

PERSPECTIVE, PRIORITIES AND PLAN



Administrative Bishop Daniel Hampton

As we look back over the last several weeks and review the situation we find ourselves in we can certainly say none of us have been here before. Our perspective and view of what is really important changed in just a matter of days. The events which were the norm didn't really dominate our conversation as much as they had before. A few examples for instance; Graduations, opening of Major League Baseball Season, PGA Major Tournaments, NFL Draft, Presidential Primaries and the list could go on. The most important perspective, as I see it, was how are we going to get through this pandemic? We are still asking that question as we try to navigate our way of getting to a new normal. We must be honest and understand that things changed after 9-11 and so will the norm be different after the COVID - 19 pandemic. We must make the choice and continue to trust Jesus through it all. Our faith must grow stronger and we can rest assured that the God who has delivered those of the past is still the God who delivers today. My perspective of the God we serve will not change regardless of the situation we are facing. I have said many times and I want to repeat it now; **“God’s performance in my past gives me great assurance of His ability to take care of my future!”**

Our priorities as we endeavor to get back to some resemblance of normal must be to please the Lord in everything we do. We must be wise in all our decisions and to the best of our ability protect our family. Our church family and their protection must be highly considered as we move forward. Caution must be observed in every decision we make. The word of God instructs us in Proverbs 4:7 “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” I want to compliment every pastor and minister in our great state for the innovative and professional way you have continued to minister to your congregations as well as the number of people who have been blessed through on-line worship services. Church services will never be the same as they were before this pandemic because we now have an internet off campus congregation to continue to minister to. Parking lot or drive in services may very well continue even though we go back at some point hopefully soon to in house worship. Truly the church has left the building and the community will be the better for it.

Now the question, what is the plan? As we move forward every precaution must be put into place to protect our constituents and especially our senior adults, children and those with medical concerns. The Governor’s guidelines to reopen the state entitled “West Virginia Strong – The Comeback” gives information that in week 2, which would begin on May 4, churches that wish to resume in-person services will be encouraged to follow additional guidelines such as limiting seating to every other pew, maintaining physical distancing and wearing face covering restrictions. Additional guidance for churches will be available soon. (COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice “West Virginia Strong – The Comeback)

It is our desire to return to some form of normal operation as soon as possible. Decisions about future events will be forthcoming as we review the instructions of our medical professionals as well as our Governor.

I want to thank each of you for your continued support of your local church, pastor and leadership. Remember we are in this together and by the help of the Lord we will be more than conquerors through Him.



West Virginia Church of God Youth & USA Missions Director



Isolation. It's such a dark and formidable word. For me it renders mental images of prison cells. Solitary confinement. Social distancing. The phrase indicates that we are to remove ourselves from society. I fear that far too many people have done that. It goes against human nature to distance yourself from society. In fact, until the recent outbreak of COVID-19 the phrase "social distancing" was used by sociologists to indicate a distancing from people not "like me" according to social grouping and status. It's a term of segregation. While I certainly understand that's not how we mean it now, let's be very careful that that's not what happens in reality. I want to talk about these two phrases and listen to God's Word on the matter.

Isolation. You don't have to be isolated. You don't live in Isolation. First and foremost, you have fellowship with God the Father, through Jesus the Son, and by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised the disciples that the Spirit of Truth was with you and "shall be in you." We live in the age when the Spirit of God doesn't just fall on us, but He is in us. You never have to be alone. You never have to be isolated. In John 14:20 Jesus said, "I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." You don't live in Isolation, you live in fellowship.

You also don't have to be isolated from other believers. You may be six feet apart, behind closed doors, or miles away from friends and family. You may not be able to feel the warmth of an embrace from another human, but we are truly blessed to live in a day when we have so many ways to connect. A phone call doesn't replace a handshake, but it comes very close for now. Reach out. Connect with other people. Don't turn inward, turn outward to fellow man. Use this as a time to connect with people you've been meaning to reach for Christ. Someone you know is feeling just as lonely as you are and doesn't have the fellowship you have with Christ. Let them know they don't have to be alone. Connect with fellow believers and encourage each other in the goodness of God. We have so much to be thankful for. Call someone today and let them know you are thankful for them.

