the threat and make recommendations for a global or national response, it is the local response that will have the greatest impact on minimizing the effects of a pandemic. In fact, the larger and more widespread the pandemic, the more local the response will have to be.

Pandemic Influenza Planning by Vernon Dorisson

Get Ready...

1. **PRAYER** – Before we can effectively engage with our neighbours, we should be praying for those in our community. Prayer is the calisthenics that gets us in shape for the marathon of service and will ignite our faith for ACTION. Prayer without action grows into powerless pietism, and action without prayer degenerates into questionable manipulation.
2. **SPIRITUALLY READY** - What does God teach on the subject of servant hood? Would God find our hearts ready and available if such a health crisis were to occur? How do we prepare for a situation that will shake our foundation? Only through God's Strength and Protection will we have the courage to step out in times of peril. (Psalm 15, 91) Our close walk with God, our willingness to face trials and our desire to ask God for wisdom and understanding will produce a settled spirit in the face of fear, isolation, sorrow and doubt. As we serve in Love with a compassionate heart, our focus will be on the cause, not to enhance our own positions—without recognition, without reservation, without reluctance and without restriction utilizing our gifts, talents and training.

During any crisis, many questions about God arise and we need to be ready with a response for the hope that lies within us. Even though we need to be well grounded in biblical truths to answer the hard questions, however, a listening ear to a hurting soul, offers solace and comfort.

Get Set...

3. **BE INFORMED** - The most effective way to combat fear is through education. By reading the many good books and resources available, one will be informed and prepared to teach others. [http:// www.conference-board.org/knowledge/resources/resource_avianflu.cfm](http://www.conference-board.org/knowledge/resources/resource_avianflu.cfm)

Recommended Books/DVD's

- ***Pandemic Influenza. Prepare for the Worst, Hope for the Best*** The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control - www.bccdc.org (Very good over-view)(DVD)
- ***Ministry in Disaster Settings. Lessons from the Edge*** by Stephen Robinson www.emergencyministry.com.au (Australian book but excellent so worth the effort & cost to purchase)
- ***The Flu Pandemic and You. A Canadian Guide*** ISBN 0-385-66277-7 Doubleday Canada - www.randomhouse.ca
- ***Pandemic Influenza Planning. A Step-by-Step Guide for Businesses and Local Governments*** by Vernon Dorisson (Also comes with a training DVD that is excellent) ISBN 1-59800-951-6 Outskirts Press.Inc. Denver, Colorado - www.outskirtspress.com
- ***Bird Flu.A Virus Of Our Own Hatching*** - by Dr. Michael Greger ISBN 1-59056-098-1 Lantern Books, www.lanternbooks.com - www.birdflubook.com Can be downloaded from the web site but it is a large book to copy. This is an excellent book and looks at bird flu from many perspectives.
- ***Pandemonium - Bird Flu, Mad Cow Disease, and other Biological Plagues of the 21st Century*** by Andrew Nikiforuk ISBN-10 0-670-04519-5 Penguin Group, 2006 - www.penguin.ca

4. **LOCAL PARTNERS/ BUILDING LOVING RELATIONSHIPS-** Pandemic planning will require a response from people in a variety of occupations and disciplines. Get to know those who are doing pandemic preparedness in your local government, healthcare region, businesses and industries, and other faith groups in your community. There will be a need to collaborate and cooperate with other stakeholders while demonstrating a spirit of teamwork. Know your contact person for the Health Region for your quadrant and build a relationship of trust through sharing of ideas with unity of purpose.
5. **PANDEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE** – Responsible for a variety of tasks that build on each other to create the influenza plan. Will require those who are committed to gather background work and will encompass several areas of knowledge, skill and ability.
 - Planning Committee Coordinator
 - ✓ Planning Supervisor
 - ✓ Medical Supervisor
 - ✓ Training/Equipping/Education Supervisor
 - ✓ Pastoral Supervisor
 - ✓ Financial/Budgetary Supervisor
 - ✓ Small Group Supervisor
6. **PROPRIETARY PLANS** - Develop your proprietary plans while cooperating with other planners in areas of mutual interest and concern. During the planning process with the local healthcare providers, the public education responsibilities should be laid out so all involved know what will be expected of them and what each might expect from the others.