Social Distancing. This is a great tool we have to fight this virus (or any virus). I think it may be the best tool moving forward and that we will be using this strategy long after we are back in clothing stores, schools and "normal" church services. We are going to see a drop in other viruses as a result. As we fight COVID-19 with social distancing, we are also fighting noroviruses, influenzas and rhinoviruses. We could be a much healthier planet moving forward. But don't allow physical distancing to become social distancing. When we get "back to normal" don't let it be an excuse to only spend time with people who are socially like you. Don't circle the wagons around "me, my four, and no more." Find an opportunity to reach out to people less fortunate than you. Give to the poor, and don't just give to a professional who gives to the poor. This allows you to keep your distance emotionally. Really invest in the lives of people less fortunate than you. Once we are free to go into public, find a way to minister. I often take my guitar to downtown Beckley when the weather is nice and sit on the park benches ministering to the homeless or the passerby. Once the stay at home order is lifted, I'll do that again. Will I change some things? Yes. I may not lay hands on people as I pray for them. I may not sit on a bench with my arm on their shoulder. I may wear a mask when I go to pray for them, but I will not retreat into a world of people who are just like me and lose the chance to reach someone different with the gospel.

All of the things I'm talking about are spiritual. I'm not telling you to break any restrictions or recommendations about what to do in the physical. But don't let that change who you are in the spiritual. Get creative. Give a cup of cold water in His name. You may not have much to give physically. Give of your time. Give of your heart. Give the gospel. Peoples physical needs may increase, but people always have had and always will have spiritual needs. With Christ living in you, you can meet those needs as Christ's Ambassador. Matthew 25:36-40 "I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

NYLA

Virtual Conference
2020



NYLA will be an
Online Virtual Conference
this year and it is FREE.

May 2, 2020 10:00am - 4:00pm.

You must register to be able to
participate. Go to
www.nylaconf.com to register.

Every week on Thursday @7:00pm

WVCOG Youth Department

will hold a Virtual Camp online

A different speaker and musician each week.

Come experience a move of God with us



West Virginia COG Youth Camp

VIRTUAL CAMP

EVERY

THURSDAY

@ 7:00PM

West Virginia Church of God Youth Camp Announcement

We have been getting a lot of calls and questions about camp. We are continually monitoring the situation surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, and it seems to be changing daily. We are in dialogue with state and federal government leadership as well as both medical and legal professionals to come to a solution. The safety of our campers and workers is forefront in every discussion. We will not proceed with an unsafe plan.

We have a team reviewing every available option. While no preferred path is yet clear, we are continuing to plan for a great camp season as I write this message. As soon as we can give you a responsible update, we will do so. Until then, please tune in to our

Thursday Night Virtual Camps available on our

Facebook Page West Virginia COG Youth Camp. Thank You.

**Please continue to check out our Facebook pages
and Website for updated information on upcoming events.**

Mountaineer Ministries Prayer Requests:

We as the Church of God State office are praying for each Pastor, Minister and Lay member, or attender of our churches, that God will provide and keep you and your families safe during this time. Our country; Our President and State Leaders; Military; Health Care Professionals; Health and Wellness; Finances; Job; Marriage; Family; Our Church; God's hand of protection; My children; The knowledge to make the right decisions; That lost souls will be saved before it's too late; Highway driving mercies; Church to open back up soon; Families who have lost family during this crisis; My daughter to make the right decisions concerning her future.

Mountaineer Ministries Praise Reports:

Finances; Souls saved; Healing; two being saved; God protecting my children; God always providing; Our Church distributing food to those in need; God healing my body; God's comforting presence that I feel; My Pastor; A church on fire for Jesus; My job; God's presence in my life everyday; My family; My Health; My Husband; My salvation; God saving my husband.

All of the following dates are conditional and changing on a daily basis, due to the COVID-19 virus. Please continue to check our website and Facebook pages, for updates.

Mark your calendar

May 25, 2020 Office Closed for Memorial Day

June 7-11, 2020 WV Church of God Camp Meeting

June 10, 2020 Women's Camp Meeting Luncheon

June 12, 2020 New River Ranch Golf Tournament

October 3, 2020 Senior Adult Day

Are you looking for a Summer Job, looking for adventure, looking for an opportunity to pursue ministry?

We are looking for you, to be a part of our Summer Internship Program at our New River Ranch Ministry Center

May 30-July 31. Call the West Virginia Church of God State Office

at 304-252-0622 ext. 3