- Priority focus of pandemic influenza planning is the welfare of your congregation in a manner which will preserve your churches effectiveness and sustainability.
- Plan Development Methodology
 - ✓ Communication Plan – Contact list of the key people in the community and at all levels of government, communications with whom will be important before and during the pandemic planning and execution stages.
 - ✓ Security Plan – Addresses law enforcement issues that may arise.
 - ✓ Mission Continuity Plan – Addresses the preparations necessary to respond to the effects of a pandemic with the resources necessary to continue to fulfill the mission of the Faith Group.
 - ✓ Medical Plan – Identify individuals who have experience in areas that could be utilized in the medical field. Transferable skill identification.
 - ✓ Community Containment Measures – Isolation, Quarantine and Social Distancing. During a pandemic house churches are a viable option and small group meetings alleviate the feeling of isolation where fellowship and worship can be fulfilled.

Go...

7. TAKING STOCK OF RESOURCES – A church inventory is helpful to assess what resources are already in place. (www.bridgesoflove.net see “A Church Response” Pg. 13) These resources can then be evaluated on whether this is an area that could be expanded to fit a Pandemic scenario or perhaps another church in the area is also equipped adequately so another area of service should be investigated.

This is why it is so important for churches to collaborate with one another so there will be limited duplication. For instance, one church may already house a food bank as they have adequate room so other churches in the area could contribute to their stock.

8. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – Once the Proprietary plans are in place and the resources on hand assessed, it is time to be intentional in getting to know your neighbours. Plan events where the church is ‘**out**’ in the community and building trust and loving relationships.

- Invite the other faith groups in your community to a Pandemic Planning meeting to discuss how each one can play a role in taking care of their community.
- COMMUNICATION is a vital component to keep information current and relevant and to relieve stress and panic during a crisis. As church groups are building relationships with their neighbours they have an opportunity to gather information that will be critical once the pandemic is in progress. (www.bridgesoflove.net A Church Response...Pg. 12) For instance...who lives on their own and may need an extra hand, or perhaps some in your community may not have a good handle on the English language so this special need will need to be addressed) These considerations are all part of getting to know those in your sphere of service and then acting on this information. If neighbours do not wish to share personal information, bless and release... Offer them a card with your contact information and let them know that they are free to call if they need assistance. Show love with no strings attached!
- In times of crisis there is often much spiritual angst. Individuals often seek a church for peace and comfort but in a Pandemic situation with fear of contracting the virus, many might refrain from going to church, even if allowed. The faith community thus will have to adapt quickly to such a new reality, even considering ‘web casts’ as a major part of a regular service.

9. TRAINING/EQUIPPING – The focus of a disaster preparedness plan should be to anticipate not only the resources that will be needed but to have individuals trained and ready to respond at a moments notice. Training and equipping in areas of healthcare, social services and pastoral care (laity) are areas that will be a tremendous asset when trained professionals are too busy to respond to the over-whelming needs that will be inevitable. Begin by sharing with the congregation basic information about influenza and how to prevent giving it to or getting it from others. The heart of pandemic planning for individuals is infection control. There will be a need for local information that must be met in a planned, coordinated manner. Seek out information that has been prepared by your Municipal Health Authority in your locality. Also, Public Health Agency of Canada has information available. Call 1.800.454.8302 or www.pandemicinfluenza.gc.ca

- Cross-training and receiving elementary nursing care are two vital areas worth investigating in your community. The Red Cross or St John's Ambulance would be two agencies that could offer such training. Churches may see their facility used as a base for emergency response courses and programs, with congregations engaging in active participation.

10. MUTUAL ASSISTANCE GROUPS – A church response to a pandemic is a shared commitment from the whole church body. Since Pastors and other ministry leaders in the church will be over-extended it will be necessary to have mature individuals who will be ready to fill in the gap. Laity will have the opportunity to minister in the lives of friends, neighbours and fellow church members.

- Small groups can play an integral role in building community support groups, prayer gatherings, house churches, counseling and support services, food preparation, delivery services, child care, communication, etc... These task orientated groups have service already built into their DNA and will be a great resource for community care.
- During times of crisis, 'Mutual Assistance Groups' (meetings in homes) would provide a more casual but very meaningful worship/support experience. This would afford an opportunity to offer emotional support, encouragement, one-on-one counseling and concrete symbols of love for one another. A time to put one's faith into action without engaging in religious exploitation. Mutual Assistance Groups offer grieving individuals a sense of orientation into life building strong bonds of friendship.

We began the process with prayer and thus we end with prayer. One of the most significant aspects of our mission in the world is simply being there. There to love one another and pray for our neighbours as God leads us into the world to serve Him. No single person, group, agency, or organization will be able to deal with all pandemic issues on its own. It is going to take a willingness to work together, to exchange and dialogue. We have an opportunity like never before in history to practice what we believe. Putting 'feet to our faith', and thus making a difference for God's Kingdom.

Get Ready...Get Set....

